



SILVER ROSE
CHANGE YOUR FOCUS; ENGAGE YOUR TEAM

Socratic Delegation? Whaaaattttt....?

Do you know how each of your team members thinks about and approaches his/her work?

Do you have an in-depth understanding of each staff member's capabilities?

Do you know how to empower your team?



One of your most important roles as a Leader is to understand the core competencies and capacity of your team.

If you are a Star Trek fan, you are familiar with the Vulcan Mind-Meld a touch technique that allows a Vulcan (Mr. Spock) to merge his or her mind with the essence of another's mind.

As a leader within your organization, it would be useful for you to be able to do your own mind-meld. The more you are aware of how your team members think—how they plan to carry out the tasks and projects you assign them—the more impact you can have on the results achieved.

A quick and effective way to achieve this is through the process of delegation using the Socratic method. I call it **Socratic Delegation**.

When you delegate using the time worn "command and control" method, it does little to increase your understanding of what your team is thinking and capable of doing nor does it increase their ability to think for themselves or problem-solve.

One of our readers, Dean, responding to a blog I'd written on this topic put it best:

"Awesome! What a timely reminder for me not to over-manage. I'm constantly railing about how people learn by doing—not by being told or reading. Yet I continue to leap into problems because (my ego) knows how to fix it. I can't teach empowerment to marionettes."

When you utilize Socratic Delegation, you begin to develop your knowledge of each team member's thought processes when it comes to work and achieving results.

What exactly is Socratic Delegation? Here is the process:

Socratic Delegation 101

Step #1 – Identify the task or project

Step #2 – Clearly identify the measurable result or outcome. (By the way, this is often the culprit of problems. If you don't clearly define how to measure success, how is your employee to know?)

Step #3 – **Meet with the employee or team** to whom you are delegating and have the following conversation:

- “Here is the end result I am looking for _____ and here is the date I need it _____.”
- “Would you walk me through how you think it should be done?” (Or “how we should approach it?”)
- Listen and *only* listen until the end. Take notes.
 - If you identify a problem and interrupt to mention it, you may also interrupt the employee’s thought process.
 - It could be that the employee will, while talking the task through, identify the very problem you noticed and correct it.

Step # 4 – **Fine tune**

- If, while the employee was outlining his plan you noticed any potential concerns, bring them up. Use questions:
 - How will you get to that point?
 - Where are those resources coming from?
 - Help me understand...
 - What tools are you planning to use?
 - What obstacles might stand in the way of getting this done on time?
 - Etc.
- This fine-tuning process is your opportunity to coach the employee and develop his skill level.
- It’s also an opportunity for you to learn some approaches you hadn’t thought of yourself.
- It allows you the perfect reason to acknowledge the team or employee for their critical thinking.

As you lead your team be certain that YOU are clear about Steps 1 and 2. Each step is crucial to achieving success.

Whether you are a C-Suite executive or line manager, **your role as a leader is to produce results through people.**

Delegation is a core competency and something that, once you master it, will make you one of the few rather than one of the many. Start with Socratic Delegation as outlined above and hone it to fit your team culture—and watch as results increase and mistakes decrease.

As always I appreciate all feedback you provide. Send me your comments and stories. You and I are working together to change the work world. Your input is part of *my* Socratic Method.

*Silver Rose is an Employee Engagement Thought Leader who provides organizations with strategies for: (1) re-energizing employees; (2) increasing **profitability**; and (3) **freeing leadership** from the necessity of micro-managing results.*

**For information on having Silver work with your company on re-energizing your employees
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