CORE RESPONSIBILITIES

Chapter 6
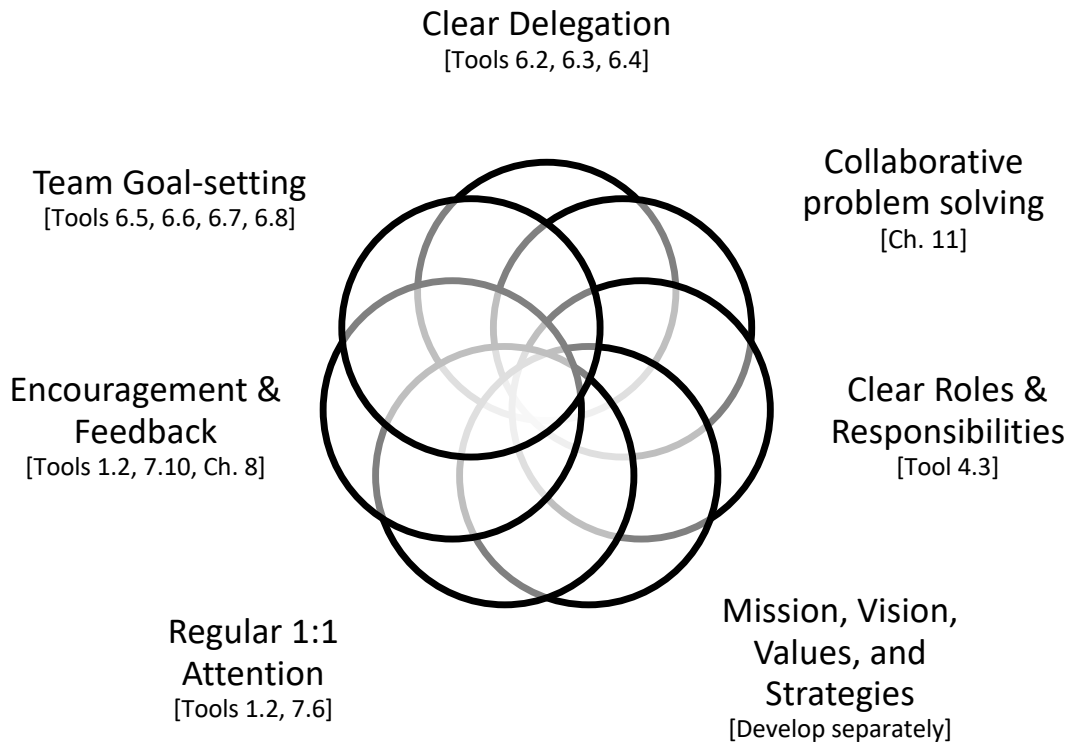
FOSTERING ACCOUNTABILITY

> **The conductor doesn't make a sound. The power comes from his ability to make other people powerful, to awaken possibility in other people.**
>
> *Ben Zander*
> *Conductor and Speaker*

6.1　Management Practices Fostering Accountability

ABOUT THIS TOOL—As shown in the diagram below, employee accountability stems from the intersection of a variety of distinct management practices. Delegation and team goal-setting, the twin focus of this chapter, are essential habits at which managers must excel. At the same time, these critical practices operate within the context of the quality of daily interactions, clear roles, and compelling strategies.

APPLICATION—Use the list below to identify those practices you wish to hone further, and then make a plan to do so.

Clear Delegation
[Tools 6.2, 6.3, 6.4]

Team Goal-setting
[Tools 6.5, 6.6, 6.7, 6.8]

Collaborative
problem solving
[Ch. 11]

Encouragement &
Feedback
[Tools 1.2, 7.10, Ch. 8]

Clear Roles &
Responsibilities
[Tool 4.3]

Regular 1:1
Attention
[Tools 1.2, 7.6]

