

# THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



## # 1710 Managers Don't Love "Upward Delegation"

It's called upward delegation and most managers hate it. If you're in the supervisory ranks, it's almost a certainty that you've experienced it, even if you didn't know the process had a name. I'm Jerry Roberts, and I've got the story, coming next on the Extra Point.

If you're in management, my guess is that you've probably got enough to do to fill your day. Your plate is full.

Then, you experience a slice of upward delegation. This is when team members bring their problems to you instead of trying to figure things out for themselves.

This can be displayed in various ways, from minor operational hiccups to more significant project-related concerns. While it's natural for team members to seek guidance when facing difficulties, a pattern of consistently offloading their problems can become detrimental.

Before we get knee-deep into this, I've known managers who secretly liked it when this happened. To them, it gave them another opportunity to prove how much they were needed.

Maybe you've heard me say, that if you do all the thinking for your team, you'll always have to do all the thinking because nobody else will ever grow those skills. That's not a recipe for success.

Too many managers are caught up in this, and the vast majority of them find themselves bogged down by work that should be done by others, leaving less time to focus on strategic decision-making and higher-level problems that truly require their attention.

You're no doubt familiar with the term "putting out fires". This is part of upward delegation. You want people putting out their own fires, and eventually not starting them in the first place.

The manager who can't control this will sooner

or later be beaten down by urgent tasks which overshadow important strategic initiatives.

Guam Training has a course entitled *Time Hero*, and one of the principles we go over is the difference between urgent and important. Until you can deal with that effectively, you'll never be as productive as you should be and can be.

So how can we derail upward delegation, and recapture our time?

1. Set clear expectations about the types of issues that should be escalated to the boss. Everything else is handled at the worker's level. This may be a shock to some workers, and you may have to walk them through solutions step-by-step until they get it.

And what if they don't get it? Go through the process again, until they do. You're drawing a line in the sand, essentially saying that you're not going to deal with this particular issue any longer.

2. Establish a system for how workers can approach you with a problem. The best I've ever used is you can't bring me a problem unless you also bring a possible solution.

I want people to think, and hopefully see if they can fix the issue. If they try and hit a wall, I'm okay with that. I just want to see thinking along with effort.

3. Be patient. If you're stuck in a situation where what I've described is your daily reality, and you want this to change, realize that it will take time to transform your group from upward delegators to self-starting problem-solvers.

That being said, get started now. If you stick with it, in a few weeks you'll almost certainly notice a change.

(Con't.)

Don't be a victim of Upward delegation. Do the things mentioned here to make sure you avoid it.

That's the Extra Point. Be responsible and make something good happen today. For 93.3FM, the Ray Gibson Show, and First Hawaiian Bank, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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