



The Art of Delegation

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THE CONCEPT OF AUTHORITY

- ▶ Authority is a legal power which is possessed by a person from his superior officers and with the help of which he succeeds in getting the things done by his sub-ordinates. Authority is the key to managerial functions. If the managers do not possess required authority, they will not be able to perform their duties properly.

THE CONCEPT OF AUTHORITY

- ▶ Definitions
- ▶ "Authority is the right to give order and the power to exact obedience". – Henri Fayol
- ▶ "Authority is the power to command, to act or not to act in a manner deemed by the possessor of the authority to further enterprise or departmental performance". – Koontz and O'Donnell

FACTORS FOR SUCCESSFUL USE OF AUTHORITY

- 1. Favourable Atmosphere :** For the implementation of authority, favourable atmosphere must be created in the enterprise so that sweet human relations may be established in the enterprise.
- 2. Justified Behaviour :** The second important use for successful implementation of authority is the justified behaviour of the officers towards their subordinates. They must feel and treat all the employees on an equal ground. If they do not do so, the employees may not contribute their efforts towards the attainment of objectives of enterprise.
- 3. Mutual Co-operation and Faith :** There must be mutual cooperation and mutual trust between officers and employees of the enterprise for the successful use of authority.
- 4. Interest in the work :** A very important condition of the successful use of authority is that the employees must have an interest in the work for which they are responsible. If they are not interested in their work, it may be very difficult for the higher officers to implement their authority.
- 5. Respect to Superiors :** There must be an atmosphere in the enterprise in which the employees pay their best regards to their bosses. If they do not have a feeling of regard for them, they may not obey their orders.

SOURCES OF AUTHORITY

Acceptance Theory

This theory states that authority is the power that is accepted by others. Formal authority is reduced to nominal authority if it is not accepted by the subordinates. The subordinates accept the authority if the advantages to be derived by its acceptance exceed the disadvantages resulting from its refusal. The subordinates give obedience to the managers because they visualize the following advantages :

- (a) Receipt of financial incentives.
- (b) Contribution in attaining the objectives of the enterprise.
- (c) Fulfillment of responsibilities.
- (d) Appreciation from colleagues.
- (e) Setting of an example for others.
- (f) Responsibility to leadership of superior
- (g) Moral obligation because of regard for old age, experience, competence, etc

FACTORS FOR SUCCESSFUL USE OF AUTHORITY

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Competence Theory

The supporters of this view assert that an individual derives authority because of his personal qualities and technical competence. Many persons derive informal authority because of their competence. For instance a person possesses expert knowledge in a particular subject. People will go to him for guidance in that matter even though he has got no formal authority.

MEANING OF POWER

Power is a method of operating in order to influence the behaviour of others. It is the power politics within the organization that gives rise to power centres in the organization. The power-centres need not necessarily be located at the position of higher authority. Nobody wants to lose power because power can be used in desirable or undesirable ways.

Power may be defined as "the ability to exert influence. If a person has power it means that he is able to change the attitude of other individuals".

In any organization for sound organizational stability, power and right to do things must be equated, when power and authority for a given person or position are roughly equated, we may call the situations as "Legitimate Power".

Sources of Powers

- (i) Legitimate Power : The power corresponds to the term authority. It exists when an influencer acknowledge that the influencer is lawfully entitled to exert influence. In this the influence has an obligation to accept this power.
- (ii) Reward Power : This power is based on the influencer having the ability to reward the influence for carrying out orders.
- (iii) Corrective Power : It is based on the influencer's ability to punish the influence for not carrying out orders or for not meeting requirements.
- (iv) Referent Power : It is based on the influencer's, desire to identify with or imitate the influence. For example – a manager will have referent power over the subordinates if they are motivated to emulate his work habits.
- (v) Expert Power : This power is based on belief that the influencer has some relevant expertise or special knowledge that the influence does not have. For example a doctor has expert power on his patients.

Difference between 'Authority' and 'Power'

1. Right to Command : Authority is the right to command where as power is the ability or power to command.
2. Right to Exercise : Authority usually resides in the position in the organization, but power is exercised by the person. Authority includes the right to exercise which have been institutionalized.
3. Positional and Legitimate : Authority is always positional and legitimate and is conferred on the position. But power is not institutional, rather it is personal. It is acquired by people in various ways and then exercised upon others. It is acquired through political means or by having certain personal attributes.
4. Authority Increases : It has been observed that authority increases as soon as one goes up in the organizational hierarchy, but it need not necessary be accompanied by more power.

