

# **The Dreaded Micro-Manager**

Micromanagers are harmful to employee engagement and retention. Below are some traits of a micromanager. You don't need to exhibit all of these traits to be a micromanager. Any one trait shows a tendency for micromanagement and should be avoided.

## **The Traits**

### **1. Addicted with Approvals**

Micromanagers love to be the final approver of things. They feel they have the best judgment so must sign off on most things.

### **2. Obsessed with Updates**

Constant updates give the micromanager something to focus on rather than completing their own tasks. It may also be a sign they don't trust the employee to manage situations on their own.

### **3. Make Sure You CC Me**

They're constantly worried about losing out on anything, so they may insist on being included in every email chain to maintain control.

### **4. Delegation Dilemma**

Micromanagers may be unable to share the torch, leading to doubt about one's ability to perform the job. They may find it easier/safer to just do the job themselves.

### **5. My Way or the Highway**

Micromanagers may be just as interested in processes as outcomes. They don't just want results, they want the results achieved "their way." They may express frustration that you completed a task differently than they would have.

### **6. Lost in the Details**

They may get stuck in the weeds, fixated on specific details, or more worries about minute details rather than the big picture. They may also struggle to let things go that are relatively inconsequential and make simple tasks over complicated.

### **7. Crave Black and White Structure**

They tend to see the world as a place that needs lots of structure to avoid chaos. They may not believe in themselves and their own abilities to do the job, so they seek processes and structures to make up for that. Since they don't believe in their own abilities, it's difficult for them to believe in the abilities of others.

### **8. They Don't Provide Full Context**

They may be consciously or subconsciously withholding necessary information from the team. This may be because they don't trust their team or feel withholding information makes them more important. This is one of the hardest problems for a micromanager to recognize.

### **9. Feels They Fit Some of the Above Traits but Makes Excuses for Why They are Different**

If you see yourself in some of these traits, but think the context of your situation is different, which is why these things are ok, they aren't. Unless you confront these traits head on, you're employees will continue to feel untrusted and disengaged.

## **The Solutions**

### **1. Get Over Yourself**

When confronted with our faults, it's easy to make excuses. Excusing your micromanager behavior will only cause it to continue to the detriment of your team. Instead of finding excuses for why you need to micromanage, consider finding reasons you shouldn't.

### **2. Let It Go**

Adopt the mentality of everyone's favorite ice queen, Elsa, and let it go. Think about how you can prioritize tasks and determine what level of involvement you actually need. Do you really need an update or can you trust your employee? If you can't trust your employee, why do they still work for you? Can you trust anyone?

### **3. Give the "What" not the "How"**

The most successful managers are focused on outcomes, not processes. Instead of explaining how something needs to be done, explain what outcome needs to be achieved and trust the employee to achieve it.

### **4. Expect to win (most of the time, not all)**

Micromanagement stems from a fear of failure or things not going your way. Consider giving up some of that control and take notice of the successes you still have.

### **5. Don't Expect Perfection**

This one goes both ways. You're not going to immediately break all your bad habits, it's going to take time to improve. And it's also important to remember your employees will never be perfect. Mistakes will be made, things will go overlooked occasionally, and that's ok. The occasional mistake is worth having a team that appreciates you and is engaged in their work.

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