



STARBUCK ACADEMY

Manager skills

Manager Skills: Delegating Well

Choosing what to hand over, briefing it clearly, and growing your team as you do it

Five short video lessons, one practical tool for each. About 2.5 learning hours in total, including your workplace tasks.

Name

Date

STARBUCK & ASSOCIATES

COACHING & LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

How to use this workbook

This workbook goes alongside the five video lessons in Manager Skills: Delegating Well. Each lesson gives you one idea to think about and one practical tool to use on real work in your team.

Watch a lesson, read its page here, answer the reflection questions, then use the tool during the week that follows. The course takes about 2.5 learning hours in total, including the workplace tasks. It works best spread over five weeks, so each handover has time to happen before you move on.

By the end of the course you will be able to

- Recognise what you are holding on to, and why
- Decide what to delegate, and to whom, with the Delegation Matrix
- Brief a task around outcome, standard, deadline, authority and support
- Stay involved through planned check-ins without taking the work back
- Use delegation to develop people over time

Programme map

LESSON	TITLE	YOUR TOOL
1	Why managers hold on to work	The Holding On Audit
2	Choosing what to delegate and to whom	The Delegation Matrix
3	Handing work over well	The Handover Briefing Sheet
4	Supporting without taking it back	The Check-in Plan
5	Growing people through delegation	The Delegation Development Plan

WORTH KNOWING

This course is about tasks and handovers: the everyday work you pass to others. If you want to look at who makes which decisions in your team, the free Empowering Others workbook is a good companion.

Why managers hold on to work

Most managers know they could delegate more. What stops them is rarely laziness or a lack of trust. It is usually one of three quiet pulls: speed, standards and control.

Key ideas

- **Speed:** doing it yourself is quicker the first time, but you pay that time again every week.
- **Standards:** much of what we call standards is really preference. Ask whether a different approach would actually be wrong.
- **Control:** holding on feels safe, but it makes you the bottleneck and teaches the team to wait for you.
- **The cost:** less time for the real work of managing, fewer chances for your team to grow, and nobody who can cover when you are away.
- **Delegating** is a core part of a manager's job, not offloading. It starts with noticing what you keep, and why.

EXAMPLE

Dan leads a project team and still writes every client update himself because "it is quicker". Each one takes forty minutes, every week. Showing Aisha how would take two sessions, and would give Dan back most of an afternoon each month.

Reflect

Which of the three pulls, speed, standards or control, do I recognise most in myself?

What would I do with an extra two hours a week if I handed more work over?

YOUR WORKPLACE TASK THIS WEEK

Complete the Holding On Audit on the next page. Use your diary and inbox from last week, list the tasks someone else could have done, and be honest about why you kept each one.

TOOL 1

The Holding On Audit

Look back over last week, not a typical week. List tasks you did that someone else in your team could have done, now or with a little help. Then name the real reason you kept each one.

REASON	WHAT IT SOUNDS LIKE	QUESTION TO ASK YOURSELF
Speed	It is quicker if I just do it.	How many times will I do this again this year?
Standards	They will not do it the way I would.	Would it be wrong, or just different?
Control	I like to know exactly where things are.	What would I need to feel comfortable letting go?

Your audit

TASK I DID LAST WEEK	WHO ELSE COULD DO IT?	WHY I KEPT IT	TIME IT TOOK

EXAMPLE

Priya leads a small finance team. Her audit shows she spent three hours building the monthly budget report, which Tom could learn in two sessions. Her honest reason is standards: she worries about the formatting.

Her next step is to write down what good looks like for the report, so the standard lives on paper rather than in her head.

Looking at my list, which task would free up the most time if someone else did it well?

Choosing what to delegate and to whom

Not every task should be handed over, and not every person is right for every task. Good delegation starts with a deliberate choice about both.

Key ideas

- A small amount of work genuinely belongs to the manager, such as performance conversations, confidential matters and setting direction.
- Ask two questions of every other task: how much does this really need me, and how much could someone learn from it?
- The Delegation Matrix turns those two questions into four choices: keep for now, grow someone, hand over now, or free up time.
- Match each task to a person by their current skill, their interest and their capacity. Ask rather than assume.
- Share stretch work fairly. Handing down only the jobs you dislike is dumping, not delegating.

