

Micromanagement Reduction Plan

How to Deal With Micromanagers in Seven Easy Steps

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Nobody likes to be micromanaged, and yet many people don't know what to do about it. The truth is that people who are being micromanaged can actually do quite a lot to improve their situations. Here are seven ideas to consider:

1. STEP INTO THE FRAY.

Accomplishment speaks for itself. A lack of trust is often the foundation of micromanagement; it is much easier for bosses to trust people who perform well.

2. SOMETIMES, IT IS BETTER TO ASK FOR FORGIVENESS THAN PERMISSION.

When bosses exhibit a micromanagement style, don't be an enabler. Make decisions and take the initiative to do things, rather than waiting for guidance from above or asking for approval at each step. But, the key word here is "sometimes." Remember, the boss is still the boss.

3. KEEP BOSSES INFORMED AND HELP THEM "LOOK SMART."

Micromanagers always want to know what is happening, so make sure you provide a dependable, accurate source of information. Regular, concise reports of progress and events, both positive and negative, will help scratch the micromanagement itch and give bosses a real sense of involvement.

4. RUN INTERFERENCE.

Help keep bosses out of the weeds, protect their time, and redirect things when necessary. Make sure everyone knows that bosses do not need to see everything—that's why they have staffs. Don't cut bosses out of the loop (see No. 3), but don't put them in every loop.

5. SPEAK UP AND VOLUNTEER.

Don't be bashful; plug yourself into the process where it's appropriate. For example, should your bosses ask for a two-hour briefing, volunteer to hear it your-

self and then later summarize it for them. Ask if there is anything on their *To Do* list that you can handle for them. They may say no, but it doesn't hurt to offer.

6. BRING ASSESSMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS, NOT JUST PROBLEMS AND OPTIONS.

When something needs management attention, don't let bosses start from scratch. Do your homework (and some of theirs) before it reaches their desks. When bosses ask for options, don't just



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pass those options along without comment. Make recommendations based on your honest analysis and give supporting facts.

7. BE HONEST AND FRANK.

Tell your bosses what you want to do and how you want to do it. Ask for more latitude and less upper-level involvement. Let bosses know when their assistance is or is not needed.

The Bottom Line

Firm proactivity is our best hope to minimize micromanagement. Silent complicity just perpetuates it. It may seem easier to go with the flow, but in the long run, failing to take action is going to hurt a lot more than speaking up. We need to do what bosses ask of us, but we also need to help them ask for the right things.

Editor's Note: The author welcomes questions and comments on this article. Contact Ward at WardD@nima.mil.



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