

Accountability is key to a balanced work environment

Micromanagement minimises autonomy, initiative and positive relationships and is unfortunately very prevalent in most work environments.



© lightwise – [123RF.com](https://www.123RF.com)

"While the definition of micromanagement might be the control of a person or a situation by paying extreme attention to small details, it has an extremely damaging effect on the person it is happening to, and can sometimes translate as endless nagging," says Helene Vermaak, director at The Human Edge.

She says that whilst most leaders are aware that it isn't the right approach, many feel as though they don't have an alternative, especially in high-risk situations and when performance is tracked. "Accountability is the key to establishing a balanced work environment, and banishing any micromanagement."

Vermaak lists accountability as an important vital behaviour that spans across every sector and element of our lives.

"History has shown us that successful organisations are dependent on management creating a culture where anyone can hold anyone else accountable - managers to employees, employees to managers and peers to peers."

Tools available

Many struggle though to hold people accountable without micromanaging them. The Human Edge, together with international organisational performance company, VitalSmarts, has created tools that individuals and teams can learn to apply, so as to create a balanced and positive organisational culture and environment.

Vermaak gives three tips as a starting point for managers and team leaders:

- Set clear expectations from the beginning and include the desired results, as well as, how issues or problems will be dealt with. Talk about the process of accountability and how management versus micromanagement is defined from both sides. The result of this conversation is that all team members should feel comfortable and be clear on what the outcomes are and the processes to ensure accountability. As a leader, you should ask the right questions that makes it clear to your team that your intentions are to achieve results and not micromanage them. The balance will be achieved from the dialogue that is had at the outset.
- Look at your story. Confronting a team member or colleague does not have to be seen as micromanaging. You can confront the issue of accountability and not micromanage. Performance issues can be dealt with while relationships are strengthened, results can be achieved while avoiding the team thinking they are being micromanaged. It is not necessary to choose between performance and relationship; both can be achieved by focussing on what you want for the other person and for the relationship.
- Describe the gap, to create the safety required to have a difficult discussion. Describe what was agreed on, what was observed and how this differs from what you expected. The gap is what you are going to talk about. It is important that you start with facts and not emotions or conclusions. Begin with an observation and not an accusation. By doing this, you send a message that you are interested in learning what happened and that you have not prejudged the individual or situation.

Vermaak says that by creating a safe and balanced environment, one in which everyone knows what is expected with no surprises, discussions will be seen as just that and not micromanaging.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>