

BEST PRACTICES: Micromanagers



Big egos are a liability in keeping the most valuable employees.

In the early 1900's most workers were not educated so the position of manager or boss was created to do most of the thinking in corporations. Now, a century later, workers in professional firms are highly trained.

It can still be a big ego rush for the manager who gets to ride in on his or her white horse shouting orders to subordinates, leaping over tall buildings with a single bound, etc., etc. But what affect does this have on the highly educated professional n especially if the one barking the orders is a controlling micromanager?

Typically an employee becomes less productive. He or she gets tired of dealing with the micromanager. Then bored. And the brightest employees find a new job.

The micromanager may save the day but spoils the year because talented people will not be happy and do not have to stay in an environment where their talents are not respected and nurtured.

Here are some common behaviors of micromanagers:

1. They are vague regarding the results they want.
2. They inject themselves into projects when they are somewhere around 75 percent complete and make major changes.
3. They give orders to a manager's subordinates without telling the manager.
4. After they have gummed up the works, they blame the manager

If your firm has micromanagers in key positions n that is they supervise others n it will save you a lot of recruiting dollars to take action right away. Sometimes this type of manager is difficult to spot because he or she works long hours and through brute force keeps things moving.

But the danger is your firm cannot grow with micromanagers in key positions because you will not be able to develop leaders under them. When you increase your revenue the micromanager cannot keep up because he or she has chased off the most

competent people and failed to develop those who remain.

Quite simply, firms who have micromanagers have only two choices:

1. Fire the micromanager, which is often unpalatable because of talent shortages, or
2. Expand the personal foundations of the micromanager.

The words "expand the personal foundations" are chosen carefully and are precise. Expanding is a gradual process and so is coaching a micromanager to strengthen his or her leadership personal foundations n those attitudes and behaviors that contribute to leadership. The process takes more than attending a seminar.

A full battery of assessments allowing the manager to own his/her behavior, attitudes and values is the place to start. This is followed by intensive one on one leadership development.

The steps to determining if micromanagers are hurting your ability to develop and retain key employees are:

- ◆ Set up confidential interviews with key employees and ask them.
- ◆ Use 360-degree systematic assessments to get feedback on managers performance from their subordinates and peers.
- ◆ Keep track of each manager's employee retention rate and if it becomes excessive, take immediate action.

Any firm can reduce employee churn and retain their the best workers by improving the leadership of managers who oversee their most valuable resource n their employees. The investment is trivial compared to the return.

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