

# The Art of Delegation

**...be more productive and get your life back!**

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# The Art of Delegation

## What is it?

Simply put, its about finding someone outside of your self or your business to complete some work for you – either on a one-off or an ongoing basis.

## Why would you do it?

- ➔ To increase your capacity
- ➔ Enable business growth
- ➔ Improve productivity and efficiency
- ➔ Improve your workload or work life balance
- ➔ Play to strengths by having specialists work on the things they are good at

## Who can you delegate or outsource to?

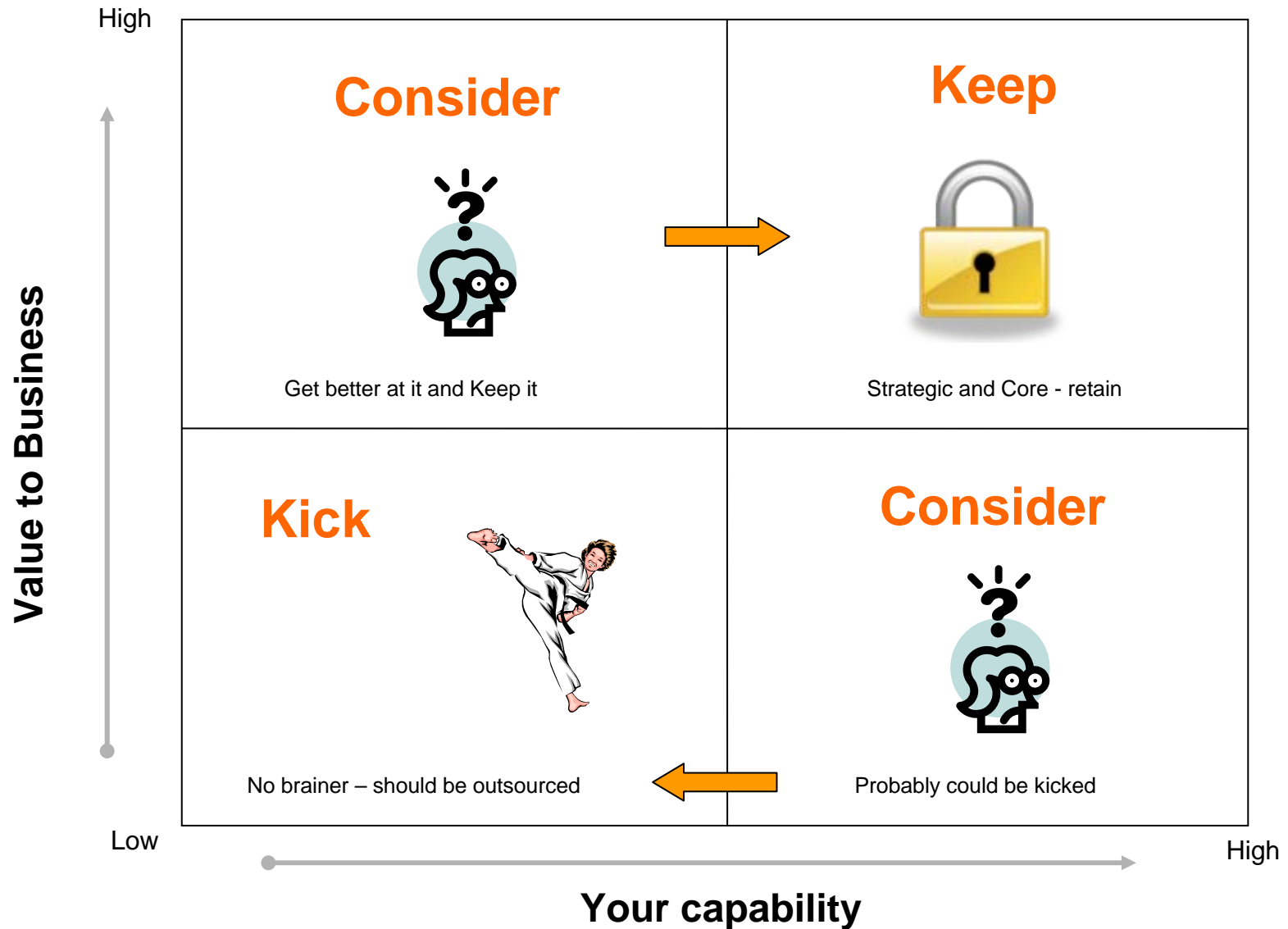
- ➔ Other individuals
- ➔ Companies
- ➔ Technology

## Choosing Activities to Outsource/Delegate

You should hold on to operations that define the core of your business mission. For example, if you want to be known as the leading provider of Customer Service, you should hang on to this function, and only outsource what is non-strategic for your business.

