



Roundtable Mentor,
Chad Aboud, General
Counsel, AudienceView,
shared his strategies on
how to deal with even
the best-intentioned
micromanagement.

Mentoring **MATTERS**

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My boss always wants excessive details on projects my teams are running. How do I keep him/her from diving into the weeds which just wastes my time and the time of my team members?

While it probably feels appealing right now to build a wall of books around your desk so you can hide from your boss' constant interruptions and micromanagement, perhaps taking a step back to gather more context might be the most helpful place to start.

I've found three steps have helped me unlock confusing or frustrating situations: (1) reflecting, (2) questioning, and (3) empathizing.

Step 1 - Reflecting

Before knowing where we want to go, we need to understand where we've been. What comes to mind when you think about the more enjoyable parts of past projects? Where do you feel like there are areas of opportunity in both the process and execution of deliverables?

Step 2 - Questioning

Once you've had a chance to reflect on your recent experiences, let's zoom out to consider the larger picture of your boss' role and the company's strategic goals. A couple of questions you might ask yourself could be "Why do I think my boss is micromanaging?", "What do I need to know about the company's strategy so that I can maximize my contributions?"

Step 3 - Empathizing

Now that you've jotted down some reflections and questions on the micro and macro elements of your job, let's consider your boss' point of view. Try to step into his/her shoes and come up with some ideas about the types of pressures your boss may be under. How do those ideas help generate solutions that support the company's and your boss' objectives while providing the autonomy you're craving?

Setting up a Meeting

With some interesting reflections and questions organized, it's a great time to ask your boss for a feedback meeting. I know we live in the age of amazing technology, but I've found that asking for an in-person meeting (or video conference if you're not working in the same office) helps foster a bond more quickly than email exchanges or phone calls.

Being able to express and read others' physical signs can increase the chances of picking up important queues that might otherwise remain hidden. (As an extra benefit of fostering this connection, your boss might share positive feedback about your team's work and most of us don't mind some positive reinforcement!)

You're in the Meeting

How can we gather the key pieces of information that will help create an aligned and positive path forward? In my experience, asking questions and active listening are the keys to bring this information to life. (Quick tip: if you want to actively listen, try not to think while the other person is speaking.) One of the reasons I find active listening to be more powerful than speaking is because we already know what we think! Asking what your boss thinks allows you to learn what's going well and gain insight into potential trust issues or business pressures that he/she may be struggling with. In fact, that pressure your boss may be under could be the reason why he/she has taken a more hands-on approach. Simply from having a better understanding of where your boss is coming from, your frustration level might start dropping.

The Win

As you ask questions and actively listen, your relationship is building trust. In turn, the trust allows you the opportunity to share why you feel that some (or all) of your boss' micromanagement may not be the best path forward. As you gain a better understanding of your boss' point of view and you've shared what you believe you need to succeed in your role, I expect you'll find yourself in a much better place to align on a new way of working that empowers your team while supporting your boss in his challenges.

Everyone wins when employees are motivated, and managers trust their teams. By empathizing with someone else's point of view and creating a path forward that supports each of your objectives, you're setting the foundation for a successful working relationship.



Chad Aboud is currently General Counsel with AudienceView. A Lexpert Rising Star Award Winner, Chad brings a business-minded approach to providing strategic and pragmatic legal advice to manage risk, negotiate complex commercial transactions and advising on a wide array of brand management and regulatory matters.



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.