SMARTer Entrepreneurs

FREE QUICK CARD

PEOPLE I QUICK CARD PE-03

What only you can do

Fifteen minutes, one week of your time, and the questions a good coach would ask you.



The practice

Most owners have delegated something. It went to a capable person with a quick briefing on a Tuesday, came back on Thursday not quite right, and was redone on Sunday evening. The lesson the owner drew was that it is quicker to do it yourself. The lesson the team drew was that it would come back anyway.

The practice: sort your week into what only you can do, what someone could do with training, and what someone could do now. Then hand over the outcome, with an agreed level of freedom and a date to check in. A consultancy owner on 52 hours a week found 14 hours in "could now"; two handovers later she was on 43.

Sort last week

Only I can do (nobody else could, even with training)
Could with training
Could now
The first task to go, and to whom
Level of freedom: 1 waits to be told, 2 asks, 3 recommends then acts, 4 acts then tells you, 5 acts and reports
First check-in date

Rough hours against each row are enough.

Try this this week

Choose one task from "could now". Tell the person the outcome you want, the level of freedom and when you will first look at it. Hand it over by Friday, and do not take it back the first time they ask a question.

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE CARD

Coach yourself

Fill in the front first. Then take fifteen minutes with these, in writing.

1. Look at your "only I can do" row. Which items are there because nobody else could, and which because you would do them slightly better?

2. How many hours in "could now", and how long have they been with you?

3. Who in the business is ready for more than you are giving them?

4. When work you handed over came back, what actually happened at the handover?

5. What will you say the first time the person asks you to take it back?

6. If you were away for a month from tomorrow, which of these would still get done?

If you catch yourself saying...

You hear yourself say	Try asking instead
"Nobody does it as well as me"	What standard does the client actually need?
"It's quicker to do it myself"	Quicker this week, or quicker this year?
"They're already so busy"	What would they say if you asked them?

ONE HARDER QUESTION

If you are not the person who does this work, what are you for?

Keep it going

Decide who keeps the handover list and which monthly meeting asks "has anything come back?" Put three dates in the diary: 3, 6 and 12 months from today. If something comes back, fix the handover, not the person.

When to get help

If a handover changes someone's job, hours or pay, talk to your HR or employment adviser first. If it hands over the right to sign, spend or approve, ask your accountant and solicitor what limits to set.

What a coach adds

This card gives you the questions. What it cannot do is notice which one you avoided. It is one of the SMARTer practice cards, covering the ten key areas of a business that sells expertise.

> Talk yours through with your SMARTer coach and mentor: book a Discovery Call at smarterentrepreneurs.co.uk

Quick card PE-03 v2, October 2026. Sources: Oncken and Wass, Harvard Business Review (1974); Lee, Willis and Tian (2018); Badal and Ott, Gallup (2015). © 2026 SMARTer Entrepreneurs. Free to share with other business owners, unchanged and with this notice.