



## **Dealing with Delegation Deterioration**

---

© Gloria Thomas, president Wizard Workforce Development Inc. All rights reserved.

A client recently asked me: "How should I handle an employee who says, 'I guess there are some things I'm just not meant to learn'?" The monthly task she said she couldn't learn required her to apply the most basic reading and math skills, but she messed up every part of it twice in a row, then attempted *reverse* delegation. This employee had been slow to catch on to most of her assigned tasks, was haphazard and disorganized, was not a self-starter and rarely took responsibility for her mistakes.

Does any of this sound familiar? What do you do when your best efforts to delegate deteriorate? First, you must be certain you've given it your best effort.

Then, what should you do after you've prioritized, trained, coached and let go of the task, yet still find yourself faced with the unpleasantness of ***Delegation Deterioration***.

1. **First, don't accept or make EXCUSES** for employees' mistakes, for their failure to take responsibility for delegated tasks or for their missed deadlines. Instead, seek and deal with the **REASONS** behind these problems, examining both your issues and theirs. Don't assume that all of your delegation problems arise just from you or just from them. Most likely, both need to change, but lasting change must begin with the leader.
2. **Delegate—but don't dump!** In the rush to get work done, leaders often overlook the difference between these two approaches. Delegation requires both training and one-to-one coaching (where someone oversees an employee who is just beginning to undertake a new task or responsibility). Effective delegation also requires that you follow a systematic process. This process should include at least two elements: Clear communication and repetition of your expectations. And the establishment of, and adherence to, a system for tracking tasks, special assignments and due dates. This system will keep you from contributing to your employee's development of bad habits.

I find that small organizations and departments resist setting up formal tracking systems. Yet, this is even more important when the number of people who generate the work is small, because there are fewer employees to take up any slack. If you don't have one, an established tracking system might be your missing key to successful delegation.

3. **Assess whether a problem employee** is psychologically, intellectually and emotionally the right person for the work you expect them to do. Everyone performs best in a position that's a good fit for their psychological makeup, their skills and their values. Assessments are useful tools for anyone who wants to uncover their blind spots and to understand better how to motivate themselves and others. Wizard Workforce Development

---

*Unleashing the Communication Potential of Individuals and Organizations.*™

provides assessment packages that are customized to discover whether a potential employee's particular job skills, behaviors, attitudes and values make that candidate right for the job.

**4. Check your *clarity quotient*.** Are you clearly communicating instructions and expectations? Are you encouraging employees to ask questions? Better still, insist on questions. Say: *I expect you to ask questions and I'm going to be disappointed if you don't. In fact, let's sit down tomorrow and review a few things. That way I can see where I may have been unclear or you might be confused.* The biggest de-motivator for employees is confusion about what is expected of them.

**5. Get human resource assistance.** Visit [www.workplacedimensions.com](http://www.workplacedimensions.com) to learn more about human resource management and the products and services offered by Workplace Dimensions Inc. I have both seen and heard about the positive impact their unique, customized services have had on many small and large organizations.

Finally, as your skills and your approach to delegation improve—enjoy your newly discovered free time!

**Gloria Thomas is the president of Wizard Workforce Development Inc., a Richmond, Virginia based training and consulting firm. Visit the Wizard Inc. website [www.wizardinc.com](http://www.wizardinc.com) or call 804.674.6111 for more information.**

---

*Unleashing the Communication Potential of Individuals and Organizations.*™