Mission, Vision,
Values, and
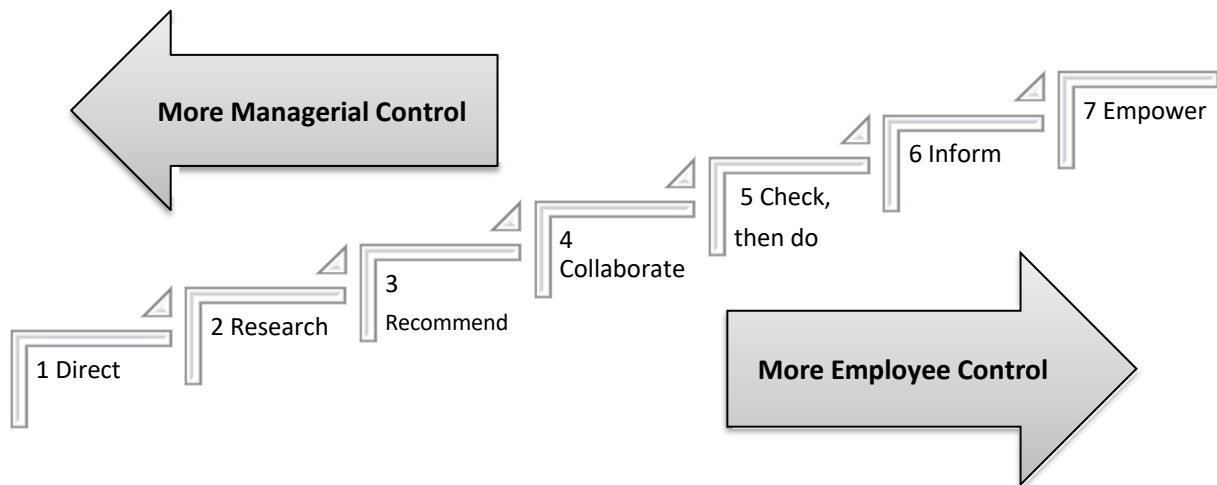Strategies
[Develop separately]

Source: Developed by the author

6.2   Many Ways to Delegate

ABOUT THIS TOOL—Effective delegation distributes workload, taps the talent on your team, and can play a central role in developing employees. At the same time, there is no consistently right level of authority to delegate. It depends on the experience and track record of the employee and the urgency, complexity, and impact of the assignment.

Each of the seven levels of the delegation continuum is appropriate given the circumstances. I find myself most often using levels 2 to 5, with level 4 the most common—that is, collaborating with the employee in exploring various options based on research the employee has completed.

APPLICATION—As you flesh out the assignment to be delegated, consider its complexity, its urgency, employee capabilities, and how you want to be involved in decisions along the way.

More Managerial Control

7 Empower

6 Inform

5 Check, then do

4 Collaborate

3 Recommend

2 Research

1 Direct

More Employee Control

1. The manager *directs* the employee exactly what to do; employee asks clarifying questions but has little latitude in executing the manager's direction

2. Employee *researches* issue; manager decides what to do

3. Employee researches an issue and makes a *recommendation* on the best course of action; manager decides what to do

4. Employee and manager *collaborate* in exploring options and developing a solution to an issue

5. Employee decides on the best course of action, but *checks* with the manager for the go-ahead before implementing it

6. Employee implements the decision, but keeps the manager *informe*d along the way

7. Employee is fully *empowered* to manage the issue as they see fit and are fully accountable for the results

Source: Adapted from Robert Tannebaum and Warren Schmidt, "How to Choose a Leadership Pattern," *Harvard Business Review,* (May 1973)

6.3   Delegation Worksheet

ABOUT THIS TOOL—You can use the worksheet as is, as a guide in writing the assignment to be delegated, or as an agenda for meeting with the employee to discuss the work you want them to do.

APPLICATION—Use this worksheet to guide you through the steps needed to delegate effectively.

Tell the employee…

DELIVERABLE—The result you want

DEADLINE—When you want it

PURPOSE—What this assignment is meant to accomplish and how it will be used

PRIORITY—The urgency of the task and how it fits with other priorities

CHECK-IN—How frequently you want to be updated

AUTHORITY—How far the employee can go on their own [Tool 6.2]

Ask the employee…

- How confident they are in completing the task *ON TIME*

- Competing *PRIORITIES* they may have

- What *RESOURCES* they need to accomplish the assignment

Source: Adapted from Val Williams, *Get the Best Out of Your People and Yourself*, (Edison, NJ: Shadowbrook, 2002), 11-20

