

# Is boss in or out of control?

## Leaders have to learn the fine art of delegating authority

I have a client, let's call him "Bob," who is overly controlling.

For the past seven years he has been the president/owner of a profitable manufacturing company with 80 employees that grosses \$25 million a year.

Bob has his fingers in every minute aspect of his company and has not learned the art of delegating authority or surrendering appropriate control. If Bob recognizes himself here he won't be surprised that I wrote this column because he and I have had many discussions about his controlling nature; a discussion that usually ends with Bob saying that if I'm so smart, how come he is making WAY more money than I am?! (Bob knows how to get me where it hurts.)

On the surface, being an overly controlling president may not appear to be a problem.

After all, a competent business owner should maintain a high degree of knowledge and control of what is going on in the organization.

However, what I am referring to is the type of leadership that fails to surrender authority for any decisions. For example, Bob gets involved, and has the final word, in all decisions, however minor, even though he has several managers reporting to him.

Bob must approve every purchase,

HANNA  
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## HUMAN CAPITAL



regardless of size. All discounts, rebates or special prices go through him.

Although on the organization chart all of the employees report to a number of managers, informally they really report to Bob. He regularly assigns tasks to any and all staff at his whim. He instructs his managers/supervisors on how to fix problems rather than encouraging them to find their own solutions.

Bob also keeps certain business information about finances, customers, plans, challenges and strategies from even his most senior managers.

Why is this a problem, you ask?

Symptoms are evident within Bob's company that can be linked to Bob's over controlling style. His people are not happy; consequently the employee turnover rate is extremely high, which is costing Bob a lot of money for recruitment and retraining.

As many of his employees are not happy, this means they are not very engaged, which means they are not working as hard as they could be. This is also costing him a lot of money.

organization. They will give you minimal effort while they're there and jump ship for more money in an instant.

So, if you are a CEO / president / owner or a manager, don't be like Bob. Surrender some control, delegate authority, allow others to make decisions and learn to trust your people.

And hey, Bob? One of your key people called me last week to help him find another job.

Naturally I won't - that would be a conflict of interest - but someone else will.

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