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MICROMANAGEMENT

Scan to review worksheet

Expemo code:
1C5D-J1LA-6T8H

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1 Warm up

In pairs, read the definition and discuss the questions.

> **micromanagement** (n) - the practice of controlling every aspect of a project, particularly when it comes to the work of employees

1. Have you had any experience of being micromanaged? What was it like?

2. Do you think of micromanagement as a positive or negative style of management? Why?

3. What do you think the benefits of this style of management are for the manager?

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2   Choosing vocabulary

Quickly read through the article on page three and decide which of the following words are the best fit for gaps 1 - 8.

1. Gap 1

   a. meanings   b. connotations   c. understandings   d. overtone

2. Gap 2

   a. worries   b. apprehension   c. insecurities   d. unease

3. Gap 3

   a. originate   b. launched   c. pioneer   d. initiated

4. Gap 4

   a. altruistic   b. benevolent   c. lacklustre   d. egocentric

5. Gap 5

   a. abate   b. slack   c. relenting   d. dwindling

6. Gap 6

   a. alleviation   b. weakness   c. unease   d. tranquillity

7. Gap 7

   a. unsettled   b. disconcerting   c. reassuring   d. discomfort

8. Gap 8

   a. deem   b. conjecture   c. gauge   d. disengage

3   Reading for gist

Read the following titles and match them to paragraphs A - E. There are more titles than paragraphs.

1. The needs of the employee
2. Transparent reasons
3. Reason and duration
4. A bad reputation
5. Manager as teacher
6. Transparency and success metrics

Step by step

Micromanagement: is it all bad?

A. _____

Use the word 'micromanagement' in a professional setting and you will notice that it has distinctly negative **1.** _____ . This is unsurprising as it is often the last resort of inexperienced managers and control freaks looking to justify their position. Handled poorly, micromanagement tends to rob employees of their autonomy while preying on their **2.** _____ and reducing the chance that they will begin to confidently work under their own initiative. By definition, micromanagement is a style whereby the manager exercises a great deal of control over what an employee does and the results they produce. Yet as a technique to guide team members through a learning curve or to introduce them to new skills, it isn't without its benefits.

B. _____

If it's an option you feel you should implement, there are a few things which you need to clarify before you start. Firstly, you need to make it clear why it is needed to the employee. Indeed, this may actually have been **3.** _____ by them if they've asked for training or help with a particular element of their job. However, if it's something you need them to do for you, be up front about how you want to handle it and even explain to them that they may feel as though they are being micromanaged, but the need for one-to-one input requires it, at least to begin with. This brings us to the second point: be clear about how long it's going to last for. **4.** _____ micromanagers just keep closely overseeing their employees' work with no signs that it will ever **5.** _____ . Set the time frame at the beginning and be flexible with it. If there are signs that they're not going to need your input for longer, tell them so. However, if you run into problems, then explain why it will take longer than you had anticipated.

C. _____

Communication is paramount throughout the process and will make the difference between it being unpleasant and useful. Bad micromanagers don't communicate their intentions to maintain an air of superiority and keep their team members in a state of **6.** _____ . When feedback is given in a friendly and supportive manner and each step of the process is explained, this creates an entirely different dynamic. In line with being communicative, you should also find a way to measure the success of your efforts and their progress. This will, of course, vary according to what is being learned. You could take an approach where you measure the speed at which they are able to complete the task, or simply that they are able to complete something without your guidance at all. Whatever it is, remember that you are guiding them towards autonomy and the goal of you no longer needing to micromanage them should always be in the not-too-distant future.

D. _____

While guiding an employee through learning experience, remember that everyone has different styles of learning. The worst kind of teacher is the one who thinks that everything they are teaching is obvious. Your experience may have made certain aspects of your job second nature, but it is not their experience. What you perceive as only requiring common sense may actually be quite **7.** _____ to someone who hasn't done it before. Incorporate practical experience of the task as soon as you can. In addition, try to **8.** _____ if they are going to progress better with you showing them directly how to do something, or you giving them guidance and then time to work through an exercise at their own pace with a timeline and a clear time for questions and feedback later. You could do worse than to ask them directly about their preferences. Handled appropriately, micromanagement can be a highly effective tool as long as it is used sparingly.

