

DO YOU WORK FOR A MICRO-MANAGER?

Top Ten Signs of Micro-Management

From Leadership Thoughts by Martin Webster

<http://www.leadershipthoughts.com/author/martinwebster>

1. Resist delegating work
2. Immerse themselves in the work assigned to others
3. Look at the detail instead of the big picture
4. Discourage others from making decisions
5. Get involved in the work of others without consulting them
6. Monitor what's least important and expect regular reports on miscellany
7. Push aside the experience and knowledge of colleagues
8. Loose loyalty and commitment
9. Focus on the wrong priorities
10. Have a de-motivated team

How to cope with a micro-manager

From Webster

1. Assess your behavior

Are you doing anything that could give your manager cause for concern? Are you giving the job your full attention? Perhaps your manager is a stickler for good timekeeping and you take a more relaxed approach. Try and match up to their values and beliefs.

2. Understand your manager

Learn to see things from their point of view. By understanding the signs of micromanagement — knowing what they are trying to achieve — you may find that you can help them realize their goals. Pursuing a common goal will help build trust and this will give you more freedom.

3. Challenge your manager

Insist on having regular 1:1 supervision sessions. At these meetings agree to do something that helps them meet their goals. And, challenge your manager when they interfere. Remind them of the agreement and their part in the bargain. Always ask your manager for the opportunity to do something on your own.

4. Frequent communication

Good communication and results is the best way to deal with the micromanager. Therefore give them an update on progress at every opportunity.

Summary

Because micromanagers rarely recognize their behavior and the impact it has on the team it is worthwhile pointing this out to them once you have gained some trust. They may be

open to working with you. But then again, don't expect too much — sooner or later they will revert to type. Sometimes it's you who has to move on!

From Harvard Business review

Do:

- Do everything you can to gain the micromanager's trust
- Know what motivates and worries your boss and try to assuage her concerns
- Provide regular and detailed updates so your boss is apprised of your progress

Don't:

- Label anyone who exercises a degree of control as a micromanager
- Defy the micromanager — that often triggers the behavior you are trying to avoid
- Try to tell a boss that he is overly controlling unless you know he may be open to hearing it

From ChangingMinds.org

The first thing is to recognize that it is their issue, not yours. However, this disability means they lack certain abilities and because of your situation, you are going to have to handle it. The worst thing you can do is to get into a power struggle, as this is very likely to result in the micromanager using all the formal power at their disposal to beat you into submission, including threats of dismissal and negative references.

The simplest approach is to listen patiently and attentively when they tell you what to do (they hate being ignored). If you really disagree with what they are saying, ask politely for their reasons or explain your concern and ask for their advice. Quietly and carefully ensure you cannot be blamed for the micromanager's decisions (it can be useful to keep notes and confirm directives in emails in case of later disagreement).

You can give them feedback (through a third party, if necessary) about how they are behaving and how this makes you feel. Some micromanagers do not intend to act this way and will make genuine attempts to improve. Many, however, will feel slighted and the result can be unhelpful. In consequence, think carefully before using this approach.

A reversal can be an interesting alternative, effectively, micromanaging them. Book their time to agree what you will be doing. Agree in detail what you will be doing. Let them make every decision. Then do exactly what they said and report back that you have completed each step. Go back often to check for new each decision. In the end they may tire of your constant attention and tell you to back off. You can also pre-empt and prompt this by occasionally asking if your approach to managing the detail through them is ok and whether they'd prefer you to decide more things yourself.

Another approach is to use their control and identity needs as levers. Use these as punishment and reward, carefully removing control and isolating them, or giving feedback that shows they are in control and are wonderful. For example when they over-control,

avoid them, whilst when they give you more space, even a little, look at them and smile (identity stroking). Be very subtle in all this -- if the micromanager feels micromanaged, they will react strongly.

In this way you will feel more in control yourself even as you give them a greater sense of control. Living with a micromanager need not be painful and it can be an interesting challenge.

What are the micro-management scenarios that are unique to performing arts?

What are some coping techniques that can be uniquely effective in performing arts?

One simple revelation or manifesto about micro-management?

ARE YOU A MICRO-MANAGER?

Signs that You're a Micro Manager

From *Harvard Business Review*, by Muriel Maignan Wilkins

If you're like most micromanagers, you probably don't even know that you're doing it. Yet the signs are clear:

- You're never quite satisfied with deliverables.
- You often feel frustrated because you would've gone about the task differently.
- You laser in on the details and take great pride and /or pain in making corrections.
- You constantly want to know where all your team members are and what they're working on.
- You ask for frequent updates on where things stand.
- You prefer to be cc'd on emails.

Let's face it. Paying attention to details and making sure the work is getting done are important. So it's easy to chalk all of the above up to a necessary part of managing. But they aren't necessary all the time. The problem with micromanagers is that they apply the same level of intensity, scrutiny and in-your-face approach to every task, whether warranted or not. The bottom line is: you need to stop. It's harming your team's morale and – ultimately – their productivity.