6.4   Delegation Worksheet Example

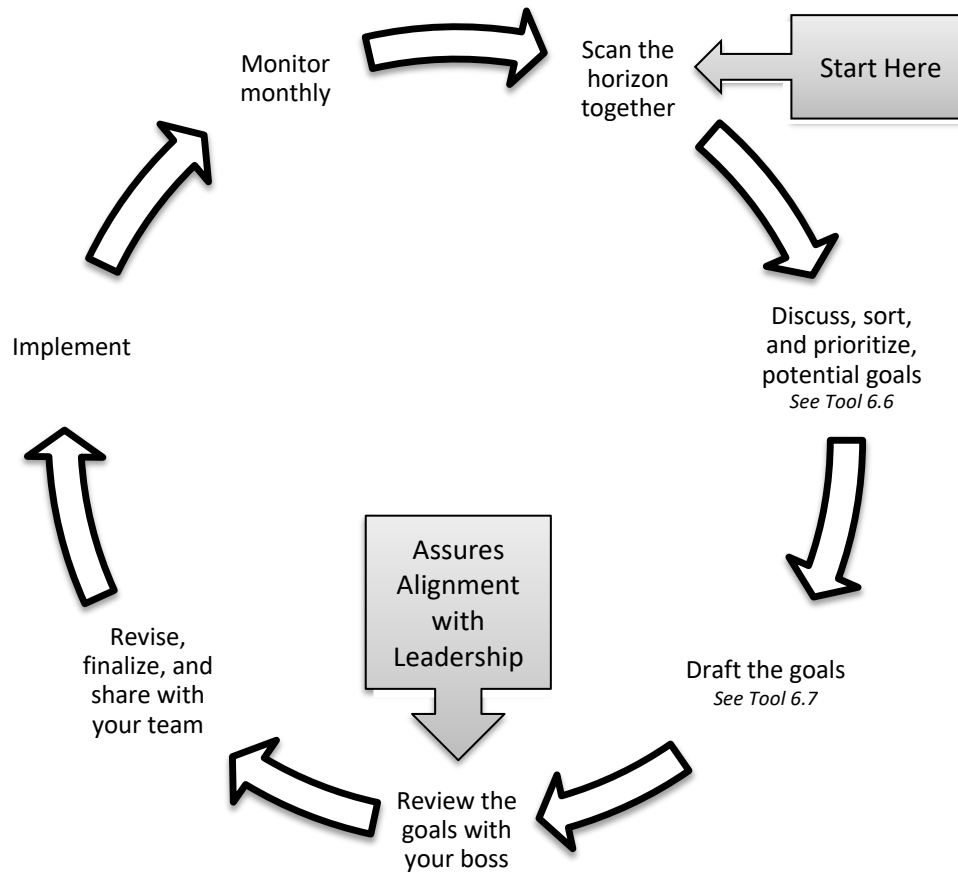| |
|---|
| ***Tell the employee…*** |
| **DELIVERABLE:** The result you want

Interview hiring managers and prepare a report with recommendations on how HR can better support their success in the selection process. |
| **DEADLINE:** When you want it

Draft report by July 31 |
| **PURPOSE:** What this assignment is meant to accomplish and how it will be used

Hiring talented employees is central to the success of our organization. How we support hiring managers in finding, interviewing, and selecting talented employees is one of the main ways we in HR can contribute to our organization's future. Improving our hiring processes is critical to the organization and to our credibility and value as HR. |
| **PRIORITY**—The urgency of the task and how it fits with other priorities

Redesigning our hiring process is a top department priority this year. The information you collect will provide critical input into that effort. |
| **CHECK-IN:** How frequently you want to be updated

Show me the interview questions before scheduling meetings with the hiring the managers. |
| **AUTHORITY:** How far the employee can go on their own

I'll decide on next steps based on your recommendations. [Level 3 on the delegation continuum—Tool 6.2] |
| ***Ask the employee…*** |
| • How confident they are in completing the task *ON TIME*

• What competing *PRIORITIES* they may have

• What *RESOURCES* they need |

<div align="right">Source: Developed by the author</div>

6.5   Quarterly Team Goal-Setting Routine

ABOUT THIS TOOL— Teams that set clear, vivid goals together achieve more. Focusing team efforts leverages employee time, talent, and energy in alignment with leadership priorities. Doing so answers the question, "What does the organization get for investing in your team?"

APPLICATION—Begin regular goal-setting by reviewing these steps with your team.

First, sort your team's accountabilities into logical categories, or buckets, of linked activities. Now you're ready to do quarterly goal-setting.

