

## Do One Thing: The 1-3-1 Problem Delegation Leadership Tool

If you are like most leaders, you are probably in constant problem solving mode. And it's a fair guess that you're pretty good at it.

As important as your superior problem solving ability is, you may feel that you are doing little else than solving problems all day. Perhaps you are at the point where it is beginning to feel overwhelming and, well, frankly exhausting, at times.

I encounter this issue frequently when coaching senior leaders during their business transformations. At times of significant change this situation becomes especially acute.

If this sounds like your situation (or close), there is something you can do about it.

First, change your perspective slightly.

It is very likely that most of the problems that you are being asked to solve relate to an area of your business under someone else's direct accountability. For example, you may have someone in charge of production, but that person is asking you to solve one of their supply chain problems.

You need to shift your perspective to see that those accountable for an area of the business should also be accountable for solving problems in their area.

Second, understand why you have not changed this pattern of behaviour yet yourself. You may actually be loath to let go of wanting to solve all of the problems that people bring to you.

Having everyone treat you as the great, wise oracle can feel very flattering and affirming. You may not be consciously aware of the personal satisfaction you are getting from this.

Another reason may be the fear of missing out on something critical if people don't come to you with every problem. You may feel the additional burden of solving more day-to-day problems warrants avoiding the risk of missing something really important.

So here is what you can do. **Implement: the 1-3-1 rule for delegating problems right away.**

For each (1) problem someone brings to you, insist that they must also come up with three (3) possible solution options, and a (1) recommendation: **1 Problem – 3 Options – 1 Recommendation**. The sooner you do this, the more quickly you'll see benefits.

The 1-3-1 Rule puts the accountability for finding solutions in the hands of those who 'own' a particular area of your business; you still get the personal satisfaction of being consulted, but this time on decisions; and, you won't miss out on anything since people will still come to you with problems (only now they have to do the hard work of thinking through possible solutions).

Give it a try for one month. Let us know how it works out for you.

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