

The 5 Levels of Delegation

A practical tool to build team capacity and reduce overload

Leaders in professional services often stay too hands-on because their careers were built on doing the work themselves.

However, this limits team growth and overloads the leader.

Delegation is the answer.

It works best when expectations are clear about how much initiative someone should take.

Coaching questions

Use these prompts, and the 5 Levels of Delegation ladder when supporting leaders who struggle to let go:

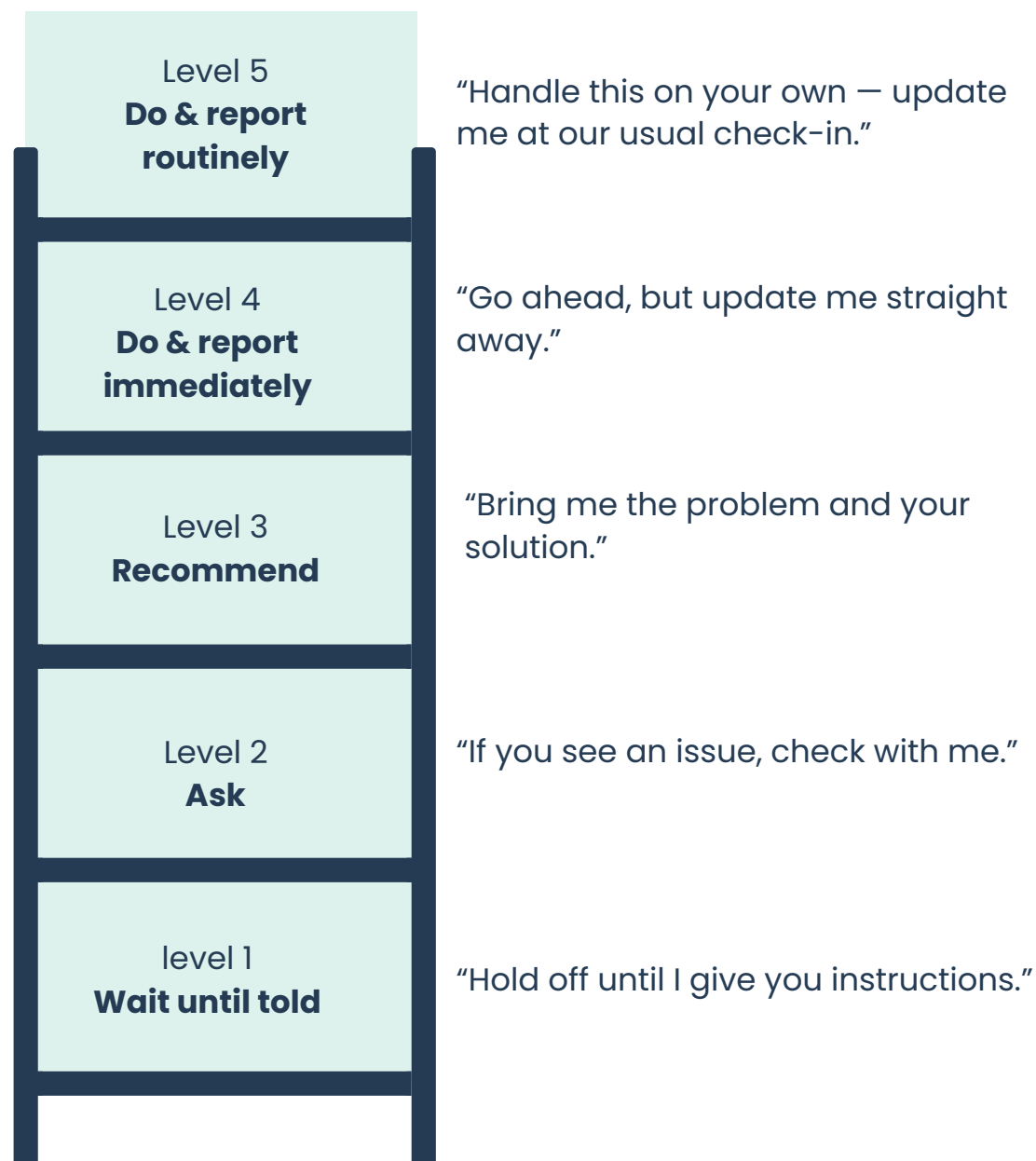
- Which tasks do you still hold on to, even when others could help?
- What's the risk if someone else takes this on — and what's the upside?
- Do you make it clear what initiative you expect when delegating?
- How could you move one task up a level of initiative this month?
- What would more effective delegation free you up to do?

The 5 Levels of Delegation

Every task you hand over involves this choice:

How much initiative do you want the other person to take?

The 5 Levels of Delegation give leaders a simple language to set expectations, reduce misunderstandings, and build trust step by step.



Adapted from Stephen Covey's 5 Levels of Initiative (The 7 Habits, 1990)