



**Too many  
balls in the air?**

**Why leaders shouldn't  
have to juggle them all**

**You shouldn't have to (and very likely  
can't) do it all as a leader**

**As a leader or manager, you're used to having many balls in the air – people management, financial management, time management. But there comes a point where too many balls really is too much, and it's your teams and workforces who suffer.**

If you're handling a lot, you need a slick prioritisation system to ensure things don't get lost in the clamour of reactive must-dos, urgent emails and workforce crises. Not many people can get this right without some pretty heavy-duty support.

And if you add managing a remote project (that's task one, with many moving parts), on top of managing a full workforce (that's task two, also with many moving parts), on top of managing that workforce's transport (task three), accommodation (task four), and catering (task five) – those balls you had up in the air? They're going to start dropping fast.

Projects that are long term require focus and coordination, and if your attention is diverted too often, you lose sight of the bigger picture and worse, your workforce loses sight of it too. And if your ability to coordinate wanes under mounting checklists and multiple Service Providers, it means missed accommodation invoices, incorrect transport timing schedules and dietary concessions still awaiting approval as your workforce takes their seat at the dinner table.

This is where outsourcing can alleviate some palpable pressure. You don't need to handle everything, and delegating responsibility to an experienced professional or organisation can help hone your focus and tie up loose ends on the coordination front.

But, most leaders struggle with delegation and experience something called 'the leadership paradox' according to the Executive Women's Forum. Put simply, it means leaders struggle to be less involved (and share responsibility) because their rise to the top has been characterised by being involved, solving challenges across departments, taking the reins regardless of circumstance.

If this sounds like you, your 'I can do it all' attitude may be to your team and business's detriment if authors Jeffrey Pfeffer and Charles O'Reilly are right. In their book *Hidden Value: How Great Companies Achieve Extraordinary Results with Ordinary People* they claim that "delegating more responsibility for decision making increases productivity, morale, and commitment, all of which impact company culture." That isn't just one reason to start delegating, it's several.

If you're used to juggling all those balls and can feel the reluctance to delegate taking hold, then you need to start with a smaller project first. Establishing a firm 'delegation structure' is another important step. Are you most comfortable with a weekly or monthly check in, both with your outsource partner and workforce? Do you want to set weekly or bi-weekly milestones that need to be hit? You outline the checklist and set the benchmarks to help ease you into the delegation driver's seat. And then? You let people get on with it. If you feel compelled to micro-manage remember this from businessman and author Donald Hatter: your job is to focus on the outcomes, not the activity; it's to manage expectations, not tasks.

Remember that if your focus is frayed, your emotions are likely to be high and predominantly negative, which compromises on your ability to lead your team towards the finish line. Emotions have a big influence on decisions-making as well as interpersonal relationships. The success of your projects rely on your ability to manage and motivate teams – think about this when you hesitate on the delegation front.

But you also need to consider if you're hesitating to delegate because of something bigger. Some leaders feel they need to hold on with a vice-like grip as new technologies, processes, remote work and economic seesawing disrupt what they were used to and create even more role and skills uncertainty (for them and their teams).

If this is how you're feeling then, number one, you're not alone: Global research into how managers are currently fairing points to frustration, exhaustion and overwhelm as traditional managerial roles become murkier over time. And number two? There is hope in removing some of this anxiety by:

1. Speaking to CEOs, CFOs, COOs and more, and having frank conversations around resourcing, upskilling, and project and task prioritisation. Understanding the longer-term trajectory of the organisation (a one-year plan, five-year plan etc) can also help illuminate priorities and allow you to effectively delegate. This might seem obvious, but as Lewis Carroll said: "If you don't know where you are going, any road will get you there." And that won't help you delegate or take the pressure off your shoulders.
2. Reinforcing your capabilities and putting the right support structures in place for both you and your team through an experienced outsourced partner. Now this may not be the solution in every business, but when it comes to large remote projects and even bigger workforces, we know outsourcing is the way to go to effectively handle all requirements.  
You don't need to be all things to all people as a manager and leader. Rely on the right partner, and a bit of delegation discipline, to keep your focus and flourish in the long term.