



The GROW coaching system is a highly effective method for assisting employees in adopting new behaviors and developing new skills. This installment of the Performex GROW Coaching System will increase the effectiveness of coaching engagements dealing with delegation.

This instructional guide is intended for use in conjunction with the Performex articles “Mastering Delegation Skills,” the Performex “Delegation Workbook,” the “Autopilot, Faulty Beliefs and Habits Assessment,” and the Performex “Delegation Assessment.”

■ Background

Based on analyzing thousands of participants in our programs, we have determined that poor delegation stems from six causes: [1] a lack of understanding of the impact and value of delegation on an organization; [2] an imperfect process for prioritizing and delegation; [3] autopilot behaviors, faulty beliefs, and habits; [4] institutional expectations and culture; [5] a lack of confidence in staff or actual lack of staff competence, and [6] asymmetrical delegating. This instructional guide provides the coach with practical strategies and GROW coaching questions to address each of the six causes.

While most delegation courses focus on prioritization skills and teaching a delegation process, it is Performex’s experience that an imperfect process causes only 10 percent of delegation problems. More often, the root cause is autopilot behaviors, faulty beliefs, and habits (50%); institutional expectations (15%); the capability of the staff (12.5%); or asymmetrical delegating (12.5%). To become more effective delegators, managers—with their coach’s support—must first diagnose the root causes of the problem.



Using the Delegation Assessment: Assign your coachee to complete and return the delegation assessment before the scheduled coaching session. Once you have received the completed form, analyze the results. The assessment will help both you and the participant determine which of the six causes for poor delegation impact the participant's skill set.

■ Coaching Methodology for the Various Causes

A lack of understanding of the impact and value of delegation on an organization: Some managers find it difficult to delegate because they lack a full understanding of the positive effects delegation has on employee development and engagement. They often assume the most significant benefit derived from delegation is more free time or less work for the manager.

The coach's job is to evaluate and then further the participants' grasp of the full value of delegation. Help participants understand the benefits they derive as a manager, that employees derive, and that the organization derives.

An appreciation for the benefits of delegation is seldom enough to ensure that coachees master the skill set. There will be other root causes that may prevent them from delegating.

These questions fit well within the **GOAL** step in GROW coaching:

1. What are the benefits of delegation? *[Please rank each facet.]*
2. How does delegation affect business results, employ-

- ee development, efficiency, speed, and engagement?
3. How does delegation impact your company's bottom line, the development of your team, productivity/efficiency, and the speed of decision-making?
4. What's important to you when it comes to delegation?
5. What are the consequences if you don't become an accomplished delegator?
6. What does excellence in delegation look like to you? What does it look like to those around you?
7. How does delegation impact your long-term goals?
8. How does delegation impact your quality of work-life?
9. How does delegation impact engagement and accountability?

Poor delegation/prioritization skills: Some individuals suffer from a lack of knowledge of how to delegate and how to prioritize, and that lack of knowledge is the root cause of their delegation issues.

Review the Performemx® "Mastering Delegation Skills" article and then assign the coachee to read it. Encourage the coachee to take notes and generate questions.

During the coaching session, review the delegation process and determine which of the steps the coachee has the most difficulty with. Next, the coach and the coachee should agree on how to implement a WAY FORWARD. Tell the coachee to be prepared to review progress on the WAY FORWARD at the next session.





Prioritization also plays a significant role in delegation. As we know, for maximum effectiveness, managers must get intricate work done through others. Doing so not only increases productivity, it creates a talented and capable

staff. Even highly challenged leaders commonly delegate the less important tasks that come their way. The challenge is to understand when excellence is necessary and when good enough will allow the team to succeed.

A second prism for prioritization is to understand what is important work versus what is urgent work. Business thinker Stephen Covey popularized Eisenhower’s Decision Principle in his book, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* [1989]. The methodology is in the “Mastering Delegation Skills” article. To apply it to their job, assign the manager to create a matrix and position each task or project to the appropriate quadrant in the Urgent vs. Important matrix. That task should be completed before the next coaching session.

Eisenhower Matrix

Urgent-Important Matrix

	URGENT	NOT URGENT
IMPORTANT	Do 1 	Schedule 2 
NOT IMPORTANT	Delegate 3 	Eliminate 4 

Urgent means that a task requires immediate attention. Urgent tasks are the to-dos that shout “Now!” Urgent tasks put us in a reactive mode, one marked by a defensive, negative, hurried, and narrowly focused mindset.

Important tasks contribute to our long-term mission, values, and goals. Sometimes, important tasks are also urgent, but that is not typical. When we focus on important activities, we operate in a *responsive* mode that enables us to remain calm, rational, and open to new opportunities.

