

WORKING MORE EFFICIENTLY THROUGH PROPER DELEGATION & GOAL SETTING

by

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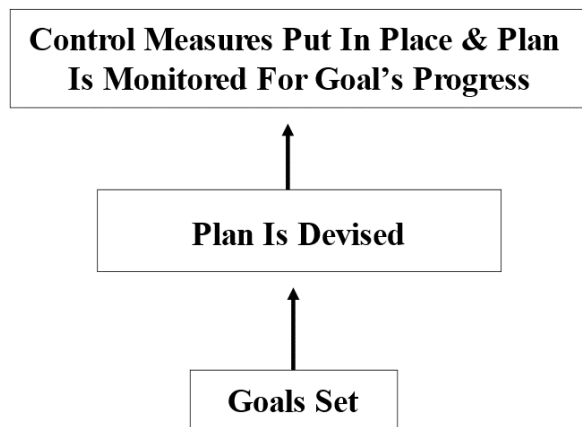
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I. THE DELEGATION & GOAL SETTING PROCESS

Too many times, managers try to delegate duties to their employees to reach their goals without having developed well thought out plans. As a result, these plans often end in utter failure simply because one or more important aspects of the planning process was overlooked. Following a proper **Delegation & Goal System Planning Process** will help ensure that all of the steps vital to the planning process are reviewed before the plan is put into action.

Therefore, a complete "Delegation & Goal Setting Process" can be diagrammed as follows:



A. **Setting SMART Goals**

First of all, the Delegation & Goal System Planning Process is not a terribly complicated system. Its basic steps include the following:

1. **Formulate goals: SMART**

All goals, or objectives, must be stated in a "SMART" manner, which stands for:

S – pecific

M – easurable

A - ction oriented

R – ealistic

T - imely

S - Specific

First and foremost, all goals must be specifically stated so everyone, the managers and employees alike, can clearly see what tasks they must complete in order for both themselves and the organization to be successful. **Specific goals also help employees to understand how they "fit into" and contribute to the company's success.** Everyone must know exactly what the goal is they are trying to reach and the role they are to play in the organization, just like a good rowing team.

For example, telling an employee to process more accounts payables is not at all specific.

However, tell that same employee to process all accounts payable checks no later than within 30 days of receipt is very specific.

M - Measurable

Next, all goals must be stated in a measurable or quantified manner. Otherwise, how could the goal be successfully monitored to determine its status or success, or how would anyone know if a goal was successfully completed so the next one can begin? Too many times, goals are stated in such a way that successfully monitoring their progress and completion is impossible.

For example, a goal stating that "production should increase" is not quantifiable. However, a goal stating that "production should increase by 10 percent next quarter" is a goal that can be measured, since it clearly indicates how the goal will be attained, so the success or failure of the goal can easily be determined.

A - Action Oriented

Goals should not be stated in a passive manner. Instead, goals should call employees to action. For instance, a passive type of goal would be to **"ensure staffing."** **A more active way to state this goal would be to "Fill at least 80% of all the vacant positions for the company by the end of the calendar year."**

R-Realistic

Managers should state their goals in a **realistic** manner. Unfortunately, some managers feel that the goals they set for employees should be unattainable, or just beyond the reach of attainment. Such managers feel this will cause employees to "stretch" and push themselves to excel as they reach for an impossible goal, which they feel produces higher result.

However, the result of setting unattainable goals, such as **increasing production by 500 percent in the next quarter**, will only end in a lowered sense of employee morale and lowered motivation. **It is very demotivating to never taste success or to diligently strive in vain to reach some impossible goal.** In the end, employees will only feel as if they have spent their efforts in vain and that they have been "tricked" by management.

On the other hand, goals must always be challenging. Goals that are set too low are demotivating, since there is no challenge in their attainment. Again, morale will drop, as will motivation, if goals are set too low.

Therefore, setting goals is "tricky" in that a happy median must be achieved -- not too easy, and not too hard, but just right.

T - Timely

And finally, managers must develop a **realistic timetable** for attaining the goals they set. Managers must not allow a vital goal or project to continue on indefinitely. Sometimes, expediency is more important than quality, and vice versa.

Management must make such a trade-off decision. A priority must be set. Time or quality? Such a choice must be made prior to the implementation of the plan, thus further ensuring its proper direction and completion.

