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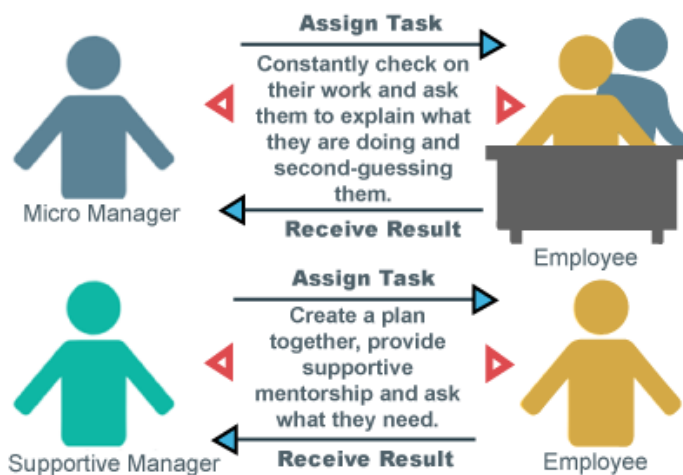
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Finding the Balance Between Supportive Manager & Micromanager

December 2021



"A boss who **micromanages** is like a coach who wants to get in the game. **Leaders guide and support** and then sit back and cheer from the sidelines.

-Simon Sinek

It is said that people don't leave jobs, they leave managers.

While I know first-hand from working with clients, there are a lot of reasons people leave jobs, leaving because of a manager who drives them crazy is pretty high up on the list.

"An employee's motivation is a direct result of the sum of interactions with his or her manager."
Bob Nelson

So, what are the things I hear about managers that drive people crazy? Here are just a few:

- They aren't supportive in helping the employee grow their career or helping to prepare them for a promotion.
- They don't advocate for the employee when it comes to raises and promotions.
- They ask questions about how the employee is spending their time in an accusatory way without a concept of how many tasks they have already delegated to that person or any concept of how much time some of those tasks really take.
- They don't set aside appropriate amounts of time for one-on-ones, show up late or spend time in the one-on-one's talking about things other than what is pertinent to that employee.
- They take credit themselves for the employee's ideas or their work – and don't give credit to the employee or their team as a whole.
- They don't run interference for the employee with upper level management or support them in helping to prepare them for presentations to upper level managers by sharing what they might know about their personality styles, quirks and expectations.

Many of these issues can be dealt with through better communication and talking about needs and expectations in the one-on-one meetings, but in reality, these are things the manager should be thinking about on their own.

If you are a manager, here are some things to consider and some suggestions:

As you move up the ladder, there is a huge difference between supervising an employee (which involves teaching them the job and overseeing if they are doing things correctly and helping them learn the work), and managing employees. At each level higher on the ladder, the manager's view needs to be broader and broader – or as might be illustrated better, higher and

**I Perform
Better Under
Micromanagement**
• Said No One Ever •

“To understand the heart and mind of a person, look not at what he has already achieved, but at what he aspires to.”

Kahlil Gibran

“ It doesn't make sense to hire smart people and then tell them what to do; we hire **smart people** so they can tell us what to do.



–Steve Jobs

“**Micromanagement** is the destroyer of **momentum.**”

higher. At a supervisor's view, you are in the weeds with the employee to some degree, teaching, helping, checking and still being a subject-matter-expert yourself to teach the job. As you move up to a manager's level, you may be looking at a 10,000 foot view – is the work getting done on time, is the employee following protocols and procedures correctly, is the work up to the quality standards that are expected, and so on. At a 20,000 foot view, you may be looking at the interaction of your department with other departments and whether they are coordinating and meeting each other's needs for efficiency and productivity and whether communications are flowing properly and whether the department is working on the appropriate tasks in accordance with the goals of the organization. At 30,000 feet, you may be looking at whether you are preparing for the next iteration of competition or what external factors are potential threats or opportunities for the organization to prepare for or take advantage of, and whether the organization as a whole is financially sound and positioned well in the market.

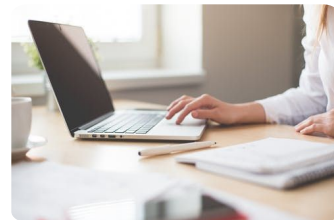
Whatever level you are however, there are common things for managers to think about when managing employees and balancing the two ends of the spectrum, neither of which are either healthy or helpful – one end being no oversight and support for the employee and the other being hanging over their shoulder and questioning their every move.

Here are some things to think about to help you find that sweet spot of making sure you're doing your job in making sure those who report to you are doing theirs, that you have time to do what you are actually supposed to be doing for the organization and that you are supporting and growing employees for the benefit of the organization.

- **Manage every employee differently** – there's no one right way to manage and the more management styles you can employ to accommodate to the different styles of your direct-reports, the more effective you will

... Miles Anthony
Smith

“The simple act of
paying positive
attention to people
has a great deal to
do with
productivity.”
... Tom Peters



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WITH OUR
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TOPICS:**

1. Handle Difficult
Conversations with
Confidence
2. Quick-Start Your New
Leadership Role: Position
Yourself for Success
3. Be a Strategic Thinker and

be. If you aren't clear on what I mean by this, consider some personality style training and how to adapt to different styles for effective communication and relationships. This is something I can help you with if you, your team or whole organization wants to explore this important knowledge and skillset.

