CONTROLLING

Chapter 17

Micromanage the Shit out of Everything

Sent: Sunday, August 15 at 8:50 pm
From: CEO
To: Executive Team
Subject: Daily Reports

I continue to be dismayed by your daily reports, they are lacking in the level of detail that I specifically asked for. I want no deviation or interpretation from my written instructions. These are critical to my insight into the work you are supposed to be doing. Some of you are not using the template I asked you to, so you'll need to redo the reports from the last couple of months. I want them to be consistent. All of them.

I look forward to seeing your revisions tomorrow.

Thanks.

One of the keys to great leadership is to get in and pull up the plants so you can examine the roots. Sure, occasionally you will cause the plant to die, but more often than not, you'll catch root rot early.

You must always know everything that happens in your company, because if you don't, bad things will happen. You can't really trust your people unless you know exactly what they're doing every step of the way. Of course, this can become problematic as your organi-

zation grows, so you have to essentially clone yourself with others who are equally diligent and detailed.

To make sure that you have supreme and all-encompassing knowledge of the organization and your people, start with your leadership team. Only hire those who are absolutely loyal to you and have shown that loyalty by following your instructions to the tee: no deviation, no ideas of their own, no questions. They are obedient, observant, and loyal soldiers to you first and to the organization second. Even one breach of this protocol should be cause for termination.

Once you have established that you have dutiful soldiers on your leadership team, you need to make it explicitly clear that every detail, no matter how small, is worthy of your attention. And, by extension, their attention. However, you don't want to hear about it; you want detailed written reports. Not that you'll read them all. The purpose is for your people to provide them so you know they have eyes on everything. It's about control. The more you micromanage your people, the more control you will have. And the more secure they will feel.

Now you might be saying that this will take a lot of time. And you're right, it does. But if people aren't reporting on everything they're doing, how will anyone know what's going on? Remember that people can't really be trusted to do their jobs without supervision. They just don't know any better. By requiring over reporting on everything they're doing, you keep them doing the work, reporting on the work, and learning a lot about the right way to do things! In the end micromanaging is really for them as well.

Occasionally you'll encounter someone who questions the reporting requirements. This person needs to go. It's not about the report, it's about the reporting process, so they really learn what they're doing. Don't defend yourself. That is unworthy of you, and the person who questioned you obviously doesn't know about good leadership.

Micromanaging is also a great way to ensure that nothing changes, that your way (the right way) is always followed. There is great accomplishment in exactitude, and you want to make sure not only that your outcome is achieved but that the way you want it done is followed as well. You do not want change as this leads to chaos, and chaos is a challenge to your leadership.

So go ahead, pull up the plants to inspect the roots all you want. It works. Teach your team to do the same, and before long, you'll have a well-oiled machine that is doing exactly the same thing all the time. Success will be yours. Employees really love this too as it teaches them discipline and obedience, exactly what they need to be successful under your leadership.

Let's Get Real

Micromanaging anything or anyone is a recipe for failure. Almost everyone has been at the mercy of the kind of manager who is so insecure that they need to inspect and direct

your every move. The result is always the same: a completely disempowered work force that is dying on the vine and eventually leaves because a low-tech robot could do their job.

When first working with a manager, you'll need to pay more attention than you will after they start learning the work. Intervene early and often, then let them go. Innovation and ideas come from them figuring out problems on their own. Micromanagement stifles innovation every single time. You should keep your attention on the results, not how they got there.

Endless, pointless reports? Get rid of them. Focus on the results and forget about the process as long as it's working. No one likes documenting things that are already easily discernible. And everyone realizes this is a form of control, so use reports that actually tell you something and ditch the rest.

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(How Not to) Be a Leader

by Mary E. Marshall & Kim Obbink

(How NOT to) Be a Leader is the first in a series of how-not-to guides for newly minted leaders looking to avoid becoming feared or hated losers in the ivory tower or veteran leaders looking in the rearview mirror wondering where and why they ran off the road. Irreverent and hilarious, *(How NOT to) Be a Leader* shines a big bright spotlight on the oh-so-common mistakes that many leaders make when they plow forward through life and business without taking the time to really consider the effect their leadership is having on others. We've all seen and heard the horror stories of bad leadership, and hopefully many of us have been lucky enough to have been the benefactor of truly great leadership. Either way, if it's your turn at the top, *(How NOT to) Be a Leader* will help you understand what you can do to be a better leader by first understanding what you should never ever do; and if you are, why you should back up the truck, take another look at yourself and your leadership qualities, and do the work and self-reflection needed to get back on track.

Why this book series? Having been in the leadership trenches for a combined fifty years, we've seen a lot. Some good, some bad, and some really, really horrible. There was no guide for us, and we want to help all those leaders who will come after us. Not with a boring manifesto about a fictional leader who only exists in a book, but with real-life stories we've experienced or even perpetrated ourselves and vow never to repeat.

This book consists of twenty-four characteristics that you don't want to be known for. Not all twenty-four will apply to you and a few might resonate louder than others. What was it you heard in your last 360? Micromanaging doesn't work? You aren't listening? You want everyone to do it your way? You might have a few to work on, and our challenge to you is to choose three or four that seem the most immediate and start working on those. Once you've mastered them, take on a few more. And certainly share the book with those around you whose leadership styles need a little polish.

Should you accept this leadership challenge, you will be able to quickly identify twenty-four ineffective leadership traits and make changes to positively address them. Through the stories in this book, you will learn how to avoid the pitfalls of leadership, how to be a better leader, and, most importantly, how to pass good leadership on to those you lead.

Available now from Amazon.com in print and Kindle formats.

Find out more about Mary Marshall's services
and follow her blog on leadership development and entrepreneurship:
www.mary-marshall.com

Mary E. Marshall & Kim Obbink, *(How Not to) Be a Leader* ©2017