Difference between 'Authority' and 'Power'

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5. Authority Relationships : In practice, authority relationships are modified by power politics in the organization. Some individuals may have more power and less authority or more authority and less power. It is the operating mechanism of the organization which is relevant for studying organizational behaviour.

6. Authority a Downward Concept : Authority is a downward flowing concept; whereas power flows in all directions.

7. Delegation of Authority : Authority can be delegated to the lower levels in the organization. The lower we go down the lesser is the authority.

DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY AND ITS METHODS

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Delegation refers to the assignment of work to others and confer them the requisite authority to accomplish the job assigned.

1. In the words of F.G. Moore – "Delegation means assigning work to others and gives them authority to do it."
2. Louis A. Allen has said – "Delegation is the dynamics of management, it is the process a manager follows in dividing the work assigned to him so that he performs that part which only he, because of his unique organizational placement, can perform effectively and so that he can get others to help him with what remains".

METHODS OF DELEGATION

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1. Administrative Delegation – When a few of the administrative functions are delegated to sub-ordinate staff it is called administrative delegation. These functions are generally of routine nature, e.g. to maintain discipline, to supervise the work, to recommend for the reward or punishment etc.

2. Geographical Delegation – When the work of enterprise is located at different distant places it is not possible for an executive to manage the whole affairs single handed. He then proceeds to delegate his authority to those who are posted at the places where physically he cannot be present round the year. This is known as geographical method of delegating the authority.

METHODS OF DELEGATION

3. Functional Delegation – When the enterprise is organized on the basis of functional organization, the delegation of authority is also done on the functional basis. All the heads are given to manage their departments according to their skill, knowledge and experience of course, they are accountable to the chief executives.

4. Technical Delegation : This method of delegation of authority is based on technical knowledge and skill. Here the authority is delegated in order to get the advantages of expert and experienced hands and their technical skill.

ELEMENTS OF DELEGATION AND ITS TYPES

The elements of delegation of authority involve three steps

1. **Authority** : The superior grants authority to the subordinate to carry out the assigned task or duty. This may include right to use resources, spend money, engage people, etc.
2. **Responsibility** : The superior entrusts some responsibility or duty to a subordinate.
3. **Accountability** : The last step in delegation is concerned with creating an obligation to carry out duty or responsibility and render an account of the results achieved through the use of delegated authority. The subordinate must be held accountable for the exercise of authority granted to him. By accepting the duties and authority, a subordinate becomes responsible to his superior.

TYPES OF DELEGATION

1. General and Specific Delegation :

- (i) **General Delegation** : It is that delegation in which the authority is given to perform general managerial functions, like planning, organizing, directing etc. The sub-ordinate managers perform these functions and enjoy the authority required to carry out these responsibilities. The Chief Executive exercises over all control and guides the subordinates from time-to-time.
- (ii) **The Specific Delegation** : Specific Delegation relates to a particular function or an assigned task. The authority delegated to the production manager for carrying out this function will be a specific delegation. Various departmental managers get specific

TYPES OF DELEGATION

2. Formal or Informal Delegation :

(i) Formal Delegation : Formal delegation has been considered as a part of organizational structure. Whenever a task is assigned to a person, the required authority is also given to him. This delegation is a part of the normal functioning of the organization. Every person is automatically given authority as per his duties. When production manager gets powers to increase production then it is formal delegation of authority.

(ii) Informal Delegation : This delegation does not arise due to position but it arises according to the circumstances of the case. A person may undertake a particular task not because he has been assigned it but because it is necessary to do his normal work.

TYPES OF DELEGATION

3. Written or Unwritten Delegation :

(i) **Written Delegation** : Written delegation is normally given through letters, instructions, circulars etc. Whatever has been delegated it must be in writing.

(ii) **Unwritten Delegation** : Unwritten delegation is given to the person concerned not in any particular way but through conventions, customs and usages the other party has to do work accordingly.

TYPES OF DELEGATION

4. Downward or Upward Delegation

(i) Downwards Delegation : Downwards delegation is a common type of delegation and is used in every type of the working concern. This delegation has been considered as a superior's delegation of authority to his immediate subordinate.

(ii) Upward Delegation : This type of delegation takes place when a subordinate assigns some of his tasks to his superiors. This is an uncommon type of delegation and its instances are very rare.

PRINCIPLES OF DELEGATION

(i) There must be Proper Planning : An executive must plan as to what is to be achieved, if delegation of authority is made. He should define clearly the objectives to be achieved and the functions to be performed by delegating the authority. The job should be designed and divided in such a way as to achieve the objectives. The subordinates must understand clearly what activities they must undertake and what delegator expects from him.