For most people, especially those with a powerful get-it-done attitude, the fixation with completing all urgent issues often prevents them from focusing on important but not urgent matters. Explain the impact of endorphins on getting the box checked “complete” and how that

phenomenon, along with their autopilot behavior, often prevents “doers” from focusing on the urgent but unimportant. The coach should review the important vs. urgent issues they face and fill out the matrix.

The following **GROW OBSTACLE** questions should help the coachee:

1. Which delegation steps will be the most difficult for you to master? Why?
2. What do you find most difficult when you must follow a rigid process like delegation?

The following **GROW OPTION/WAY FORWARD** questions should help the coachee:

1. What steps will you take to master the art of delegation?
2. How will you prioritize and assign work?
3. What cadence or processes will you follow so that delegation is a routine managerial task for you?
4. What steps in the Performemx delegation article do you need to have clarified?

Autopilot behaviors, faulty beliefs, and habits: Coaches should assign the coachee to complete the Autopilot Behaviors, Faulty Beliefs, and Habits Ranking Assessment to rank, in descending order, the following autopilot behaviors, mindsets, or habits that prevent great delegation:

1. I am the best/expert on a subject, function, or process, and only I can do it at a sufficient or perfect level.
2. I have attained my current position by being an expert and by being fully engaged at all times. Delegation means there will be times when I feel out of control and not busy. That makes me feel guilty. I must be working 100 percent of the time, or I am not giving it my all.
3. I really enjoy doing/being the subject matter expert. I do the work myself because I would rather be doing my old job as an individual contributor than managing others.
4. I don’t want my staff members to work as hard as I do. I feel guilty when I ask them to work so hard that it negatively impacts their home lives.

5. It's faster and better to do it myself. I am efficient and an "expert." If I do it myself, it will only take a little more time than if I delegate it. I'll just do it myself and make sure it gets done right.
6. Procrastination works for me! Unbelievably, many people who procrastinate are great individual performers. They ramp up their workload and concentration at the last minute to meet deadlines. Such people often find deadlines drive them to complete tasks. The last-minute approach fuels their concentration and creative processes. By the time they get around to assigning a task or decision, it's often too late—or vastly unfair—to ask their staff to take on the work.

Based upon the order of reasons the coachee chooses, the coach should use the following **GROW GOAL question**:

1. How will your long-term success be affected by not overcoming these beliefs?

OBSTACLE Question:

1. What mindset or beliefs are holding you back from being an excellent delegator?

OPTION Questions:

1. If you are the best/expert, and only you can perform the work at a quality level, what will you do to address that?
2. How will you achieve support to address the poor performers in your unit?
3. How can you develop their skills and behaviors so they will be better in the near future?
4. What techniques can you use to suppress your desire to do the actual work?
5. What approach/actions have you seen being used, or have used yourself, to develop expertise?
6. How will you know what work can be delegated and which tasks and projects you must do yourself?
7. How will you analyze the skills, development needs, and workload of your staff to assign more work?
8. Who on your team should be doing more work, given their position and experience?



9. How will you avoid taking on the work you've delegated when, after reviewing the initial results, the project looks like it will miss the expected deliverables?
10. What is the level of results that would be acceptable or good enough to win?
11. Who might be able to help your team members with the assignment?
12. Would you like another suggestion from me?

Some managers will answer that they feel compelled to be engaged all the time. Many successful people believe that being task oriented and overloaded has been critical to their success. They assume it will always be that way. A senior leader must maintain a longer-term focus to deliver the expected results vital to the individual's, as well as the company's, success. Being more strategic requires reflection and spare time to think through those important but not urgent items that secure long-term success. Without delegation, people tend to stay short-term focused. It may feel great to be fully engaged on pressing matters, but that mindset is a "What got you here won't get you there" belief that needs to be shed.

Stress this fact: You will fail more as a senior manager if you cannot become strategic.



Other managers simply enjoy being the subject matter expert and doing the actual work. For those individuals, these **REALITY questions** are helpful:

1. Is there an intrinsic value you obtain from being the subject matter expert at work?
2. Is your love for the subject or the work so great that it will prevent you from ever being a great leader? *[If the answer is yes, follow-up with this question: Are you in the wrong job?]*
3. Being strategic and longer term requires reflection. How do you feel when you are not crossing things off the list?

OBSTACLE Questions:

1. What drives your desire to do the work yourself?
2. Could doing the work be a way to escape from your role as manager?
3. Make your strongest case for continuing to do the work yourself? What holes are there in your argument?

Some managers will tell you they don't want their staff to work as hard as they do. For those managers, the following **REALITY questions** are helpful:

1. Would you have developed your current skill set if your bosses withheld the most challenging and demanding work from you because they were worried about your workload?
2. How would you have felt knowing that your boss was doing that?