So what do you do if you want to stop micromanaging? Here are four strategies to help:

1. Get over yourself. We can all rationalize why we do what we do and the same holds true for micromanagers. Here are some common excuses that chronic micromanagers give, and what they really mean:

WHAT MICROMANAGERS REALLY MEAN WHEN THEY TRY TO EXPLAIN THEIR BEHAVIOR

Don't take the excuses at face value.

WHAT CHRONIC MICROMANAGERS SAY	WHAT THEY REALLY MEAN
<i>It will save me time if I just do it myself.</i>	<i>I don't believe it's worth my time to let them try, because they won't get it right anyway.</i>
<i>Too much is at stake to allow this to go wrong.</i>	<i>I don't trust them to do their jobs according to my standards.</i>
<i>It's my credibility on the line if we don't get it done on time.</i>	<i>The work won't get done unless I constantly prod them.</i>
<i>When I am not involved, they mess up.</i>	<i>The one time I yielded some control, there was a mistake and I'm not willing to take that risk again.</i>
<i>My boss wants me to be heavily involved in my team's work.</i>	<i>If I don't stay involved, how else will I prove my worth?</i>

These excuses lead to a disempowered, demoralized team. Instead of finding all the reasons why you should micromanage, consider why you shouldn't.

2. Let it go. The difference between managing and micromanaging is the focus on the "micro." At the core of moving away from micromanaging is letting go of the minutia. This can be hard, but the key is to do it a little at a time. Start by looking at your to-do list to determine what low hanging fruit you can pass on to a team member. Engage in explicit discussions with your direct reports about what level of detail you will engage in and where they will need to pull you in. You should also highlight the priorities on your list — the big ticket items where you truly add value — and make sure that is where you are spending most of your energy.

3. Give the "what," not the "how." There is nothing wrong with having an expectation about a deliverable. But there's a difference between sharing that expectation and dictating how to get to that result. Your job as a manager is to clearly set the conditions of satisfaction for any task you assign. Articulate what you envision the final outcome to look like, but don't give blow-by-blow instructions on how to get there. When in doubt, share the "what" and ask (rather than tell) your team member about how they plan to get there. You might be surprised that their approach, while different, may yield excellent results.

4. Expect to win (most of the time). Underlying your need to micromanage is a fear of failure. By magnifying the risk of failure, your employees engage in "learned helplessness" where they start believing that the only way they can perform is if you micromanage them. It's a vicious cycle. Instead, focus on setting your direct reports up for success. Be clear on what success looks like. Provide the resources, information, and support needed to meet those conditions. Give credit where credit is due. Over time, you'll realize that a loss every now and then helps build a strong track record in the long run.

From Entrepreneur Magazine, by Marcus Erb

Commit to hiring the right people. It's much easier to create a culture of accountability with accountable people. At RadioFlyer, the famous maker of children's wagons, accountability is a core value central to finding new employees. Prospective job candidates are screened on whether they proactively seek needed information and feedback, and whether they strive to accomplish team goals. The company remains doggedly loyal to this value, going so far to keep positions open for more than a year if they are unable to find an ideal match between the candidate, the culture and the position. Additionally, all 55 of RadioFlyers's employees, hiring managers and the executive team receive training on the selection process annually.

Make people accountable to each other. There is nothing like peer pressure to drive behavior. At Bridge Worldwide, a Cincinnati-based digital and relationship marketing agency, employees are given the chance to give anonymous feedback to various teams in a quarterly satisfaction survey and an annual benefits opinion survey. Through these regular

audits, employees have the chance to give genuine feedback on performance from other departments as it relates to their job. The goal is to create a productive community culture. Clearly and frequently articulate expectations. Entrepreneurs often find themselves micromanaging their staffs when they don't adequately communicate their expectations. Employees at Hoar Construction, a construction management firm, are evaluated twice annually, and receive personal, detailed feedback. New tracking measures, goals and developmental needs are determined during these evaluations. The frequency is even greater at FatWallet, the Illinois-based online discount clearinghouse, where employees and managers set "Key Performance Indicators" at the beginning of each quarter to re-evaluate goals, progress and successes/failures.

Give employees decision-making power. Your employees are much more likely to "own" their work when they help create or have a voice in what they're doing. Bridge Worldwide puts many decisions to a company vote or suggestion. An example of this was the process of naming its conference rooms. Employees were asked to nominate a 20th-century icon who embodied the company's values. Based on these nominations and subsequent votes, the company now has rooms named after the people who inspire the dynamic culture -- including Henson (Jim), Parks (Rosa), Einstein (Albert), DiMaggio (Joe) and Coltrane (John).

What are some of the circumstances unique to performing arts that drive micro-management?

What are some coping mechanisms specific to performing arts leaders that could help reduce micro-management?

One simple revelation or manifesto about micro-management?