

Micromanagement May Be Destroying Your Business

10 min read



Micromanagement is one of the most toxic management styles that business leaders can use. It rarely has a positive impact on business.

Key Takeaways

- **What Does It Mean to Micromanage?:** to manage with a management style that uses excessive control. This can include...
- **What Does Micromanagement in Business Look Like?:** Business leaders who are guilty of micromanagement often struggle to delegate jobs and assign tasks to other employees because...
- **Combat Turnover During the Great Resignation:** with a better management style, you might just be surprised at how much happier you, as a person who is also an employee of your company, can become as well.

In fact, micromanaging is extremely harmful to businesses as it results in dissatisfied and disengaged employees, wastes management's time, and creates a highly negative and oppressive workplace culture.

So, how do you know if you're guilty of micromanagement in your business and what can you do to fix your management style?

First, learn what micromanagement is and how to recognize it. Then understand exactly how it hurts your business, and finally, determine a more positive management style to adopt going forward.

What Does It Mean to Micromanage?

- **Micromanage Definition -** To micromanage means to manage with a management style that uses excessive control. This can include using excessively close observation or oversight, excessive rules, excessive instruction, and/or excessive reminders.

What Does Micromanagement in Business Look Like? (6 Signs)

Sometimes it can be difficult to take a look in the mirror and view ourselves objectively. However, if you notice any of the following behaviors in yourself or signs in your business, then you might be micromanaging your employees.

1. You Struggle to Delegate Tasks

Business leaders who are guilty of micromanagement often struggle to delegate jobs and assign tasks to other employees because they don't trust that anyone else can do the job as well as they can or that they'll do it the right way (i.e. the manager's way).

As a result, micromanagers often feel overwhelmed and do not have enough time during the day to complete everything they need to do. They also spend a lot of time focusing on low-value tasks that would be more cost-effective if delegated to a lower-paid employee.

2. Your Employees Spend Lots of Time Reporting to You

How often do you require your employees to check in and provide you with status updates or progress reports on their projects? Weekly? Daily? Hourly? Status updates should be on a reasonable, preset schedule that typically takes place during routine check-in meetings held with all employees.

If your employees spend more time reporting to you or are constantly interrupted because they need to update you, then you're micromanaging them.

3. You Don't Freely Share What You Know

Managers who are reluctant to share or don't share their knowledge with all employees – such as information about overall business operations, long-term strategies, upcoming challenges, exciting opportunities, etc. – are guilty of micromanaging knowledge and often of micromanaging in general.

Managers sometimes claim to silo information or keep things to themselves because they're too busy to share or are concerned about security and loyalty. Sometimes, they simply feel that lower-ranking employees don't need to know about higher-level information.

4. You Dislike Feedback, Discourage Feedback, or Rarely Receive Feedback

If you react negatively to feedback of any kind, then you're likely also micromanaging.

Read More: [A Business Leader's Guide To Being Wrong \(The Right Way\)](#)

Even if you aren't actively discouraging feedback from employees, if you never or rarely receive feedback, then you likely have an overbearing management style that makes employees not feel comfortable sharing their opinions, ideas, and/or criticisms with you.

5. You Frequently Complain

While it's okay to encourage improvement in your employees and set yourself on a path in pursuit of excellence, you should be able to see and recognize a job well done when it's done. If you find that you're always complaining about work, looking for flaws, nitpicking processes, or criticizing your employee's approach, then you're micromanaging.

6. Employees Avoid You

Employees don't like to be micromanaged, and so they'll start avoiding you. You might find yourself alone in the breakroom, taking breaks at a deserted water cooler, or waiting for slow replies to emails. You should also pay attention to your employee's body language when you approach or talk to them. Do they roll their eyes, sigh, look pained, or appear uncomfortable in any way?

Why Business Leaders Should Never Micromanage Their Employees (8 Consequences of Micromanagement)

Keeping yourself – the person you trust the most – in charge of everything might seem like the safest approach to doing business and managing your employees. However, this couldn't be further from reality. Micromanagement is extremely harmful, and its countless negative effects will destroy your business. There are several ways micromanaging negatively impacts business, but the following eight are some of the most serious consequences.