Most people will tell you they wanted the juicy/challenging assignments and credit those assignments with their current success. Coaches should stress that a critical leadership concept skill is setting stretch or high standards of performance. Doing so is the key to "flawless execution" and "full engagement." Share Ric Bruce's quote: "Expecting great things from your people is not mistreating them ... It's the foundation for superior leadership!"

Some managers will tell you, "It's faster and better to do it myself!" For those individuals, these **REALITY questions** are helpful:

1. If you do the difficult/critical work, how will your employees experience the satisfaction of taking on and completing a challenging task and working through their difficulties?
2. How will you grow and develop your people without giving them challenging assignments through more delegation?
3. If you can't develop the ability to delegate, how will you be successful in future leadership roles?

Institutional expectations and culture: Although uncommon, some organizations operate in such a manner that the manager is expected to know everything that is going on in the manager's area of responsibility. Those managers and organizations also tend to limit the decision-making ability of subordinates to low-impact issues.

The coach should challenge all participants who claim this is the case in their organization. In Performex's



experience, many participants use the all-knowing manager as a rationalization for why they don't delegate. We understand that some company cultures may inhibit delegation, but almost all companies value delegation, at least on the surface, and in their stated values. Therefore, it is difficult for any organization to resist attempts to delegate if it's properly positioned with the leadership team.

An effective strategy in such instances is to ask the participant the following **REALITY questions**:

1. Do you feel a desire to be on top of everything to impress your boss and other key senior leaders by always having the answer? If so, how can you quell that desire?
2. When did you last push the envelope to the limit?

Then ask the manager to test if the organization cares if you don't know the answer but you can rapidly find it.

Next, ask the participant the following **OPTION question**:

1. Can you articulate a strategy that keeps you sufficiently apprised of the status and essential issues your managers are facing?

A strategy that works with tightly managed companies is for managers to inform the organization that they have delegated a vital assignment to a report in order to promote the report's development. The managers should then ask for help and support from the impacted parties and senior managers. Managers should invite the report to review meetings to present updates and to answer questions from the senior leadership or steering committee.

Lack of skilled direct reports: Many participants will disclose that their lack of trust, respect, or confidence in the abilities and skills of their direct reports prevents them from delegating. That belief creates a circular argument. For example, a manager cannot delegate to incompetent staff; therefore, the team never receives the on-the-job experience necessary to improve.

While significant deficiencies may exist, the fact is that you, as a coach, do not know if this is true or false.

Use these **REALITY questions** when staff competency is the stated cause for failure to delegate:

1. Why are you willing to manage an incompetent staff?
2. How do your staff members' capabilities impact their preparedness for assignments and their need for assistance?
3. Are you willing to fail or deliver substandard work?

Use these **OPTIONS questions** when staff competency is the stated cause for failure to delegate:

1. How will you use the Performex GROW Coaching Methodology to increase the skills of the people on your team as they take on more challenging assignments?
2. How will you overcome their lack of knowledge, skills, and behaviors?
3. What are you going to do to remedy the situation?
4. How will you coach, teach, and instruct your employees so they can accomplish increasingly complex and challenging tasks?
5. What does "Tell the WHY and the WHAT but assign and delegate the HOW" mean? How can you use this concept to help you delegate more often?

6. What accountability techniques and follow-up skills can you use to ensure the delegated work will be completed on time and to an acceptable quality standard?
7. Is the employee's skill deficiency a matter of will or skill?

The coach should review with the coachee how a person's ability and experience impact what can be delegated. Ask the managers where their reports fall within a four-box will/skill matrix and how much direction and support will be needed for each to obtain a superior result.



Asymmetrical delegating: Some managers delegate tasks but not decisions or delegate only low-impact, unchallenging assignments even to experienced and highly capable employees. We refer to such a tendency as asymmetrical because the manager doesn't use or have the full range of delegation skills. Managers who struggle with such tendencies usually proclaim the things they delegate as proof of their abilities. Those managers fail to recognize that their delegation style is uneven and does not result in the rapid growth of their employees or substantial shifting of their workloads and responsibilities.

The coach's job is to help the participant shift more of the difficult and challenging assignments to their staff rather than merely delegating simple, less demanding work.

Use these **REALITY** questions:

1. When your boss delegates a decision to you, how does it make you feel?

2. Conversely, when you must go to your boss for a decision you are qualified to make, how does it make you feel?

Use these **OPTION** questions:

1. How will you help each of your employees become capable of performing an acceptable level of work and delivering adequate results?
2. What's holding you back from delegating more weighty decisions?
3. Which accountability and follow-up skills do you need to ensure the delegated work gets done on time and to an acceptable quality standard?