Monitor monthly

Scan the horizon together

Start Here

Discuss, sort, and prioritize, potential goals
See Tool 6.6

Implement

Assures Alignment with Leadership

Draft the goals
See Tool 6.7

Revise, finalize, and share with your team

Review the goals with your boss
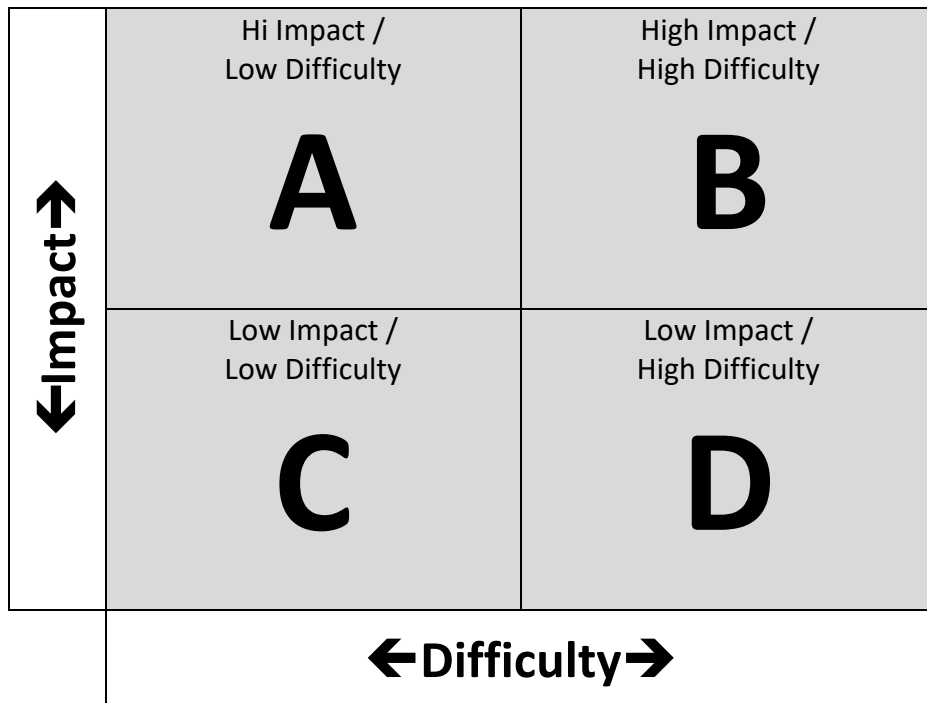
Source: Developed by the author

6.6   Prioritization Grid

ABOUT THIS TOOL—One way to evaluate potential goals is to sort them by the impact they will have and the difficulty in achieving that impact.

Impact—The difference achieving the goal will have for your team's stakeholders.

Difficulty—The relative effort needed to realize the impact given its complexity, resource implications, historical context, and anticipated obstacles.

APPLICATION—Assign a letter to each of your potential goals. A's and B's should predominate. If most of your goals are B's—that is, high impact but very difficult to achieve—reassess!

	←Impact→	Hi Impact / Low Difficulty **A**	High Impact / High Difficulty **B**

←**Impact**→

Hi Impact / Low Difficulty	High Impact / High Difficulty
A	**B**
Low Impact / Low Difficulty	Low Impact / High Difficulty
C	**D**

←**Difficulty**→

6.7   Simple Goal Format

ABOUT THIS TOOL—Concise, concrete, and clearly written goals enhance the probability they will be achieved.

APPLICATION—Follow this format in writing your goals. Always start with an action verb.

Hire an analyst by June 15 to fill a vacancy.

What will you do?   *By when?*   *Why?*
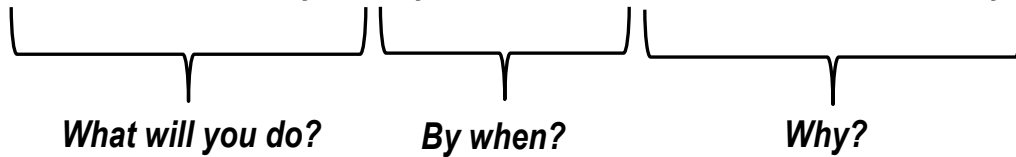
Source: Developed by the author

6.8   Example of Team Goals

ABOUT THIS TOOL—This is an abbreviated example of quarterly goals of a human resources team. The names in brackets indicate the staff person principally accountable for achieving that goal, though others may contribute. Where two or more names appear, the first person listed is the lead. [Names are fictitious.]

APPLICATION—Adapt this format to meet your team's needs.

Staffing	Compensation	Professional Development
RECRUITMENT PROCESS IMPROVEMENTS—By the end of the quarter, implement the list of improvements in the workflow of the hiring process so that the time of hiring managers is maximized and the success of selection processes enhanced. [Diane, Paul] **NEW EMPLOYEE ORIENTATION**—Finalize and then announce by November 1 the refreshed approach to online orientation of new employees, enabling them to have a quality orientation experience regardless of workplace location. [Diane]	**POSITION REVIEWS**—Complete the analysis of the accounting job family and submit for position review to assure market competitiveness of these key financial positions. Due: November 15. [Prashant]	**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**—Meet with leadership by October 31 to obtain their endorsement for a new professional development program so that the workforce has clear guidance and support for their continuous professional growth. [Paul]
Management Development	**Performance Management**	**Organization Development**
MANAGEMENT EXCELLENCE—Complete a report by December 1 of participant experience in the basic management excellence program with the aim of updating and strengthening program content. [Paul, Molly]	**PERFORMANCE REVIEWS**—Convene a task force of managers and employees by November 1 to identify ways to strengthen and make more efficient the annual performance review process. [Jane, Diane, Prashant]	**CLIMATE SURVEY—**Meet with leadership twice this quarter to assess their readiness to take action on the anticipated results of the proposed climate survey. The readiness assessment will determine whether we will proceed with the survey. [Molly]

Source: Developed by the author