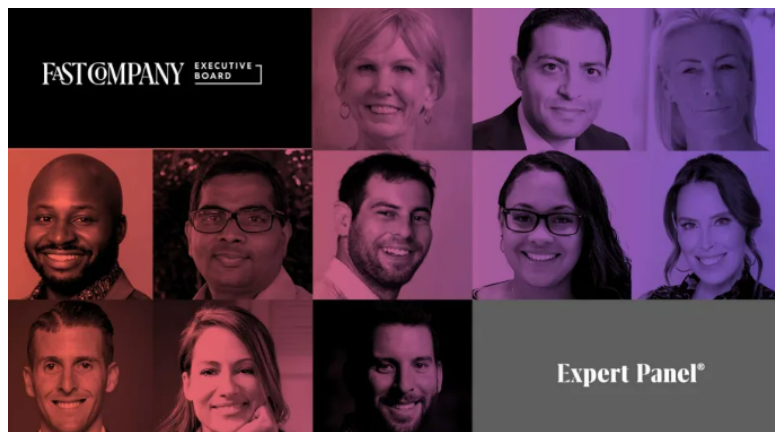


# FAST COMPANY

## 11 tips to help leaders avoid over-delegation

Create clear expectations and communication so your team will succeed.

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To avoid burnout in the workplace, it's essential for every leader to learn how to delegate their workload before they begin to feel overwhelmed and off-balanced. However, it takes some time to assess who you can really trust to meet the same expectations and execute your goal.

But once you find your sweet spot of handing assignments over to the staff members with enough bandwidth, sometimes the problem is relying on others way too much. It's not always a good practice to let go of too much, too soon. If you are having issues with over-delegation, here is what 11 experts from Fast Company Executive Board have to say about what they've learned about the error of assuming that everything is being taken care of when the leader is away or focused on other tasks.

### 1. CONTINUE TO CHECK IN WITH DIRECT REPORTS

Over-delegation can lead to a team perception of the leader not being actively engaged with their team. Teams tend to respect leaders who are willing to roll up their sleeves and drive their own projects and results. Over-delegation can also lead to less preparation, vision

setting, and check-ins to ensure the success of the person responsible for the deliverable. – [Peggy Anderson, Shutterfly](#)

## **2. WEIGH IN ON WHETHER TO DELEGATE OR ABDICATE A PENDING TASK**

Figuring out if the task needs to be delegated or abdicated is a better way to figure out if you are over-delegating. Maybe that task should be totally abdicated to another person or group. You must ensure that the tasks delegated are still on your radar in some capacity as you might be ultimately responsible for the outcomes of those deliverables. – [Walid Al-Hajj, Technium Consulting Inc.](#)

## **3. COMMUNICATE WITH TRANSPARENCY AND TRUST**

It's all about communication, transparency, and trust. Delegation is an excellent development tool, but it must be strategically executed. Know your team, their skill sets, and their bandwidth and make sure they understand the vision and overarching goals at the onset. If you take the time to build a solid foundation, they'll have the tools to tackle pivots and snags on their own along the way. – [Anna Bager, Out of Home Advertising Association of America, Inc.](#)

## **4. SHOW APPRECIATION AND PROVIDE FEEDBACK**

Over-delegation can lead to leaders losing touch with the human component of the business. Delegation is a wonderful strategy when used properly, but leaders often forget the level of effort task completion takes, leading to their teams burning out or feeling undervalued and overleveraged. To avoid over-delegation, leaders must implement feedback channels and adjust as needed. – [Jevon Wooden, Live Not Loathe](#)

## **5. QUESTION YOUR UNIQUE PERSPECTIVE**

It is important for leaders to ask themselves before delegating: Can I add any unique perspective to this question? Can I connect the dots across different products or teams to help? If the answer is yes, it is good to add those perspectives and decide how or who to delegate. You should also assess if this is a good area to learn from before delegating—this is useful when taking over a new area. – [Gangadhar Konduri, Medallia](#)

## **6. DETERMINE THE TIME COST**

There are two situations where it's an obvious mistake to over-delegate: When you don't know how to measure success and when a task is non-translatable with the time cost of delegation outweighing handling it yourself. – [Bobby Steinbach, MeanPug Digital](#)

## **7. FIND OPPORTUNITIES TO ELEVATE YOUR TEAM MEMBERS**

One key lesson is to avoid burnout. A better way to approach delegation is through strengths-based leadership. Instead of simply delegating, look for opportunities to delegate tasks that are going to also elevate your team members. When possible, have the insight to delegate intentionally based on their strengths and celebrate your team members when they excel. Keep two-way communication channels open and pivot as needed. – [Cynamon Scott, DuploCloud](#)

## **8. STAY IN THE LOOP**

While it is tempting and often helpful to delegate due to bandwidth constraints, I've found that the further removed a leader gets from the day-to-day operations, the greater the risk of disconnection—from clients, team members, and important information. At that point, you risk becoming a figurehead instead of a leader. Be careful to find that sweet spot! – [Nicole Marra, Fixer Advisory](#)

## **9. DELEGATE EXECUTION RATHER THAN VISION**

Top performers tend to struggle with delegation, but it's a necessary tradeoff for growth. On the flip side, over-delegation can be even more harmful to a business. The most important lesson for leaders is to not delegate vision. Instead, the focus should be on delegating execution that can be entrusted to the team and then tracked with the proper oversight and high-level strategy. – [Josh Jacobs, Speakeasy Co.](#)

## **10. DELEGATE IN SMALL INCREMENTS TO GAUGE EMPLOYEE TRUSTWORTHINESS**

When I first started, I delegated a lot of work to someone who, it turned out, was trying to start her own business. I had known her for years before I hired her and assumed I could trust her. It taught me that you can never assume that someone is trustworthy before you delegate to them; it's much better to test their trustworthiness incrementally before delegating entire projects to them. – [Anna David, Legacy Launch Pad](#)

## 11. BALANCE DELEGATION AND OWNERSHIP OF TASKS

Over-delegation leads to a lack of accountability, ownership, and initiative. It also leads to a breakdown in communication and trust. Leaders need to maintain a balance between delegation and ownership of tasks and ensure team members have a clear understanding of their roles. Taking these measures into account will lead to successful team collaboration and elevate the way your business operates. – [Yonathan Lapchik](#), [Suku](#)