Sources: Forbes, BBC

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4 Reading comprehension

Match the sentences to the endings a - i. There are more endings than sentences.

1. Micromanagement has a poor reputation...

2. Skilled managers can use micromanagement...

3. Communicate clearly with an employee...

4. Make sure the employee knows how long it will last for...

5. Bad managers use this technique...

6. It's vital to find a way to measure the success of your method...

7. Taking the time to discuss with the employee...

8. *Not used*

9. *Not used*

a. ...as it is often used poorly by insecure and new managers.

b. ...as a way of seeing what to do.

c. ...as to why you are using this particular method if you choose to do so.

d. ...as one of their tools for guiding employees through a learning curve.

e. ...as it can be demotivating if there seems to be no end in sight.

f. ...as to how they prefer to learn is a good idea.

g. ...as a way of showing the employee that they are progressing.

h. ...as a method of control or to make them feel knowledgeable.

i. ...as long as it isn't a problem for the manager.

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5 Focus on vocabulary

Look up the words in the box and answer the following questions.

supportive / competent / insensitive / irritable / attentive / withdrawn / tolerant / tactful

1. Who have you worked with that you thought was particularly **competent**? What did they do?

2. What makes you particularly **irritable**?

3. In which situations do you think it's a good idea to be **tactful**?

4. Which manager have you had that was the most **supportive**? What did they do?

5. When you were at school, in which lessons were you the most, and the least, **attentive**?

6. What do you think can cause someone to be **withdrawn**?

7. Has anyone ever said something to you that was **insensitive**? What was it? How did it make you feel?

8. Would you describe yourself as a **tolerant** person? Why/why not?

6 Listening for gist

Listen to the three conversations between managers and their employees. Choose the correct option for each sentence describing what they are learning about.

Audio 1

Audio 2

Audio 3

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1. In Conversation 1 the employer is learning about how to

   a. use a database

   b. do market research

   c. complete a spreadsheet

   d. analyse sales figures

   e. deal with customers on the phone.

2. In conversation 2 the employer is learning about how to

   a. use a database

   b. do market research

   c. complete a spreadsheet

   d. analyse sales figures

   e. deal with customers on the phone.

3. In Conversation 3 the employer is learning about how to

   a. use a database

   b. do market research

   c. complete a spreadsheet

   d. analyse sales figures

   e. deal with customers on the phone.

7   Listening comprehension

Part A: Complete the table by ticking the box to show which one of the adjectives from the vocabulary section applies to the manager and the employee in each situation. Write (M) if it applies to the manager, or (E) if it applies to the employee.

	Conversation 1	Conversation 2	Conversation 3
a. supportive			
b. competent			
c. insensitive			
d. irritable			
e. attentive			
f. withdrawn			
g. tolerant			
h. tactful			

Part B: Answer the following questions in your own words.

1. In Conversation 1, what is meant by "it's not rocket science."?

2. In Conversation 2, what is meant by "I think you'll find it quite intuitive."?

3. In Conversation 3, what is meant by "it's really easy to lose track."?

8 Talking point

In pairs, discuss the following questions.

1. Which manager did you like the most from the listening section? Why? What did they do that you liked?

2. What poor management techniques did you hear? Why were they bad?

3. Do you agree that micromanagement can be a useful tool? Why/why not?

4. What other problems have you had from managers and their style of management? What did you learn from this?

5. If you are a manager, what techniques do you use to get the best from your team? If you aren't, what techniques would you use?

9 Extended activity/Homework - Roleplay

You're going to do a management roleplay. Follow the steps to prepare.

1. Decide on a task that you are very familiar with in your job that you could teach to someone else.

2. You may require a computer or preparation to be able to show your partner how to do the task. Make sure you ready this ahead of the roleplay.

3. Take it in turns to be the employee and the manager with the manager guiding the employee through a specific task.

4. Discuss how you felt about the task afterwards, how it made you feel, what you thought was and wasn't useful about it.