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others to exercise leadership capabilities. In essence, the entire group knows where it is headed and they assist each other in making the crucial flight.

Throughout the book, Belasco and Stayer offer usable advice in how to turn organizations around and to enable them to function more efficiently. They speak to the necessity of instilling ownership of the organization in their workers. The worker must realize that they are a valuable member of the flock and that they are headed in the right direction as they take flight.

The book addresses the vision of the organization and the power that is generated in sharing this power with all employees. Admittedly, the revamping of an organization takes time, energy and a tremendous amount of education. There will be the need to ensure commitment. Also, the authors realize that obstacles will be present and that they will have to be removed to make any real progress.

The reader will find the other illustrations and parodies presented in this book to be helpful and enlightening. The credibility of the book is enhanced by the collaboration of the two authors' backgrounds. Both have extensive histories of business experience as well as educational backgrounds that help them to convey this vital information.

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University of Arkansas System
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**Criminal Justice Institute
Dr. Lee Colwell, Director
University of Arkansas System
7723 Asher Avenue, Suite B
Little Rock, Arkansas 72204**

**SWITCHBOARD
(501) 570-8000
TOLL FREE
(800) 635-6310
<http://www.cji.net>**

*Information compiled and assembled by
Mr. Mike Mashburn, CJI Law Enforcement
Management Specialist.*

The *Criminal Justice Institute* provides management and supervision, forensic science, and computer education and training, as well as research services and technical assistance to Arkansas' law enforcement and criminal justice community.

This quarterly newsletter is designed to provide current, timely and useful information to improve the management, leadership and performance skills of supervisors.

*Your comments and suggestions
are solicited and welcomed.*

***You are encouraged to
make copies of this
publication and
distribute them to others
in your agency.***

The Lost Art of Delegation

One of the most difficult tasks for supervisors in law enforcement agencies is learning to divide up the work among employees they supervise. The major difficulty in doing this is often due to those personal qualities that got them promoted in the first place—job knowledge, competency, personal performance, initiative, motivation and a good collection of personal skills. Those qualities might lead new supervisors to believe they can and should do all the important work in the unit themselves.

These qualities may have made the supervisor successful in the past, but they can become a heavy burden if they are misapplied in the supervisory role. In your new job there is too much to accomplish for one person to do and you must back away from tasks that can be accomplished by subordinates. We do this through the process of delegation.

Delegation

The American Heritage College Dictionary, Third Edition, offers a definition of the word delegate, "To commit or entrust (a task or power) to another". An elaboration often offered is "The assignment of one or more meaningful tasks or responsibilities, either operational or managerial in nature, to a subordinate or subordinates". Obviously, delegation entails giving up the power and authority to accomplish a given task while hanging onto some of the responsibility surrounding the task.

It is also obvious that this giving up

of certain levels of authority, while retaining responsibility for the task creates very meaningful psychological worries for the delegator. There are risks involved and there is great potential for things to go wrong. For this reason, it is very important that the process of delegation is applied with a great deal of thought involved.

What to Delegate

To answer this crucial question, the law enforcement leader must dissect the reasoning behind the delegation. What are you trying to accomplish? In essence the leader, manager or supervisor has two overall responsibilities. One is to get the job done; the other is to cultivate individuals working for and with you to the point where they need little or no direct supervision.

A good starting point in the delegation process is to defer decisions you make most frequently. Minor decisions and repetitive routines often consume a major portion of the day. Most if not all of these can be delegated by teaching employees the policies and procedures that apply.

Logical tasks to be delegated are functions in your technical or functional specialty. These are usually operating tasks rather than management functions. This will be essential in that others may have to step in and fill your void if you are not in command due to vacation, sick leave or other extended absences.

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An obvious need for delegation is those tasks and projects for which you are least qualified. It is almost certain that some of your employees are better qualified and can do parts of the job better than you can—let them.

While it sounds onerous, you can delegate functions you dislike. Performing functions we dislike is often distasteful and we put them off or do them poorly. Examine the likes and dislikes of your staff as well as their talents. You will nearly always find someone who likes the job and can do it well. If they need training, provide it.

An excellent reason for delegation is providing work that will provide experience for employees. These types of delegation make growth in the present job reality and helps keep employees challenged and motivated.

Delegation can provide assignments that will add variety to routine work. A change of pace is usually welcomed and is often a good motivator for an employee whose job is growing dull.

Abraham Maslow knew the need for the individual to aspire to their greatest potential. For this reason, proper delegation provides activities that will make a position more complete. As employees become more proficient, they often have time to spare. Add complimentary duties and responsibilities to give their positions more substance.

The forward-thinking law enforcement administrator will see the necessity of providing tasks that will increase the number of people who can perform critical assignments. This will maximize the strength of your squad by giving people the needed experience to back one another up during emergencies or periods of unusually heavy workload.

Ultimately, by delegation you hope to provide your co-workers with opportunities to use and reinforce their

creative talents. Stimulate employees with difficult problems and projects, then reward creative solutions.

Getting Results

Once you have committed to take a chance and embark on delegation, there are certain steps and recommendations that you can follow. They will ensure that you are obtaining the most effective and efficient use of your delegation skills.