EXAMPLE

Before handing anything over, Nadia asks her team who wants to build which skills. Two people mention presenting. It changes her choices: the monthly update goes to one of them, with support, rather than to the person who would do it fastest.

Reflect

Who in my team tends to get the interesting work, and who rarely does?

Who has said they want to learn something new, and what could I hand them that would help?

YOUR WORKPLACE TASK THIS WEEK

Place the tasks from your Holding On Audit on the Delegation Matrix. Choose two tasks to hand over and name the person for each.

TOOL 2

The Delegation Matrix

Take each task from your audit and ask the two questions. Write it in the box where it fits best.

	SOMEONE WOULD LEARN LITTLE	SOMEONE WOULD LEARN A LOT
Really needs me	Keep for now. Review it again in three months.	Grow someone. Hand it over with a thorough briefing and close support.
Does not need me	Free up time. Hand it over, or ask whether it needs doing at all.	Hand over now. A good first step for someone building confidence.

Your matrix

	SOMEONE WOULD LEARN LITTLE	SOMEONE WOULD LEARN A LOT
Really needs me		
Does not need me		

Choose two tasks and the right person

TASK	PERSON	THEIR SKILL, INTEREST AND CAPACITY	WHY THEM?

EXAMPLE

Marcus manages a busy customer team. Updating the weekly rota does not need him and teaches little, so it goes to Leah to free up his Monday mornings. Presenting the quarterly service review needs him now, but would stretch Sam, who has said she wants more visibility. It goes in the grow box, with support.

Handing work over well

The handover conversation is where delegation usually succeeds or fails. A good one covers five things: the outcome, the standard, the deadline, the authority the person has and the support they can expect.

Key ideas

- Start with the outcome: what the task is for, who it matters to and what done looks like.
- Agree the standard and the deadline out loud. What seems obvious to you may not be obvious to them.
- Name the level of authority, from look into it and report back to own it completely.
- Match the support to the person's experience with the task.
- Ask them to play back how they will approach it, rather than asking whether it makes sense.

EXAMPLE

Chris asks Ella to "sort out the team away day". Ella books a venue, then finds Chris expected her to recommend options first. Nobody was careless. The level of authority was simply never said.

Reflect

Think of a handover that went wrong. Which of the five areas was missing?

Which level of authority do I usually give by default, and is it the right one?

YOUR WORKPLACE TASK THIS WEEK

Hand over one of the tasks you chose, using the Handover Briefing Sheet. Agree the level of authority and ask the person to play it back before they start.

The Handover Briefing Sheet

Fill this in before the conversation, then use it to guide what you say. Share a copy afterwards so you both have the same picture.

Five levels of authority

LEVEL	WHAT YOU SAY
1	Look into it and report back to me.
2	Recommend what to do, and I will decide.
3	Decide, but check with me before you act.
4	Act, and tell me what you did afterwards.
5	Own it completely. No need to report back unless something changes.

Your briefing

WHAT I WILL SAY	
Outcome and purpose	
Standard	
Deadline	
Authority level	
Support on offer	

Check it has landed

What will I ask them to play back?

What did I hear that I need to clarify?

Supporting without taking it back

Once work is handed over, the aim is to stay close enough to help, without hovering, and without quietly taking it back when things get difficult.

Key ideas

- Agree the timing and focus of check-ins at the handover, and put the dates in the diary together.
- In a check-in, be curious. Let the person lead and ask what they need from you.
- When a problem comes back, resist saying leave it with me. Ask for their options and let them keep the next step.
- When work goes off track, ask about the aim, what has happened, the options and the next step before offering your view.
- If you must step in, explain why, keep the person involved and talk it through afterwards without blame.

EXAMPLE

Jo hands a supplier review to Ben. Two days before the deadline, the client asks for it early. Jo explains why she needs to step in, keeps Ben on the call with the client, and afterwards they talk through what would have helped sooner.