2. SMART Goal Example

An example of a SMART goal would be:

"To fill 90% of a division's annual vacant positions by December 31st."

This goal is:

Specific, since it says exactly what the employee is expected to do,

Measurable, in that it sets a specific goal which is clearly either met or it is not,

Action-Oriented, since it calls the employee to perform certain actions (Hire a certain number of individuals.),

Realistic, assuming reaching such a goal is something the employee could actually do and

Timely, since the employee must perform this goal by certain deadlines.

An example of an improper goal would be "To hire employees for the division." Such a goal is not **specific**, since it establishes a "do what you can" type of attitude. Also, there is no way to **measure** if the employee has fully attained this goal or if the staffing needs of the organization were met. Such a goal is unacceptable.

3. Rewarding Employees For Attaining SMART Goals

a) Cliff ("All or Nothing") vs. Graduated ("Sliding Scale") Goals

- (1) **Cliff or "All or Nothing" Goals.** Under a Cliff or All-or-Nothing method, if employees achieve 100% of their goal, they will receive 100% of their reward. However, if employees achieve less than 100% of their goal, then they receive nothing.

An example of a Cliff or an All-or-Nothing measured goal would be to require the employee: "To have an average processing time of one hour per order for the calendar year as of December 31st."

If the employee meets this goal, the employee will receive his or her bonus. However, if by December 31st the employee has an average processing time for the calendar year of 61 minutes, the employee gets nothing.

- (2) **Graduated or "Sliding Scale" Goals.** Goals may also be measured based upon a Graduated or "Sliding Scale" method. (Such an approach is also commonly referred to as a "**Stepped**" approach, since employees may receive rewards at different steps in the process.)

Under a Graduated or Sliding Scale reward method, the amount of reward employees receive is based upon what percentage of their goal they complete. Unlike the Cliff or All-or-Nothing method, if the employee achieves 90% of his established goal, then the employee would receive 90% of his targeted bonus.

An example of a Graduated or Sliding Scale measured goal would be:

Processing Orders Goal

The dollar amount of incentive you actually receive is based upon equaling or beating the target levels, as shown in the table below, for having an average order processing time within the parameters listed below for the calendar year as of December 31st:

<u>Actual Average Order Processing Time</u>	<u>Payment Rate</u>
60 minutes maximum	100%
> 60 minutes but < 63 minutes	95%
≥ 63 minutes but < 66 minutes	90%
≥ 66 minutes	0%

Of course, if a goal is especially challenging, managers may want to consider including an added incentive to the bonus an employee may receive. An illustration of such an added reward would be as follows:

Processing Orders Goal

The dollar amount of incentive you actually receive is based upon equaling or beating the target levels, as shown in the table below, for having an average order processing time within the parameters listed below for the calendar year as of December 31st:

<u>Actual Average Order Processing Time</u>	<u>Payment Rate</u>
< 57 minutes	110%
≥ 57 minutes but < 60 minutes	100%
≥ 60 minutes but < 63 minutes	95%
≥ 63 minutes but < 66 minutes	90%
≥ 66 minutes	0%

This way, even though very high goals are set, they are still realistic since the employee may succeed on the lower levels.

B. Determine What Activities Will Help Attain The Goal

Too many times when plans are made, one of the most important and most obvious steps in the planning process is omitted:

What ACTIVITIES are needed to attain this goal?

Managers need to determine exactly what route they will follow and what steps are necessary to reach the desired goal. Managers must specifically determine what activities they will need to undertake to achieve the goal and/or to prepare the person the managers is delegating the task to so the employee will be successful. These specific activities must be identified and then planned. A map must be drawn...step by step by step.

Think of it like teaching your teenager how to drive. If you forget something ... the child will die.

For example, in delegating to an employee the responsibility of answering customer service calls, such activities might include:

- Training the employee in how to use the phone system, how to diffuse rather than escalate conflicts, how to use “encouragers” and how to use listening skills, to mention a few,
- Finding the proper person to train the employee,
- Letting the employee watch how it is done correctly and,
- Letting the employee practice their new skills.

