

HOW TO LET GO OF YOUR INNER CONTROL FREAK

Wendy Lewis offers pointers for empowering your team to succeed



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LET'S FACE IT. NOBODY WANTS TO WORK for a micromanager who controls their every move. It's no fun to be looking over your shoulder and worried about your boss' reprisals day-after-day, especially in an aesthetics practice where everyone needs to get along and put up a united front with patients.

To encourage creative brilliance and loyalty, you must foster an atmosphere where it can thrive and then step out of the way. Some bosses may not even realise when they're behaving badly, and their team may be too scared to tell them. The end result of treating good people in this manner is that it is a recipe for disgruntled staff, discord among employees, and high-turnover. In the worst-case scenario, it may drive people to sabotage your business in the way of theft, negative reviews, or frivolous lawsuits.

A common trait among managers is a desire to always be in control of every single thing—not just the big picture but down to the minuscule details. This translates to everything that gets done in the practice, even the simplest of daily tasks, falls under this intense scrutiny. No one enjoys being policed this way, especially more creative, joyful people whom you may have hired for their excellent people skills. Relentless micromanaging is the death of creativity.

The first step is to admit that you have a problem.

Or course, paying attention to details and making sure the work is getting done in a timely fashion are important. These are part of being a manager, but you have to draw a line to avoid overdoing it. Try to mitigate the level of intensity you apply to every actionable item on a daily basis. This can impact your team's morale and stall their productivity. Micromanaging only gets short-term results. The long-term effects can hurt your reputation and

standing in your field and thus, make it harder to hire good people. If you don't believe me, take a glance at the kind of comments that get posted by employees about their bosses on Glassdoor.com.

Although it's difficult to give up control and fully trust someone else to get the job done, it is essential to let your practice thrive. Discouraging people to make decisions on their own and take responsibility can lead to disgruntled staff, which surely will get noticed by patients, colleagues and partners. Try giving your staff the autonomy they deserve and let them shine. They may pleasantly surprise you.

“ It doesn't make sense to hire smart people and tell them what to do; we hire smart people so they can tell us what to do. ”

—Steve Jobs

If you acknowledge your own tendencies towards micromanagement, start making changes to tick some of the boxes in the leader column. For example, if you're making your staff anxious, reassure them that your door is always open if they need assistance or input. When they understand what to do, they can figure out how to do it in the best way. Better communication is essential and that starts with you. Take a few steps back and give your people room to grow without hovering. Try not to make them feel like you don't trust them to get things done effectively. If you're aware of the problem and

understand why you behave the way you do, you can make subtle improvements to create positive changes. Over time, your confidence in their abilities and dedication to your practice will improve and so will morale.

How to empower your staff

As Steve Jobs famously said, 'It doesn't make sense to hire smart people and tell them what to do; we hire smart people so they can tell us what to do.'

When you trust your staff to succeed, they may wow



Put yourself in their shoes

Doctors, think back to when you were a resident (registrar in Brit speak) and you privately cursed the Attending because he or she never listened to your opinion, or interrupted you when you were talking to a patient or belittled your diagnoses or treatment plan. Now, remember how that made you feel. It may be a while since you actually had a boss, but try to put yourself in your staff's place and avoid making them feel the way you did.

you. My approach is to match the specific tasks to be assigned to each individual's skill set, comfort level, and personal preferences. I try to give people projects that they are most passionate about. That doesn't mean they don't still perform the basic functions of their jobs that usually include the less fun tasks of billing, collections, analytics, writing proposals, creating presentations, etc.

Instead of telling people what to do and how to do it, try to support them so they can excel at what they are doing. Allow them to do what they were hired to do without looking over their shoulder 24/7. Nobody likes to be micromanaged. It's frustrating and demoralising and tends to make people work less efficiently, call in sick and quit more. In the long run, your practice will benefit if you encourage your staff to work as a cohesive team.

I believe that most people actually want to do a good job and are self-managing. But they also want to get acknowledged and rewarded for it. The recognition from a supervisor can be more emotionally satisfying than a bonus check or a raise. Consider the coveted 'Employee of the Month' award programme implemented in every big box store. At a minimum, start talking to your team more regularly to get to know them on a deeper level. Schedule a team lunch on a Friday, plan a relaxed outing for a future date, and make sure you know when everyone's birthdays and anniversaries are.

