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LEADERSHIP, TALENT MANAGEMENT

How to Get a Manager to Stop Micro-Managing

by  [Dianna Booher](#) on May 2, 2014, 7:00 AM | [1 Comment](#)

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In the more than 10 years I've been blogging on communication issues, no one has ever asked about the important topic Rahul emailed about recently on LinkedIn:

"I have a team lead who has micro-managing habits. I have a meeting soon with him and I'm getting help from your videos. But how do I solve this problem?"

The habits of a micro-manager

Before you communicate one-on-one with a micro-managing boss, observe his or her habits in general. Here's a checklist for your consideration:

- **Does the boss seem to micro-manage everyone or just you?** (If the micro-managing focuses on just you, you need to have a talk to find out why.)
- **Does the boss seem distrustful in general** — of his or her own boss and peers in other functional areas? (If generally distrustful, the micro-managing habit may or may not be solvable.)
- **Is the boss confident of his or her own abilities?** (If the boss lacks confidence personally, then it stands to reason that insecurity will extend to a lack of faith in others')



ability to perform well without constant supervision.)

But if the above checklist suggests that your boss's micro-managing is focused solely on you, then it's time for a heart-to-heart discussion.

What to ask in that heart-to-heart discussion

Here are some key questions for that conversation:

- *Is there a past project I've handled that has made you feel uncomfortable about my current performance?*
- *Is there a key skill that I need to improve or a work habit that's causing you to feel that I might not be able to deliver on the XYZ project?*
- *Would it make you feel more comfortable if we set up more frequent check-back points on this current project? At what points in the project, would you like me to check back with you?*
- *I understand that there are different levels of delegation. Which level do you feel most comfortable with between us?*
 - —“Here's what I've done. Let me know if that's not okay.”
 - —“Here's what I plan to do. If I don't hear from you otherwise, I'll go ahead with this action.”
 - —“I recommend we do X. Do I have your approval to move ahead?”
 - —“Here's what I've discovered. What action would you like me to take?”

Focusing on long-term change

You may feel as though you're “caving in” to the micro-managing boss with even more frequent report-backs, status reports, approval requests, and so forth.

And you may be — for a period. But if your goal is to call attention to the issue and change the situation, this focus on the habit can bring about long-term change.

At best, such frank communication gives you solid feedback about performance and perception. At the least, such a discussion communicates to a boss the need to clarify expectations to improve the relationship.

This was originally published on Dianna Booher's [Booher Banter blog](#).

Dianna Booher, CEO of Booher Research Institute (www.BooherResearch.com), is author of more than 46 books, published in 26 languages, with nearly 4 million copies sold. She writes and speaks on executive communication, personal presence, productivity, life balance, and faith. Her latest

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