

Summary

Micromanagement is destructive to work teams and employees. Micromanaging indicates a lack of trust to people. As a manager it is critical that you build trust that you focus on the responsibilities of management and allow your employees to do their jobs. Doing so will reap great benefits.



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Management - Eliminating Micromanagement

On the surface, micromanagement of people and teams would seem a noble thing. After all, you're the manager and you've got the responsibility to make sure that tasks are accomplished and projects completed. Unfortunately, your role is not to micromanage but to, instead, manage. Your job is to 'orchestrate' or 'conduct' activities and project, not to actually be involved in the minute details and participate as if you were an individual contributor. Below are some ideas on how to avoid micromanaging and boosting productivity to new levels.

Building Trust: Your subordinates, or team members, have to believe that you trust them to do their jobs to the best of their ability and creativity. Hanging around and offering unsolicited suggestion indicates that you don't trust them. Jumping right in at the first sign of an issue, instead of letting the team work it out, indicates that you don't trust them. Learn to trust your people and teams to make the right decisions and take the right actions unless they prove they can't.

Flexibility: Each of us has become successful because of our skill and ability to deliver what is required. Along the way we learned a 'winning formula' to achieve results. We take this into our management role. Fortunately, there is more than one 'right way' to accomplish most tasks. Instead of imposing your methodology or ideas, let the team discover and put into practice their own ideas and methods. Focus on the results, not the steps, and discover new ways of getting the job done.

Communicate Appropriately: People and teams want to know what is expected of them, what resources they have to accomplish the tasks or project, timelines, and desired results. From that, people and teams want to be able to exercise their creativity in solving the problems and delivering to the results. Communicate the bigger picture and let the team fill in the detail blanks. Communicate your outcome expectations, not the task completion details.

Instill "Early Warning Systems": Provide opportunity for your people or team members to approach you with issues before they become problems. Regularly scheduled 1-on-1 meetings with key team leaders or managers are an important part of eliminating micromanaging. Deal with the big topics, explore new or open issues, and coach your leads/managers to discover their own course of action. Resist the temptation to rush in and 'fix' the issue - even if you can.

Solve Problems Quickly and Decisively: Your people want to know that if they come to an impasse or have problem they can't resolve that you are there as a resource. And, that you are able to quickly assess and resolve the problem in a manner which allows the individuals or teams to get back to work. If you have a team member who isn't performing, quickly coach back into expectations or move them on. Don't let problems linger. Doing so destroys credibility and trust and forces you to micromanage.

Coach, Don't Meddle: Become your team lead or manager's sounding board. Not to have you solve the problems, but to ask probing questions and making suggestions on where to find solutions. Coach the team to results, don't do the job for them.

Change your Reward Horizon: Individuals who become managers must change their personal reward horizon. Whereas one could derive a sense of accomplishment from completed tasks or project deliverables, on a daily or weekly basis; now you must view your sense of accomplishment to that of the entire project over months, perhaps quarters or years. This can be frustrating and cause you to jump back in to 'accomplishing something today'. Resist the temptation and stay focused on the goal line.

Their Success is Your Success: Realize that, as a manager, you are successful if your people and teams are successful. Your teams and people are successful if they have been able to accomplish their tasks and projects through the exercise of their creativity and skill. Your role is to remove obstacles, motivate, encourage, and lead the people and teams to solutions. Not undertake the project details and make all the decisions.

Watch for Burnout: If you persist in staying involved in every project, all the details, creating frustration for your teams and people along with all your other management responsibilities you're a candidate for burnout. Early warning signs are fatigue, then exhaustion, then burnout. When you reach the burnout stage, you'll stop micromanaging. But by then it will be too late. Your teams will have moved on to something else - most likely away from you and your projects.

Good managers trusts and leads by example. Poor managers take on everyone else's work. Your people and teams will respect your good management and contribute to your business success.