Breaking bad management

The first thing you need to do is to just let go. Review your 'To-Do' list to start checking off tasks that can be easily delegated to competent staff and circle the important projects that you want or need to handle personally. ▷

Do you want to be a leader or a micromanager?

- Leaders have the ability to empower people to meet or exceed their goals by giving them room to grow. They choose good people with strong skills, continually develop them and instil confidence so they can believe in themselves and accomplish more. Leaders create followers who are loyal.
- Micromanagers give orders to maintain their position of authority and direct people on how they want them to do things to reinforce their own superiority. This may be a sign of insecurity or the need for constant ego-stroking. Micromanagers have employees period and are challenged to instil loyalty which can lead to high turnover and negativity.

15 ways to tell if you're a micromanager

1. You don't think you're ever wrong because you're the boss
2. You tend to find fault with everyone's work, and see no reason to restrain yourself from letting them know
3. You demand to get constant status updates on projects so you know what everyone is doing all the time
4. You are always in crisis mode so everything is urgent and needs to be done ASAP
5. You're a compulsive emailer, texter, and intercom buzzer
6. You make corrections in red text or yellow highlights on documents, so they stand out and get noticed
7. You want to be cc'd on positively everything
8. You're all about drilling down to nitty-gritty details rather than trying to see the big picture or end result
9. You treat simple questions as annoying interruptions yet are disappointed when the result is not what you were expecting
10. You don't understand why your team can't just read your mind
11. You find it hard to delegate tasks that you don't need to be doing yourself because you're the only who can get it right
12. You have a tendency to take credit for other people's ideas and rarely pay compliments to subordinates or colleagues
13. You're not a great listener and have a tendency to think that your opinion is the only one that counts
14. You're never 100% satisfied and always think they could have done better
15. You tend to find fault with your team and are often too quick to pull the trigger to replace them.

▷ Make sure you are using your time in the wisest way. Note that I didn't write, 'most profitable way', because it is not always about profits. You may really enjoy doing certain treatments or seeing individual patients even though your physician extenders are well qualified to take over for you. As a true leader, you get to decide what you want to do and what you would rather delegate.

It is reasonable to have certain expectations about how a specific task should be handled and the outcome. However, if you continually tell your staff how to do every little thing, they will never be confident in their own abilities to make decisions and execute. As a leader, set a clear endpoint for any task you assign. Articulate what you envision the final outcome to look like, and articulate when you want to see it. Stop short at giving step-by-step instructions on how to get there. Rather try having an open discussion about how to do it and let your team contribute to formulating a plan to deliver the desired result. You might be pleasantly surprised that their approach is

actually pretty good or even better than yours.

If you still feel the need to monitor your team's every move, look into project management tools, programmes or apps, like Basecamp.com or Trello.com. Here's an updated list to consider: www.proofhub.com/articles/top-project-management-tools-list.

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questions, create checklists, assign tasks, and follow designated timelines. For a staff of 6, this probably takes more of an effort than required. But if you have a staff of 16, it may be a good tool to ease your mind.

These programmes are most useful, in my experience, when there are several teams working on the same project to simplify communications and avoid overlaps.

A system that works for the team

Full disclosure: my internal team has tried to get me to use these a few times and I think they have finally given up. I found them more work than actually doing the work itself. After two-plus decades of running my own company, I tend to prefer emails to spreadsheets, quick calls, texting and WhatsApp for easy communications, and Google docs for ongoing reporting. Instead of daily wrap-ups and internal documentation, I like to schedule weekly or bi-weekly one-hour touch base sessions. This strategy keeps everyone feeling connected to what's going on and it also gives us a chance to brainstorm on creative ideas, client needs and future plans.

So, for 2020, strive to stop making excuses for your control-freak tendencies because it may be hurting your practice without you knowing it. Although you may be surprised by this, I promise that your employees recognise your micromanagement tendencies even if you're still in denial.





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