

### Are You Solving the Right Problems?

It is so common when we are trying to get out the door after a long day of problems only to get caught near the door by yet another person with yet another problem. It is so easy to jump in to solve that one more problem. But, is that really the best way to handle the situation? We can so easily get distracted from our real job by all the problems. Our job is to direct others so that they can solve the problems. We need to recognize which details and problems are important and which need to be delegated. We must not get too busy to lead.

Business is full of problems and details. Anyone who has started a business or has rebuilt a department knows that there are lots and lots of details that need

to be handled. However, there are details where you have already solved the major problem and your strengths can be better used elsewhere. Whenever possible, we do best to delegate instead of handling these details ourselves.

Delegating is not simply shifting work from our desk to theirs. Instead it is about moving work that we should not be doing to those who could benefit from doing it. Often, the person will need training, learning, and encouragement to be able to do the work.

Also, we need to watch how we react to problems brought to us. Many times, the wrong problems are brought up first. Many a medical doctor knows that the real problems will come up at the end of the exam and not at the start. In status meetings, problems often are not

brought up until we really dig for them. Likewise, when walking into a new consultation, the client often brings up smaller problems just to see how the consultant will react and only later, bring up the real issues.

One issue with delegating is that often, the hardest thing to do is to let go of something that you have done and where you have feelings about how well it should be done. People who have been in control of everything have a hard time letting anyone else do any of that work.

### Delegate As Much As We Can

Delegating work is a hard action. When we are too busy, it is hard to identify what to delegate. But our job is to move the business forward. Nearly everything else can be delegated or farmed out to those who can spend more time doing

it right.

Any task that is repeatable is one that can be delegated. The first time, often we are figuring out what needs to be done. The next time, we can define the task for someone else to do it.

Our job is to make the business run well enough that we can leave and it doesn't fall apart. That means delegating to people such that they can pick up and run with the tasks. That leaves us to do the very important work of identifying the vision for the business and communicating the direction to take.

When we are leading, then the delegated work is done well enough to move the company forward and we can praise and thank the person for helping.

Let us delegate as much as we can so that we can do the important work.

### How are you hiring?

Over time, businesses have gotten far more selective in hiring and many have dropped their training programs. We hear about the labor shortage, but the normal response to a labor shortage is not happening. In general, businesses are expecting others to do all the training that they used to do. The businesses that are still hiring on attitude and training new employees are still finding workers. When we are hiring properly, there isn't a major labor shortage.

In the early days of this country, many people came over and were placed in apprentice programs. Ben Franklin was apprenticed to his older brother and learned the printing trade from him (and also ran away from him). Many other people came over and ran away. The papers were full of notices of runaway apprentices with rewards for their capture. The rewards for their capture ranged from half a cent for an apprentice who was getting drunk and embezzling money to thirty dollars for a formerly good servant.

Many a business used to run apprenticeship or internship programs but these programs have been dropped and businesses have come to expect that applicants will have all the needed experience and training. These are the very businesses that now complain of a shortage of workers. The labor economics show quite the opposite. The businesses that have training programs and invest in labor rarely have labor shortages.

A number of successful companies are always in the hiring mode and will hire the right person even if they don't have a job for the person right away.

So, how are you hiring?

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### Risky World

A study of Scandinavian auto accidents has found that people with 4-wheel drive have more accidents on snow and ice than those without it. It turns out that we get a sense of mastery because of the 4-wheel drive and forget that it doesn't help with stopping (and some turns). The risk is that we think that we are invincible because of some technology and aren't.

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