



*How do you work with a micromanager?*

*Glain Roberts-McCabe sat down with Roundtable member **Jody Peck**, Vice President, Human Resources for PepsiCo Beverages Canada, who shares her advice on what to do with a micromanager.*

## MENTORING MATTERS

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*“Help! My boss is a micromanager. He rewrites everything I put in front of him and seems to need to be involved in every decision. It feels like he doesn’t trust me and it’s affecting my motivation. How can I manage my manager?”*

I'll answer this from the perspective of the question asked, and then also from the point of view of the micromanager themselves.

The question is how to manage your manager when they are micromanaging you. In general, figuring out how to "manage your manager" is important for everyone; it is often a critical success factor and makes your job easier too.

To start, understanding what your manager is looking for in terms of deliverables, level of detail, timelines, frequency, and communication is key. The nature of the project or item you are

### *Leadership Tip*

*First, understand what your manager is looking for. Then, work to establish trust.*

working on may also determine how closely informed or involved your manager needs to be. For example, is the need different when the initiative is a high value item affecting key financial metrics that will

go to more senior people versus items that are being created for internal use by the team? Considering the end user or audience is an important part of figuring out what is needed. If you can crack the code, you will be on your way to delivering work that meets the needs of your manager and the organization, ultimately resulting in your feeling motivated because you can connect your business contributions to the important goals the organization is accomplishing.

Establishing trust is another critical step in "managing a micromanager." A track record of proven results and credibility reinforces confidence in your ability to deliver quality work on time. The ability to do this is highly contingent upon the clear, mutual understanding of project objectives and deliverables. It is always critical to establish this understanding upfront with your

manager before starting any real work. These discussions are critical opportunities to clarify questions about content requirements, tone, style, and audience, and will ultimately serve to minimize lost time due to project hiccups or delays. Asking the right questions ahead of time also enables enriched feedback and discussions after the product is delivered. If you feel the product met the criteria discussed in advance, asking your manager directly about what you could have done differently to ensure it was “camera ready” may be helpful.

### Leadership Tip

*Have an open discussion with your manager, with an outline to follow and objective to achieve.*

Managing a micromanager can be a journey that requires various incremental steps which serve to level set expectations, establish trust, and foster clear two-way dialogue. The latter in the form of an open general discussion with your manager could be a key enabler to share concerns, particularly if you are feeling frustrated and/or unmotivated.

Take the opportunity to clearly outline for yourself what the objective of the discussion is, and have examples of situations that have previously occurred to support the discussion. The objective(s) could be something like:

- Fully understand what is required in “x” assignment
- Eliminate the need for re-work
- Increase my ability to deliver work that is “ready to go”
- Continue my in-role development

If you are reluctant to have the conversation, ask yourself what is holding you back. If it is the feeling that nothing will change, then you don’t have anything to lose. Feeling unmotivated in your job is something that needs to be addressed so you can enjoy coming to work

every day with the knowledge that your contributions are valued. You should never be afraid to address your concerns with your manager. An issue will either get resolved, or bring you clarity in terms of where you want to work, and who you want to work with.

Focusing now on the context of micromanager themselves, some may not even be aware that this has been their approach or how they are viewed by their employee(s).

If you are the leader of a micromanager, it is important for you to bring their awareness to this, and the impact this approach has on their team, not to mention on their own productivity. If they are focusing on the small things, they are not able to deliver the big things.

Sometimes people who are newly promoted to leadership roles can have the tendency to micromanage. They are not yet comfortable with making the distinction between “work that is graded,” and “work that is pass/fail.” Of all of the

priorities leaders deal with, the trick is to figure out which ones are of the most importance and which ones can be done to a certain level of quality (or not done at all). The desire to be excellent at everything leads to micromanagement issues, which in turn, can have a counter-productive result of running out of time, or burning out; none of which are ingredients in the formula for success.

Another micromanager issue is being able to trust the team. Letting people try first and coaching to get them through to the right end product versus just doing it for them will lead to happier

### Leadership Tip

*When you're the leader of a micromanager, it's up to you to approach this issue - for their development and that of their team.*

employees who are able to develop great capabilities. This takes great self-control. It is no doubt easier and quicker to do it yourself. A key question to keep asking yourself is, "What is the work that only I can do?" This will keep you out of the work that your team is accomplishing, and have you focused at the right level.

People can change, but only when they become aware of an issue; this requires discussion and candor.



**Jody Peck** is the Vice President, Human Resources for PepsiCo Beverages Canada. She started her PepsiCo career in 2001, and has worked across a variety of PepsiCo Divisions including Frito Lay Canada, Frito Lay U.S. and Pepsi-QTG. Prior to joining PepsiCo, she worked in the transportation and health care sectors in human resources roles. Jody has a Bachelor of Commerce from the University of Alberta, a Graduate Certificate in Executive Coaching from Royal Roads University, and recently obtained her Chartered Director (C.Dir.) designation through McMaster University.



**Glain Roberts-McCabe** is passionate about the art of leadership and supporting ambitious mid-career leaders. She created **The Roundtable** to provide emerging leaders with the navigational skills, tools and savvy needed to manage increases in scope, pressure and leadership complexity.