

THE 4 W'S OF DELEGATING TEAM TASKS

*How to stop throwing flowers
and start **passing the baton!***



Sean Glaze

sean@greatresultsteambuilding.com

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Too many busy leaders just start throwing flowers at their team.

Nope, not rewards or praise. The flowers I am referring to are wedding bouquets.

Remember what happened at the last wedding you went to? Sometime after the happy couple said “I do,” the new bride got everyone’s attention. She turned her back on the many interested onlookers and blindly threw a bouquet to a pack of unwed ladies who were obviously in various places on the “interested in catching it” scale.



That is, unfortunately, what too many leaders do every day with delegating tasks.

When delegating team tasks, your job as a leader is to never be that young bride.

Instead, you should seek to be a track star on a relay team –

You should seek to pass a baton to a good runner - so it can cross the finish line in record time and with impressive style.

What do I mean? Glad you asked!

I mean that, by passing a baton, you should identify ONE person to run with and take responsibility for the project or task you are delegating.



And that analogy leads me to the four W's of delegating team tasks:

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1. WHO?

You should delegate a task to a person based on two things:

a. Who is doing well carrying their water?

Whatever role they have, smart leaders give more responsibility to those who are doing a great job with the responsibilities they already have...

Once a team member illustrates that he or she can successfully carry their water, your job is to give them more water to carry...

b. Who needs to learn or improve this skill?

Be sure to reward people with tasks that will encourage them to grow in areas that will benefit them and the organization.

2. WHAT

Be as detailed as possible in this step and share the specific expectations and desired outcomes you want accomplished.

Remember that all failure is the result of vagueness!

Define exactly what success looks like so he/she can succeed.



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3. WHEN

Be specific about deadlines.

Rather than, “When you get a chance,” you should **give the person a definitive date or time** that the project or action must be completed.

A goal is a dream with a date!

Also, be sure to set expectations of when he/she will need to check in and provide updates leading to that definitive deadline so you can assess their progress and offer assistance if needed.

4. WHY

Take the time to explain to the person you have chosen to complete the task exactly why he/she was chosen.

This is a powerful opportunity to share your appreciation for how they have handled previous responsibilities, discuss their value to the organization, and **emphasize the potential you see in them.**

You will also want to help “connect the dots” so the person sees the big picture and understands how the delegated activity contributes to accomplishing your team’s greater goals.



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Sean Glaze is an entertaining speaker, author, and team building facilitator who helps people have more fun laughing together so they can have more success working together.

As the founder of [Great Results Teambuilding](#), Sean has been inspiring rapid teamwork and developing team leaders for over 20 years.

He delivers interactive events and conference keynotes for clients interested in increasing their competitive advantage by building more engaged and connected teams.