C. Identify What Resources Are Needed And Identify Any Potential Obstacles.

Managers must determine what resources they currently have at their disposal, as well as which ones must be acquired, to successfully complete the chosen activities. If these resources are not available, can someone get them for the manager? The resources necessary for the successful achievement of the goal must be identified and a plan then devised for their acquisition, if they are not already at hand.

What resources will be needed?

- Cell Phone?
- Mileage?

- A budget?
- Use of equipment, like a car? Desk? Computer?
- A trainer?
- A seminar?

Managers must also predict and consider what obstacles might prevent them from attaining their goals. Managers should then decide how they may best deal with these obstacles. Can the obstacles be avoided? Can these obstacles be removed? Are these obstacles insurmountable, which would then either negate or alter the goal? Obstacles must be identified and dealt with accordingly. If not, managers will surely trip over them later...guaranteed.

Of course, in the real world, one of the biggest obstacles that lie in front of us keeping us from reaching our goals is **TIME**. Will the employee be given enough time to be trained in how to perform the duties of the new task? Will they be given enough time from their other duties to perform this new task?

D. How Will The Plan Be Monitored or Controlled?

Although planning is vital to the success of any goal, and thus the organization, the progress of the plan must also be effectively monitored and, therefore, controlled. To accomplish this task, every plan must include some type of monitoring or controlling device that will accurately indicate both the progression or regression of the plan, as previously discussed.

Control procedures keep managers "in touch" with the progress their goals are making in relation to their preset plan.

REMEMBER:

DELEGATION IS NOT ABDICATION!

Managers must know at all times what is happening with the goals that were set.

Proper control procedures can tell managers **when** a plan went off course, **where** it went off course, and **by how much** it went off course. Knowing this information makes it much easier to determine how to get the plan back "on track" should it eventually become "**derailed**," since its current situation can then easily be compared to the goal's original "map" or plan.

Control procedures are also extremely useful in detecting the waste or abuse of the firm's resources soon after or possibly even before it occurs.

Of course, whenever any control procedures are used or imposed upon employees, the reasons for using the chosen control measures should be explained to those employees who are subject to their rule. **Such an explanation helps to promote an understanding by employees and therefore an acceptance of these procedures.** As a matter of fact, it is best if those employees who will be subjected to these control measures are also **involved in their design and implementation**, thus promoting understanding of the control procedures while also lowering the employees' resistance to these control procedures.

Again, managers must make sure that whatever control procedures are used to monitor employees, **the standards they set should not be too low or too high.** If the **standards are set too low**, then the employees will see the control process as a "joke," which **lowers the credibility** of the manager's ability to manage. On the other hand, if the **standard is set too high, the employees will then be smothered by its edicts**, which will in turn lower the employees' morale and their motivation to excel.

There are three separate ways in which a plan can be monitored. These three methods of monitoring the progress of a goal are as follows:

1. Strategic Control Point Systems

A Strategic Control Point System occurs when only specific points in the plan's progress are identified for evaluation. An example of a commonly used Strategic Control Point System occurs in most **auditing functions**, such as in the area of **quality control**.

Usually, in most auditing procedures, the auditor only evaluates every so many units, not every one. This way, every unit must doesn't have to be monitored or examined, but instead, the auditor only reviews a **random sample** which the firm hopes is representative of the whole and will therefore indicate a problem if one exists.

Strategic Control Points can be established however management sees fit. **Every fifth loan can be audited, every 100th widget evaluated, and so on.**

2. Warning Control Systems

Some plans may best be suited for using a Warning Control System. In a Warning Control System, **the company sets certain boundaries, limits, or levels of results or performance.** When the plan then skews off course to the point that a pre-established boundary is breached, **an "alarm" is sounded**, and the situation is investigated and corrected.

An example of a Warning Control System can be seen whenever a **budget** is established. **If a project exceeds the predetermined budget amount, the manager is alerted to take the necessary corrective action.** Of course, a Warning Control System can also alert a manager of the plan's positive achievements, such as when a certain profit level is met.

If managers adopt such a control system, then it must be determined which boundaries must be set, as well as what notification system should be used to alert the manager of either the problem or the achievement that was reached.