1. It Destroys Workplace Culture

Positive workplace culture is essential to business success. It impacts every single aspect of your business from hiring, employee engagement, employee satisfaction, and retention to smooth operations and profits. Employing micromanagement in your leadership style is the swiftest path to cultivating a toxic culture that hampers productivity, disengages employees, quickly leads to skyrocketing employee attrition rates, and produces plummeting profits.

Read More: [Managing Company Culture in a Hybrid World](#)

2. It Leads to Employee Burnout

Micromanagement creates a highly stressful environment for workers who feel like they are constantly being watched. Imagine how you would feel if it seemed like you couldn't sneeze without having a second of your time docked from your pay or you couldn't format a document the way you felt was simplest without fear of criticism and having to redo your work.

The oppressive environment created by micromanagement quickly leads employees to experience extreme amounts of work-related stress and anxiety that can not only affect their happiness and well-being on the job but at home too. When [employees burn out](#), they quit caring about their work and start looking for different jobs.

3. It Stymies Growth

All the unhappiness, disengagement, and lack of job satisfaction created by micromanagement stifle company growth. With micromanagement, there's no room for improvement. Working under an overbearing management style, your employees won't think they matter to the company as a whole

or to you. They won't feel valued, and as a result, they won't contribute to the success or growth of your business.

4. It's a Waste of Your Time

You hire the people you hire for a reason – you, at one time, believed they were competent and trustworthy enough to do their jobs. So, when you micromanage, fail to delegate, or don't give your employees the freedom, space, or time to do what you hired them to do, you're wasting a whole lot of your own time that truly should be spent on higher-value tasks.

5. It Stifles Creativity and Prevents Innovation

Micromanagement leaves zero room for creativity and that means no room for innovation that could potentially lead to growth.

6. It Displays Distrust

Positive workplace culture is built on a foundation of trust that exists between you and your employees. When you micromanage, you actively show a lack of trust in your employees. Micromanagement makes it look like you don't trust your employees, you don't believe they are competent, and like you don't want them to do their jobs. As a result, they don't trust you, and your workplace culture is destroyed.

Read More: [Invest In Your Middle Managers: They Can Make or Break Your Business](#)

7. It Causes Employee Turnover

Micromanagement not only creates toxic culture but can also produce an unpleasant or even hostile work environment – and no one wants to work in those kinds of conditions. If you're micromanaging, expect your employee turnover to skyrocket and, as your management's poor reputation spreads, don't expect to see many applications for job openings.

8. It's Not Future-Focused

When you micromanage, you're focused on minute details – sometimes details that happen by the hour or minute. This means that you're not doing your true job as a business leader which is to be thinking about the future. When you're overly focused on managing the daily workflow of your employees, you miss out on opportunities and lack time to set goals and develop solid strategies to achieve them.

**Combat Turnover During the Great Resignation (and Always)
With a Better Approach to Management**

The opposite management style of micromanagement is laissez-faire management. This completely hands-off approach to management also has drawbacks such as employees lacking clear direction, established goals, or motivation. So, the key is finding a healthy balance between over-managing and under-managing your employees.

One great approach to management is to manage with a growth mindset. This management style involves providing your employees with clear direction, well-established goals, and an operating framework within which they can meet benchmarks and achieve goals. Managing with a growth mindset also involves creating a positive culture that fosters psychological safety through open communication channels, positive reactions to failures (such as viewing them as informative learning experiences), and bottom-up management techniques where leaders in your business listen, hear, and truly consider the feedback and ideas of their subordinates.

Read More: [Improve Workplace Productivity and Employee Teamwork With DISC Training](#)

The steps you can take to lead with a better management style include:

- Clearly communicate your expectations.
- Trust employees to fulfill their duties and meet your expectations.
- Empower employees to do their work and achieve their goals in their own way.
- Use technology to streamline communication, workflows, and project management.
- Focus on encouraging feedback sharing.
- Follow through with considering and responding to feedback.
- Create a positive culture where employees have space to be creative and encourage innovation.
- Shift to a team-based mindset, moving from 'I' thoughts and statements to 'we' thoughts and statements. Understanding that the statement, "We will build a successful company," is more likely to be true than the statement, "I will build a successful business."
- Monitor performance and results instead of monitoring employees.

As you improve your leadership style and that of all the leaders working in your business, you, your company, workplace culture, and your employees will benefit in countless ways.

Plus, with a better management style, you might just be surprised at how much happier you, as a person who is also an employee of your company, can become as well.