Pay Attention to Detail and Innovate
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There are a many people who confuse micromanagement with attention to detail. Micromanaging has a negative connotation, and for good reason. It is when a manager or leader assigns work, tells capable employees exactly how to do it, monitors them excessively, and often takes over when work is not done exactly as the manager wanted. The result is that employees never learn how to do the job or utilize their skills and creativity. Employees become discouraged and lose interest in the job since they have no sense of ownership in the process or outcomes of their work; the manager does.

When managers micromanage, the manager/employee relationship is characterized by mistrust and stress. Micromanaging results in little employee learning and less motivation do the work. It also removes any incentive for the worker to seek improvements in the process or innovate. Despite this, millions of managers and leaders micromanage their staff.

The reasons for this are many, and as with most human issues, it is complex. A controlling personality often plays a role. However, a major reason is that companies often hire the wrong people, so they are not skilled or motivated by their work. This is often the case when companies hire people at the lowest possible wage, thereby failing to attract the best employees. In this case, since the employee is not properly matched to the job, the manager feels it is necessary to step in to ensure the job gets done.

Therefore, when attention to detail is mislabeled as micromanaging, one tends to do less of it. This is counterproductive because attention to detail is not the same as micromanaging. Paying attention to detail is what good managers and leaders must do to ensure that work is done properly and the organization's vision is advanced. It involves assigning work, allowing staff to do it their way and making sure it gets done according to agreed standards.

With skilled and creative staff, the better matched the employee is to the job, the more freedom they should have. This is part of what makes the job motivating for them; they can do it their way and have control over the end product. The manager occasionally checks in during the process to see if assistance or resources are needed and to ensure that work will be completed on schedule. This is not micromanaging, it is paying attention to detail. Additionally, managers and leaders who pay attention to detail will not settle for anything but excellence,
sometimes even perfection. They will constantly improve what they produce to move closer to their goal of excellence.

For paying attention to detail to be feasible, one needs capable, skilled and creative personnel who are motivated by their work. Staff who are willing to work for the lowest wage are unlikely to fit this description. Therefore, if you want to micromanage less and get the full value of your human resources, hire the best people you can afford. Less managerial effort will be required for them to perform well and they will likely find better ways to do the job than any manager could.

Pay Attention to Detail
- Hold staff accountable for quality work and deadlines, but give them freedom to determine how to do their work
- Encourage employees to be creative in their jobs and try new ideas
- Create reasonable deadlines and standards that allow for creativity and occasional delays when new ideas don't work
- Have occasional meetings where staff share what they learned when trying new ideas
- Check on progress regularly and use it as an opportunity to offer help and resources; this can also be a learning opportunity for leaders
- Believe that perfection is possible, it is just a matter of hard work and persistence

Conclusion
Micromanaging results in overworked managers, de-motivated workers and less than optimal organizational performance. Paying attention to detail results in better staff and organizational performance. Integrate paying attention to detail into your leadership style and see performance improve.

Check out my book to get tons of great ideas on how to become an unconventional leader and create an innovative organization.

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