3. **Continuous Control Systems**

Sometimes it is necessary for managers to monitor a plan or goal **continuously**. In a Continuous Control System, the system does not notify the manager of when to take action to correct problems, but instead, **the system itself takes action.**

Without a doubt, the most commonly used Continuous Control System firms use are **policies**, which are broad, general guidelines that govern, restrict, or direct the behavior of employees. Another type of Continuous Control System used by most firms are **standard operating procedures (SOP's)**, which outline the specific sequence of duties necessary to complete a project or job in an effort to promote uniformity.

Another commonly used Continuous Control System is a firm's **performance appraisal system**. In a proper performance appraisal system, the employee's performance is monitored constantly for improvement or failure, and the employee is then appraised accordingly on a regular basis. Therefore, there are no surprises at the formal review.

(Too many times, managers use the performance appraisal system as a Strategic Control Point System, which means it is only at the point of the employee's formal review when that employee receives and feedback from the manager. Therefore, the review is filled with numerous surprises, which should never be the case.)

Continuous Control Systems should be used when a plan can easily get off track and the plan may need immediate correction, such as in the case of employee behavior or performance.

In reality, a combination of these various monitoring devices are used in conjunction with one other in order to determine when the plan needs "correcting" or controlled in order to stay on its proper course.

Therefore, a complete "Goal System" that keeps managers informed, focused, and "in touch" with their departments can be diagrammed as follows:

E. Provide Feedback To The Employees.

Too many times, the progression or regression of a plan occurs and those who have worked toward completion of the goal are never kept apprised of its status. ***Everyone must be kept apprised of the plan's status.*** Otherwise, any feelings of teamwork will be destroyed and feelings of futility will set in, which causes the motivation to continue on toward the attainment of the goal to drop.

In reality, a combination of these various monitoring devices are used in conjunction with one other in order to determine when the plan needs “correcting” or controlled in order to stay on its proper course.

SHRM Activity 22-JXA6T

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**Start Date: 4/6/2022
End Date: 12/31/2022**

1.5 Recertification Credit Hours



HRCI Program ID: 585177

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**Start Date: 4/6/2022
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1.5 Recertification Credit Hours: General



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Scott Warrick, JD, MLHR, CEQC, SHRM-SCP (www.scottwarrick.com) is a two-time best-selling author, a national professional speaker, a practicing Employment Law Attorney and a Human Resource Professional with 40 years of hands-on experience. Scott uses his unique background to help organizations get where they want to go, which includes coaching and training managers and employees in his own unique, practical and entertaining style.

Scott Trains Managers & Employees ON-SITE in over 50 topics, all of which can be customized **FOR YOU!** Scott travels the country presenting seminars on such topics as Employment Law, Conflict Resolution, Leadership and Tolerance, to mention a few.

LET SCOTT DESIGN A PROGRAM FOR YOU!

Scott combines the areas of law and human resources to help organizations in “Solving Employee Problems **BEFORE** They Start.” Scott’s goal is **NOT** to win lawsuits. Instead, Scott’s goal is to **PREVENT THEM** while improving **EMPLOYEE MORALE**.

Scott’s first book, **Solve Employee Problems Before They Start: Resolving Conflict in the Real World**, is a #1 Best Seller for Business and Conflict Resolution on Amazon. It was also named by EGLOBALIS as one of the best global Customer and Employee books for 2020-2021. Scott’s most recent book, **Living The Five Skills of Tolerance: A User’s Manual For Today’s World**, is also a #1 Best Seller in 13 categories on Amazon, including Business Leadership, Minority Studies, Organizational Change, Management, Religious Intolerance, Race Relations and Workplace Culture, to mention a few.

Scott’s **MASTER HR TOOL KIT SUBSCRIPTION** is a favorite for anyone wanting to learn Employment Law and run an HR Department.

Scott has been named one of Business First’s 20 People To Know In HR, CEO Magazine’s 2008 Human Resources “Superstar,” a Nationally Certified Emotional Quotient Counsellor (CEQC) and a SHRM National Diversity Conference Presenter in 2003, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2010 and 2012. Scott has also received the Human Resource Association of Central Ohio’s Linda Kerns Award for Outstanding Creativity in the Field of HR Management and the Ohio State Human Resource Council’s David Prize for Creativity in HR Management.

Scott’s academic background and awards include Capital University College of Law (Class Valedictorian (1st out of 233) and Summa Cum Laude), Master of Labor & Human Resources and B.A. in Organizational Communication from The Ohio State University.

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