

COMMUNICATE TO REASSURE BOSS

Send e-mails, set up talks about your work to gain a micromanager's trust

By Kevin C. Keller
Special for The Republic

Strong communication is important when dealing with your manager, but it becomes especially critical when your boss is a micromanager, metro Phoenix career counselors say.

"They (micromanagers) have a desire to control," says Amy Lieberman, executive director of Insight Employment Mediation in Scottsdale. "It's nothing illegal, if that's their style. It's more about are they doing it to everyone or just you?"

And while some workers acclimate better to working with micromanagers, overbearing bosses can stunt productivity if they take micromanaging too far, she adds.

This isn't necessarily a reflection on workers, because some bosses find it difficult to relinquish control, thinking no one can get the job done as effectively as them, Lieberman says.

But oftentimes managers find it hard to give up control because they're not getting enough information from their subordinates, she adds.

Clear communication can help employees gain a manager's trust and could get the manager to see that his or her actions are counterproductive. Even just asking for a meeting can help turn the manager around, Lieberman says.

Make sure the meeting has a clear agenda and doesn't get in the way of an important project and try to gain the manager's trust by asking for his or her expectations. Then set up systems that will track and show your work in meeting those guidelines.

Linda Baugh, president of American Career Executives in Phoenix, agrees that communication is key to help micromanagers dial it back a notch.

"Take the initiative instead of letting the shoe drop," Baugh says. "In general, it's better to not wait for them. Document everything, too."

Quick e-mails that recap meet-

TIPS

Micromanagers can be turned around. Experts offer these suggestions on getting that process started:

- » Communicate about work expectations with the manager.
- » Set up meetings or progress reports to gain trust.
- » Take initiative on projects, which shows leadership.
- » Document interactions with the micromanager with quick e-mails and memos to show you're on top of goals.
- » Get advice from other managers or human resources.

ing points or conversations with a micromanager can help show that you're doing your best to communicate and meet that manager's expectations, she says.

"Ask a lot of questions about responsibility," Baugh says. "Be clear so you know ahead of time what you can and can't do."

Still, what to do if the manager isn't the most accessible or communicative? Get creative. For example, ask the manager's secretary for a list of items he or she wants accomplished, then give a heads-up to the secretary when those goals are met.

But if communicating and taking the initiative on projects isn't helping, then it might be time to start looking for work elsewhere, Baugh says.

"(If) on Sunday afternoon your stomach gets into a knot because of work on Monday morning, then you really have three choices: change the situation by trying one last conversation with the boss, change your response to the situation or find another job."

But both Baugh and Lieberman say you should exhaust every avenue before jumping ship.

"Always give someone a chance (to change)" Lieberman says. "Check with human resources or another boss about what you can do."