- **Get to know each of your direct reports** and ask them what they need from you. Find out what motivates them and what hinders them or frustrates them. The best way to find this out – ask them! Give consideration to who needs more check-ins and who needs less, who needs more praise and who is embarrassed by too much praise, and how do they like positive feedback – in private or more publicly? Get to know them!
- **Make it a point to figure out what the strengths are of each direct-report.** Show them you recognize those strengths and they will feel supported by seeing that you've paid attention to know what they are good at. Start there because it helps to build the trust with that employee. When you need to help in an area where they may be weak, they will then be more receptive.
- **Figure out not just where they need to improve or grow, but what they need.** Is it more training? Is it awareness to understand what they are doing incorrectly or perhaps how their attitude or approach is not received well by others? Do they need skill-building? If it's skill-building – do they need knowledge or practice or to work with someone who has the skill so they can learn the techniques, best practices and nuances of that skill. Make sure the solution fits the person.

Decision Maker

4. Stress is an Inside Job!
5. Coaching & Mentoring Skills
6. Everything is Negotiable - Do It Skillfully!
7. Results Leadership (Part I & Part II)
8. Leadership Skills
9. Public Speaking & Presentation Skills
10. Effective Time Management Skills
11. Running Effective, Time-Saving Meetings
12. Working Effectively With Your Manager
13. Networking - Opportunities for You Personally and for Your Organization
14. Transitioning Into Retirement
15. Get Them There Better and Faster; Coaching & Mentoring Skills
16. Thoughtfully Choosing Your Approach to Conflict
17. Mediation Skills for Employee Conflicts

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- **Schedule one-on-ones, make sure you carry them out in a timely way and jointly create an agenda for those meetings** so you cover the

things you need to address with the direct-report or be updated on from them and that you make time to talk about the things they want and need to talk about.

Have some standard questions – What’s working, what could work better, how can I help? Where are you with respect to each of the goals you’re responsible for – are you on target for hitting the goals and if not, what’s in the way and how can you, with or without my help get the obstacles out of the way?

- **You need to know that each direct-report is on track to accomplish the goals, and know how to figure that out.** One way is to ask them.

But, if you are constantly asking them, then it will feel like micromanagement and that you don’t trust them.

So find other ways without hanging over their shoulder – look at the results of their work. Check dates when they accomplished tasks, check quality, check your dashboards for clues about what’s happening. Another important consideration is not to find out about their work by asking other people, because that sends a message that you are checking up on an employee who you don’t have complete confidence in. There are ways to do that without sounding like that, but be very careful. Your tone of voice, the circumstances around when you ask someone and how you ask the question can all send the wrong message. It needs to be casual – like hey I know you were working with so and so on that project – how’s it going? Leave it open ended and see what they say, but don’t start digging for details. And whatever they say, just nod and say “Ok, great or OK thanks for the info or feedback.”

AND SHARE!

Since 2016, Joy has been publishing monthly articles to address everyday challenges in the workplace which are common to many. Often, topics come from you, her readers and clients. These articles are designed to help you, your direct-reports, peers and leaders. Feel free to download and share them.

[Click here to go to the library!](#)

- **Most importantly, be sure you have made every aspect of your expectations clear to the direct-report from the start.** If they aren't clear, you can't expect them to meet your expectations – and then it's not their fault, it's yours for not communicating accurately. See my article from November 2021 "The Assumption Trap" to help you avoid that pitfall. Click [here](#) to download that article.
- **To properly grow employees you need a few things:**
 - You need to know their strengths
 - You need to know what they want for their own career
 - You need to help them see their own strengths and where you see their potential that they may not be thinking about (people rarely see all of their own strengths – another way you can support them – tell them what you see)
 - You need to figure out what they need in order to be ready for the next move up
 - You need to watch for opportunities where you can give them stretch assignments and provide other opportunities for them to gain the knowledge and skills they need in order to position them for promotions
 - They need you to be a "sponosr" for them by singing their praises to upper level leaders and making their name and accomplishments be know
 - They need you to advocate for them to receive raises and promotions – in some organizations, that doesn't happen without the advocacy of the manager, and I have quite a few clients right now who are looking for jobs outside their own

organizations because they are not getting that support.

One more important thing to help keep you from micromanaging is to be clear on the difference between methods, procedures and practices that are mandated or required by some company policy or outside regulation, vs. those that are deemed best practices vs. those that are the way you like to do it!

Those that are required by policy or regulation are to be closely followed and it's your job to make that clear and see that they are followed. It's your job to teach and promote best practices. You cross the line, however, when you mandate or coerce the methods you happen to like best because they work well for you. Notice I said mandate or coerce. There's nothing wrong with sharing what works best for you, as long as you let them know it's just an offer and they may find something works better for them and that's fine. Different personality styles learn differently, process information differently, think differently and produce results by different methods. Please don't try to fit a square peg into a round hole because the square peg is the way you like it. Let your employees play to their strengths by using the methods that work for them. To do that, you need to be well acquainted with their strengths. Give them that freedom every time you can and you will motivate them.

Ask how they need your support, coach them to help them figure things out themselves by asking questions that help them think and let them know you are there to have their backs, help them grow in their career and support them when they need help getting obstacles out of their way, and in return, you need them to meet the goals and expectations put before them and let you know when they are struggling so you can help.

Being someone's manager is, in a sense, a type of responsibility for another human being, much like being a parent is a responsibility for another human. You can have such a huge impact in making their work life joyful and a place they are anxious to embrace each new day. A great manager is a gift in life that every employee appreciates and values.

If I can be of help, please feel free to reach out to me. Just want to chat? Take advantage of a complimentary hour with me. I'm always happy to take the time.

Enjoy your role as a manager!



Joy Conley Kacik

Joy is a conference speaker, team and leadership development consultant, customized trainer and facilitator and a Certified Professional Coach with expertise in personal career coaching, job offer and salary negotiations and executive coaching.

As an Insights Discovery® licensed practitioner, Joy provides clients the added value of the Discovery® Portfolio of tools when working with individuals, teams, leaders and organizations to create inspiring visions for collaborative, cohesive teams to produce superior results.

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