

# The Little Red Hen

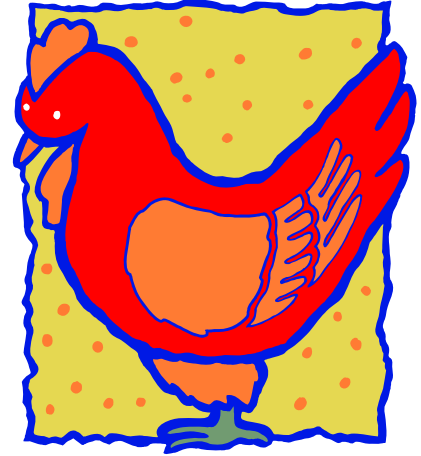
The art of delegation is important for any good leader to practice. A parable to prove this point appears in *Getting Things Done*, written by Edwin C. Bliss and published by Bantam Books:

Once upon a time there was a Little Red Hen who owned a wheat field. “Who will help me harvest the wheat?” she asked.

- “Not I,” said the pig. “I don’t know how.”
- “Not I,” said the cow. “I’m too clumsy.”
- “Not I,” said the dog. “I’m busy with other things.”

So the Little Red Hen did it herself. “Who will help me grind the wheat into flour?” she asked.

- “Not I,” said the pig. “That’s another vocation in which I’m untrained.”
- “Not I,” said the cow. “You could do it much more efficiently.”
- “Not I,” said the dog. “I’d love to, but I’m involved in some matters of greater urgency. Some other time, perhaps.”



So she did it herself. “Who will help me make some bread?” asked the Little Red Hen.

- “Not I,” said the pig. “Nobody ever taught me how.”
- “Not I,” said the cow. “You’re more experienced and could do it in half the time.”
- “Not I,” said the dog. “I’ve made some other plans for the afternoon. But I’ll help you next time.”

So she did it herself.

That evening, when the guests arrived for her big dinner party, the Little Red Hen had nothing to serve them except bread. She had been so busy doing work that could have been done by others that she had forgotten to plan a main course, prepare a dessert, or even get out the silverware. The evening was a disaster, and she lived unhappily ever after.

Moral: A good leader will find a way to involve others to the extent of their ability. To do the job yourself is the chicken way out.

– Beecher Hunter