MODULE OVERVIEW

Building an autonomous team: A six-step delegation plan

Adaptive module | ~20 min

Delegation looks simple—hand over, trust, follow up—yet it breaks down at every step, most often because no one has shown how to do it. This module walks through a six-step plan, from identifying what can be delegated to follow-up that doesn't take back control, with the team member as co-author of their growing autonomy. It also brings in the newcomer: the AI assistant, which changes what gets delegated, and to whom.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

01 Map what can be delegated, distinguishing what should go to a team member and what should go to AI.

02 Offer the assignment to the team rather than assign it, then choose by ability, workload, and development value.

03 Co-design the framework and a step-by-step timeline toward autonomy, noting the limits of delegation.

04 Make delegation visible, transfer resources, then follow up without taking back control at the first mistake.

WHO IT'S FOR

Managers who want to help their team become more autonomous and free themselves for what only they can do.

- **Prerequisite:** none

HOW THE MODULE WORKS

Self-paced, with practice tailored to each learner.

1 **Self-assessment**: on 9 dimensions, to gauge current habits and guide the practice.

2 **Expert video**: 10 minutes, with 3 pauses for reflection.

3 **Practice scenarios**: the first 2 chosen from the self-assessment, then 16 optional ones. Every answer gets feedback: what it leads to, and one way to improve.

4 **Dated commitment**: one action to try, written by the learner or picked from the suggestions.

5 **Memo to download**: key takeaways, questions, commitment, personal notes and checklists.

ASSESSMENT AND COMPLETION

Pass mark: 80%

The score takes into account your answers to the practice scenarios, your commitment and, where relevant, any additional learning activities. Passing requires a commitment and a score of at least 80%.

METHODS & MODELS

- Empowerment (handing over the means to act) – inspired by Conger & Kanungo (1988)
- Participatory delegation – Afthonios approach
- Differentiated delegation (person or AI assistant) – Afthonios contribution

SOURCES & REFERENCES

- Klarna – teams trained to delegate part of their work to an AI assistant, then human agents brought back for complex cases after the company scaled back its AI-only approach (2024–2025)
- Buurtzorg – Dutch model of autonomous nursing teams, capped at 12 people, who set their own schedules
- Decathlon – "sports leader" role with local autonomy over the product range, the team, and sales initiatives
- Jurgen Appelo, Management 3.0 – Delegation Poker and clarifying autonomy

Module created by Afthonios.com.

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