

# The Delegation Decision Matrix

AKA "THE COVEY TIME MANAGEMENT MATRIX" OR "THE EISENHOWER MATRIX"

Smart delegation is key to growing your business. Similarly, countless businesses fail to scale or are run into the ground because their leaders fail to delegate or delegate poorly. As with many of the skills you will develop in your business career, there is no substitute for practice and experience. If you're looking for an immediate edge in the delegation game, practice using this simple tool as you further hone your skills as a delegator. Best of luck to you.

– KEN COLWELL PhD., MBA

	URGENT	NOT URGENT
IMPORTANT	Quadrant I: Urgent & Important  <b>DO</b>	Quadrant II: Not Urgent & Important  <b>PLAN</b>
NOT IMPORTANT	Quadrant III: Urgent & Not Important  <b>DELEGATE</b>	Quadrant IV: Not Urgent & Not Important  <b>ELIMINATE</b>

The Covey Time Management Matrix, based on the eponymous Eisenhower Decision Matrix, is normally thought of as a model for personal time management, but it can also be an effective guide to not only when to delegate, but how to manage team members working on different kinds of tasks. Starting at the lower left, tasks that are urgent and not important can be safely delegated and forgotten about. Even if they're not done, or not done correctly, they're not important anyway, so who cares? Moving up a quadrant are tasks that are important and urgent. This is the leader's trap—because they are important and need to be done yesterday, the instinct is to jump in and work on them. However, if you do this to the detriment of tasks in the next quadrant, you are creating a rudderless ship, and we all know what happens to those. Resist the temptation and delegate these tasks as much as possible, but because they are important, you need to stay involved. Effective management of these tasks involves coaching and mentoring. The environment should be supportive but clear guidelines and KPIs are necessary. Moving one quadrant to the right we find tasks that are important, but not urgent. This is the area where effective leaders should spend most of their time. These are often strategic, planning, or relationship building activities that the leader should either do themselves, or at least know about. Team members who are also working on such tasks should be treated collegially in a very open, non-judgmental environment. Finally, tasks that are neither urgent nor important can usually be ignored. The question is why they are tasks at all. You may need to review processes and procedures to figure out where these items reside and eliminate them.