To help spur a constructive discussion, the coach should have participants systematically review all their responsibilities and significant projects. Next, review the underlying concepts of Situational Leadership and how a person's ability and experience impact what can be delegated. Ask managers where their direct reports fall within the matrix and how much direction and support will be needed for each to obtain a superior result.

■ Consolidated GROW Delegation Questions

GOAL Questions:

1. What are the benefits of delegation, and how does each facet rank?
2. How does delegation affect business results, employee development, efficiency, speed, and engagement?
3. How does delegation impact your company's bottom line, the development of your team, productivity/efficiency, and the speed of decision-making?
4. What's important to you when it comes to delegation?
5. What are the consequences if you don't become an accomplished delegator?
6. What does excellence look like to you when it comes to delegation? What does it look like to those around you?
7. How does delegation impact your long-term goals?
8. How does delegation impact your quality of work-life?



9. How does delegation impact engagement and accountability?
10. How will your long-term success be affected by not addressing the situation?

REALITY Questions:

1. Is there an intrinsic value you derive from being the subject matter expert at work?
2. Is your love for the subject or the work so great that it will prevent you from ever being a great leader? *[If the answer is yes, follow-up with this question: Are you in the wrong job?]*
3. Being strategic and longer-term requires reflection. How do you feel when you are not crossing things off the list?
4. Would you have developed your current skill set if your bosses withheld the most challenging and demanding work from you because they were worried about your workload? How would you have felt knowing that your boss was doing that?
5. If you do the difficult/critical work, how will your employees experience the satisfaction of taking on and completing challenging tasks and working through their difficulties?
6. How will you grow and develop your people without giving them challenging assignments through more delegation?
7. If you can't develop this ability, how will you be successful in future leadership roles?

8. Do you feel a desire to be on top of everything to impress your boss and other key senior leaders by always having the answer? If so, how can you quell that desire?
9. When did you last push the envelope to the limit?

Then ask the manager to test if the organization cares that you don't know the answer but can rapidly find it.

OBSTACLE Questions:

1. Which delegation steps will be the most difficult for you to master? Why?
2. What do you find most difficult when you must follow a rigid process like delegation?
3. What mindset or beliefs are holding you back from being an excellent delegator?
4. What drives your desire to do the work yourself?
5. Could doing the work be a way to escape from your role as manager?
6. Make your strongest case for continuing to do the work yourself. What holes are there in your argument?
7. What is the biggest challenge for you when it comes to delegation?

OPTION Questions:

1. How will you obtain support to address the poor performers in your unit?
2. How can you develop their skills and behaviors so they will be better in the near future?

3. What strategy can you articulate to keep you sufficiently apprised of the status and issues your managers are facing with their assignments?
4. What's important to you when it comes to delegation?
5. What approach/actions have you seen used, or have you used yourself, to develop expertise?
6. How will you know which work can be delegated and which tasks and projects you must do yourself?
7. How will you analyze the skills, development needs, and workload of your staff to assign more work?
8. Who on your team should be doing more work, given their position and experience?
9. How will you avoid taking over the work you've delegated when, after reviewing the initial results, the project looks like it will miss the expected deliverables?
10. What level of results would be acceptable or good enough to win?
10. What level of results would be acceptable or good enough to win?
11. Who might be able to help your team members with their assignments?
12. Would you like another suggestion from me

WAY FORWARD Questions:

1. What's the best/worst thing about that option?
2. What will you do differently?
3. How will you know you have been successful?
4. Which of the various obstacles will you commit to overcoming?
5. What are three actions you will take this week?
6. How are you going to go about it?
7. What suggestions in the MASTERING DELEGATION article do you think you need to do right now? How you're going to do that?
8. How will you know when you have done it?
9. Is there anything else you can do?
10. On a scale of one to 10, what is the likelihood of your plan succeeding?
11. What would it take to make it a 10?



12. What obstacles do you expect to encounter?
13. What resources can help you?
14. What will one small step you take now?
15. When are you going to start?
16. What support do you need to get that done?
17. What will happen [or, what is the cost] of you NOT doing this?
18. What do you need from me/others to help you achieve this?
19. On a scale of one to 10, how committed/motivated are you to doing it?
20. What would it take to make it a 10?
21. Is there anything missing from your plan?

■ Key Readings

Amy Gallo, "TWhy Aren't You Delegating?" Harvard Business Review, July 26, 2012, <https://hbr.org/2012/07/why-arent-you-delegating>

Michelle Randall, "6 Steps for More Effective Delegating," Gallup, March 6, 2013, <http://www.fastcompany.com/3006643/6-steps-more-effective-delegation>

[This link does not work.] <http://www.time-management-guide.com/delegation-skill.html>