To analyse what range of activities you could outsource, use the assessment matrix on the following page. You can play with the axes – for example instead of Your Capability on the bottom, another useful dimension is Complexity

# Assessment Matrix



# Steps to Successfully Delegating Work

## 1. Choosing a Provider - Do your homework. Your checklist of things to research

- ➔ Quality of work – do they have a guarantee of service or any kind of quality assurance? Can you check past work?
- ➔ References – talk to other customers about quality, service, timeliness and communication. They should be ok with providing you some names.
- ➔ Skill Match – how well does their expertise really match what you need?
- ➔ Capacity – what is their current volume of work and their capacity to service your needs? How scalable are they?
- ➔ Cost/Investment – have to weigh up based on all factors. As usual, cheapest is not always the best
- ➔ Communication – what options do they have for communicating with you? How easy will it be for you to stay in touch (phone, email, chat, web etc)

## 2. Preparation - Write a detailed brief

- ➔ What do you want done – and the more detail the better
- ➔ What outcomes are you specifically looking for
- ➔ What do they need to do in a certain way, and where do they have some latitude?
- ➔ What authority levels does the person have in making decisions, spending money and so on

## 3. Monitoring Progress - You don't want to find out the day before the work is due that it's not right or what you expected. Avoid this by scheduling regular checkpoints at the start. If it's feasible, you should agree expectations on how much work will be completed by each checkpoint.

During a checkpoint meeting:

- ➔ Review and discuss progress - give feedback and encouragement
- ➔ Identify anything you want done differently
- ➔ Ask if there are any problems or obstacles and how you can help
- ➔ Go over expectations of work to be done by the next checkpoint
- ➔ Document your discussion and send it to them

## Steps to Successfully Delegating Work

**4. Conduct a final debrief** - This final session is even more important if you are considering a long term relationship. It should include:

- ➔ 2 way discussion about how the task went
- ➔ More feedback from you about your satisfaction with the output, their process etc
- ➔ They provide feedback to you on how you were as a delegator and what you could do differently next time
- ➔ Discuss a way forwards if the relationship is ongoing

## What kinds of work are commonly considered?

Generally, self contained tasks or activities are more suited than projects requiring lots of team work or brainstorming. These more involved activities have added complexity, and are harder to manage to tight outcomes (although not impossible).

- ➔ Payroll
- ➔ Bookkeeping, including invoicing and bill paying
- ➔ Other finance and accounting work
- ➔ IT support
- ➔ Graphic design
- ➔ Web design
- ➔ Business planning
- ➔ Recruitment
- ➔ Legal services
- ➔ Presentations
- ➔ Marketing strategy
- ➔ PR
- ➔ Sales
- ➔ Copywriting
- ➔ General admin using a virtual assistant
- ➔ E-commerce
- ➔ Answering phones

## Finding Resources

The internet and your network are your best sources of information on potential providers. Referrals from people you know give a level of comfort. Some tips about where to start looking:

- ➔ Industry association websites (e.g. – Graphic Design Industry Assn – [www.agda.com.au](http://www.agda.com.au))
- ➔ Google search – “Find a xxxx”
- ➔ Online portals like [www.elance.com](http://www.elance.com) or [www.ebay.com](http://www.ebay.com)
- ➔ Email your business and/or personal networks – ask who can refer someone to you

## Final Tips

- ➔ Watch out for hidden costs, like time spent training and management of the outsourced activity
- ➔ Start small – begin with a small self-contained project. Test your partner before committing to more significant effort
- ➔ Be prepared for challenges – it takes time on both sides to build effective relationships that you have confidence with. Invest the time in building trust.
- ➔ Don't be afraid to review your decision to delegate or outsource. You should always ask yourself the question about whether it's the right move for you or not.
- ➔ Define Success – be very clear about how you will define a “successful delivery” or outcome
- ➔ Delegating activity doesn't mean delegating accountability. That stays with you.