Tool

CEO delegation check

This quick tool can be used when assigning new work, planning projects, or during regular one-to-one meetings with staff.
It helps ensure that delegation builds capability rather than simply transferring tasks.

1. Clarify the outcome

Before delegating, ask:

- ☐ What outcome am I expecting?
- ☐ Why is this work important for the organisation?
- ☐ How does it connect to our strategy or priorities?

Discuss the outcome clearly with the staff member.

2. Match the opportunity to the person

Consider:

- ☐ Who would benefit from leading this piece of work?
- ☐ What capability could this help them develop?
- ☐ Does this support future leadership or succession planning?

Delegation should stretch people without overwhelming them.

3. Define authority and boundaries

Agree on:

- ☐ What decisions can the staff member make independently
- ☐ When should they check in with you
- ☐ What risks or sensitivities to be aware of

Clarity here prevents unnecessary escalation or hesitation.

4. Build it into regular meetings

Use existing meetings to support delegated work.

Institute of Community Directors Australia
(This is member-only content; use but please don't distribute)

For example, during one-to-one meetings ask:

- What progress has been made since we last spoke?
- What obstacles are emerging?
- What support do you need from me?

Keep these conversations focused on coaching rather than control.

5. Encourage ownership

Where possible:

- Ask the staff member to propose solutions rather than waiting for direction
- Invite them to present updates or outcomes to the leadership team or board
- Recognise their leadership publicly

This builds confidence and visibility.

6. Reflect and learn

After the work is completed, discuss:

- What worked well?
- What would we do differently next time?
- What capability has been developed?

This turns delegation into a leadership development opportunity.

Practical prompt for CEOs

At the start of each quarter or workplan cycle, ask:

- What responsibilities could I delegate to develop my team?
- Who needs a stretch opportunity this quarter?
- What work am I holding onto that someone else could lead?

Small, consistent delegation decisions over time are what build strong future leaders.