(ii) Select appropriate subordinate of delegation : The subordinate should be selected in the light of the work to be achieved. The qualification of the individual concerned may influence the nature of the delegation of authority. This is the purpose of the managerial function of staffing, most carefully considered.

PRINCIPLES OF DELEGATION

(iii) Maintain purity of authority and responsibility : Authority should be delegated commensurate with responsibility. This is on the assumption that where subordinates are held responsible for performance of certain duties it is fair that they should be vested with the necessary authority to carry out such duties. Although technically it would be inaccurate to stress the questions of equality as the executive does without a certain amount of authority, there must be adequate correlation between duty and authority delegated.

(iv) Ensure unity of command : This is one of the common principles of organization advocated by Henry Fayol which stresses that subordinates should have only one boss to whom he should be accountable, to avoid confusion and friction. Of course, in practice, it is not possible to follow this principle.

PRINCIPLES OF DELEGATION

(v) Maintain adequate communication : There should be free and continuous flow of information between the superior and the subordinate with a view to furnish the subordinate with relevant information to help him make decisions and also to interpret properly the authority delegated to him. Plans may change and decisions have to be taken in the light of the changed conditions.

(vi) Reward effective delegation : Effective delegation and successful assumption of authority must be rewarded. This will provide a proper environmental climate for fuller delegation and effective assumption of authority.

PRINCIPLES OF DELEGATION

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(vii) Establish a climate of confidence : The subordinate to whom authority is delegated must generally feel free from fear and have a feeling of confidence that delegation will not result in punishment but is an opportunity for his own self-development and growth.

(viii) Establish a strong belief in delegation: For delegation to be successful, the man who delegates must himself be convinced of the need and benefits of delegation. He must also be willing to allow his subordinates to make mistakes although he can be strict if the same mistake is repeated.

PRINCIPLES OF DELEGATION

(ix) Proper Selection and Training of Personnel : Selection of personnel to various jobs should be fair and just. It should not be arbitrary but it must be based on certain principles. Only right persons should be placed on the right job. The person selected must also be given proper training to enable him to handle the post efficiently and to perform the assigned job properly. Proper selection and training helps to develop their self-confidence and morale.

(x) Proper Control Techniques be Developed : In a good organization proper control techniques be developed and major deviations from standard should be checked. There should be no interference in dayto-day functioning of subordinates.

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PRINCIPLES OF DELEGATION

- (i) It avoids wastage of time : Present-day management is a complicated process. A manager has to perform various functions as a matter of routine work. It is not possible for him to give proper attention to all matters coming to him. Delegation helps him in transferring the less important subject to his juniors and attends to more important works.
- (ii) It helps in training the new incumbents : The lower units that use the delegated power, get a spontaneous feel of their future responsibility. They become aware of the works at the higher level to which they may be promoted. Delegation also helps in developing the managerial personnel within the organization.
- (iii) It avoids over-work : Delegation shifts some portions of the responsibility and work from the shoulders of the manager. To quote Beach : "The over worked manager who learns the art of delegation, is at one and the same time able to relieve himself of some of his burden, increase the competence of his men, and raise the level of accomplishment of his unit.

PRINCIPLES OF DELEGATION

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(iv) It develops increased sense of responsibility : Delegation generates an increased sense of responsibility in the subordinate personnel. It also increases their working capacity and helps in enhancing their unspotted caliber which could be helpful for management.

Delegation also helps in avoiding any kind of act at a higher level which may, otherwise undermine the powers vested in the lower level units.

(v) It avoids delay : Delegation helps in taking timely and accurate decisions. The personnel at lower level, being delegated, act quickly which serves the organization with due economy, efficiency and rapidly.

DIFFICULTIES IN DELEGATION

there are three types of fears which discourage delegation and thus create difficulties in delegation. They are :

1. Fear of loosing the grip and control over the operations;
2. Fear of not a better performance by the sub-ordinate to whom the authority may be delegated; and
3. Fear of better performance by the subordinate to whom the authority may be delegated.

DIFFICULTIES IN DELEGATION

The above difficulties arise out of –

- (i) Lack of mutual confidence;
- (ii) Non-existence of atmosphere of team-work;
- (iii) Non independence in thinking and behaviour;
- (iv) No proper and ambiguous definition of common goals to be achieved;
- (v) No inter-exchange of ideas and suggestions;
- (vi) No favourable management climate;
- (vii) Existence of element of fear and frustration ; and
- (viii) Incapable hands manning the executive positions.