Reflect

When did I last take a task back, and what was really going on for me?

How would the person I delegate to describe my check-ins?

YOUR WORKPLACE TASK THIS WEEK

Complete the Check-in Plan for the task you handed over. Agree the dates with the person, hold the first check-in, and use the coaching questions if anything is off track.

TOOL 4

The Check-in Plan

Plan your check-ins with the person, not for them. Fewer, planned conversations usually beat frequent drop-ins.

	DATE	WHAT WE WILL LOOK AT	HOW LONG
Check-in 1			
Check-in 2			
Final review			

Coaching questions when it goes off track

FOCUS	QUESTIONS TO ASK
Aim	What were we trying to achieve? Has anything changed?
What has happened	Where are things now? What has got in the way?
Options	What could you do next? What else? What would you advise someone else to do?
Next step	Which option will you take? By when? What do you need from me?

These questions follow the shape of the GROW model, popularised by Sir John Whitmore. Ask them before you offer your own view.

EXAMPLE

Leah brings Marcus a problem: two people want the same week off and the rota will not work. Marcus is about to say leave it with me. Instead he asks what options she can see. Leah suggests two, picks one, and agrees to tell him how it went at Friday's check-in.

Growing people through delegation

Delegation is one of the most practical ways to develop people. Used deliberately, it builds skill and confidence one step at a time, and it keeps improving your own practice as a manager.

Key ideas

- Raise the level of authority step by step, in a plan you agree together.
- Take ten minutes after each task to review it: what went well, what to do differently, what was learned.
- Make delegated work visible. Let people present it and give them the credit.
- Reflect on your own delegating: the briefing, the level of freedom and when you stepped in.
- Make it a habit with a simple monthly look at your audit and your plans.

EXAMPLE

After Sam presents the service review for the first time, Marcus spends ten minutes asking what went well and what she would change. He also names one thing he would do differently in how he briefed her.

Reflect

What have I learned about myself as a delegator during this course?

Which one habit will I keep going after the course ends?

YOUR WORKPLACE TASK THIS WEEK

Sit down with one person in your team and complete the Delegation Development Plan together. Agree what you will hand over in the next three months, and when you will review progress.

TOOL 5

The Delegation Development Plan

Complete this with the person, not about them. Use the five levels of authority from Tool 3 to show how their freedom will grow.

TASK	LEVEL NOW	LEVEL IN 3 MONTHS	SUPPORT THEY NEED	REVIEW DATE

EXAMPLE

Sam starts presenting the quarterly service review at level 2: she prepares the slides and recommends the key messages, and Marcus decides. By the next quarter she moves to level 4, presenting it herself and briefing Marcus afterwards.

Reviewing a finished task together

What went well, and what would you do differently next time?

What did you learn, and what would you like to take on next?

Your own review as a delegator

AFTER THIS HANDOVER	NOT YET	PARTLY	MOSTLY	FULLY
My briefing was clear	☐	☐	☐	☐
The level of authority was right	☐	☐	☐	☐
I stepped in only when needed	☐	☐	☐	☐
They got the credit	☐	☐	☐	☐

FINISH

What I am going to do

Two or three small changes that you actually make will do more than a long list you never start.

My three actions

WHAT I WILL DO	WHEN	WHO I WILL TELL

Coming back to this

Put a date in your diary about a month from now and answer these three questions.

What has changed since I did this workbook?

What did I not get to, and what got in the way?

What am I carrying forward?

KEEP GOING

Manager Skills: Delegating Well

Return to the video lessons and knowledge checks whenever you want a refresher, and use these tools each time you hand work over.

£49 per person, one-off, inc. VAT

Your course home: academy.starbuckassociates.com/courses/manager-skills-delegation

Part of the Starbuck Academy free resources from Starbuck & Associates. If you would like support using this across a team or a leadership programme, we would be glad to help. This workbook is general learning and development material, not professional advice. © 2026 Starbuck & Associates Limited.