First and foremost you must establish and use broad controls. The effective delegator must maintain control without stifling the subordinate; delegate then trust.

Unfortunately you must let others make mistakes. In law enforcement there are certain instances where mistakes cannot be allowed so you must be cautious about what you are delegating and how much room, if any, there is for small mistakes that lead to learning. Continual checking to eliminate all mistakes will make delegation impossible.

The effective leader must communicate clearly. It is often stated, "If you cannot communicate, you cannot supervise". Give the employee the clearest picture you can of the assignment, the results expected, time limits involved, the authority being transferred to the employee and the frequency and methods of reporting back to you.

You as the delegator must specify authority in terms of scope and range. To be effective, there must be an absolute transfer of power within agreed upon parameters. Limits may have to be set to avoid the zealous worker overextending him or herself.

The law enforcement supervisor will have to encourage subordinate participation. The employee's satisfaction with the job he/she is given and their motivation to perform it well are highly

correlated to the degree to which they believe they have an influence in determining what is expected of them. Your allowing them to participate may catch them off guard!

An important tenet is to review results, not methods. An effective delegator must be willing to accept differing solutions for achieving results. The important aspect is whether or not the task is performed, all within policy and regulations.

Any effective leader and supervisor must show trust. Obviously this trust must be earned. The only way for your workers to earn trust is by demonstrating their abilities in a constructive manner.

You must seek recommendations. This must be facilitated by the use of feedback. Again, there may be other perspectives by which the problem or task can be viewed. You certainly won't know if you don't solicit information.

Be certain to delegate credit, not blame. The boss can and must delegate credit, but he/she cannot delegate blame. Blame can and must be established, but only between the boss and the employee.

An effective supervisor must be a coach and a counselor. They must give support. Workers will be uncertain when first taking on additional responsibilities. An encouraging word might pay big dividends.

Leaders must always be consistent. Subordinates and coworkers must be able to predict your behavior and reaction. It is tough to deliver service to a superior when one is unsure as to their concerns.

It is an understatement to advise that you must know your people. You have to know their likes and dislikes, their hopes and aspirations and their level of ability. Otherwise it will be very frustrating in determining what and whom you will delegate and to.

Ability levels will only increase and flourish if you develop your people. They must be given the proper education and training that is requisite for the performance of the tasks delegated. Frustration will only occur if the task is delegated without regard for readiness levels.

Encouraging Growth

As stated earlier, the job must be done. But, equally important is the development of the coworker to the point that he or she needs little or no direct supervision. Deep psychological fears will have to be overcome in order to

accomplish this. In delegation, you are giving up essential elements of your position.

In essence, you are preparing qualified subordinates to the point of replacing you. Employee goals include future promotion and the delegation process helps them attain the growth toward that goal. Hopefully, you are preparing them to replace you when you yourself move up the chain of command.

Unfortunately, you may be preparing a qualified subordinate to assume another position outside your jurisdiction. While frustrating, you can not intentionally hold back an individual out of fear that they will leave your patrol

shift to enter the criminal investigation division. If your division cannot meet their needs, they probably won't perform to their optimum level for you anyway.

Most frustrating of all, you may prepare a qualified subordinate for a position in a competing organization. Again, if your agency is not competitive in terms of benefits, working conditions or whatever, it serves no purpose to hold individuals back. The most that any law enforcement supervisor can hope for is that they provide an environment that will be attractive for a capable worker to remain in.

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BOOK REVIEW

By: Mike Mashburn

Flight of the Buffalo: Soaring to Excellence, Learning to Let Employees Lead, (1993), by James A. Belasco and Ralph C. Stayer, Warner Books, Inc., New York, NY.

James Belasco and Ralph Stayer teamed up to write this book thus combining many years of experience, insight and passion. Their combination of academia and practitioner based knowledge produces a readable work that advises organizations of the changes necessary in their leadership practices that will allow them to survive the coming decades. Law enforcement leaders and middle managers have been hearing for years that the traditional autocratic paramilitary structure of their agencies is outmoded. This book offers insight in ways of abandoning the old traditions and embracing the new open communication forms of organization.

Belasco and Stayer's approach is previewed early in the book by providing a comparison between herds of buffalo and gaggles of geese. The symbolism impresses upon the reader that significant differences exist between these animal groups, just as there are vast differences between leadership styles in certain organizations.

A hasty reader may conclude that an organization similar to a herd of buffalo might be a good solid organization. The buffalo is a powerful creature and surely a large group of them would be powerful indeed. The buffalo herd, however, is dependent upon a strong central leader. The dominant bull in a herd of buffalo owes its power to the many loyal followers that make up the rest of the herd.

Anyone familiar with this type of organization realizes that little gets done by the loyal followers until the leader dictates what needs to get done. There may even be a lot of "standing around" until the leader gives directions. Also, if the leader is neutralized, the rest of the herd wanders around with no sense of direction of their own. Besides this, being the absolute leader takes an enormous amount of time.

The flock of geese exhibits a more favorable form of organization. A flock of geese is made up of numerous independent members, all responsible to the general aim of the group. More importantly, they are capable of shifting roles when needed. They take their turn leading the "V" formation and fall back into the group when tired allowing

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