

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



446 What to Do When Your Manager Doesn't Manage

Nobody likes a micromanager. We all know that. Let's flip the script. What if you've got a manager who doesn't manage much at all — then what? I'm Jerry Roberts and today, let's talk about what to do when it seems nobody is in charge. That's up next on The Extra Point.

Your boss either isn't around much, or even when he/she is there, they don't provide much guidance or help. You're pretty much on your own. Is this a good thing or bad thing?

There's a lot to this topic and for today we'll offer two scenarios. You're given a project to do and basic instructions, along with the due date. You have questions along the way but your manager doesn't respond to your messages. When you finally track him down he says he's very busy, and further that someone at your level should be able to do the work without help. You deliver the job on time, but the boss criticizes you for your approach. You argue that trouble could have been avoided if he'd just been accessible, and it leads to a shouting match. Are you in trouble now?

Another scenario. Your company believes strongly in offering promotions to the existing roster of employees before going outside to advertise. You've seen two of your friends advance to middle manager in the past year, with the close support of their division leader. You've made it known to your division leader that you're also looking to move up but you've received no feedback from her. She travels half the month and is hard to pin down. You feel stuck and consider looking for another job.

A 2015 poll of 1,000 workers showed 90% of top management offenses had to do with what their leaders were not doing, rather than what they were doing. If you're stuck in this situation, here are a few ideas on how to deal with it.

1. Figure out if others have the same issues with the boss. If the manager is communicating

and helping everybody else but not you, you'll need to find out why. Is it a personal issue?

2. Make direct written requests to the boss for assistance. If you need answers and not getting them will delay or derail a project, put that in your message. In the subject line of the email, put in capital letters: NEED RESPONSE OR PROJECT IN JEOPARDY. Give it a short time and then follow up with another message.

3. The next point depends on who you work for. If it's a small business and your so-called "absentee" boss is the owner, there's not much more you can do beyond those direct requests. I'd do everything possible to arrange a one-to-one meeting to air out your concerns.

In a larger company I'd still push for that meetup. I'd also make sure that senior leadership became aware of the quality of my work, plus the fact I'm looking to advance. This gets you on the radar screens of those who make those kinds of decisions. Maybe your boss's boss can mentor you. Maybe you ask to take on a special project. Anybody who will weigh in on a possible promotion needs to know you.

One more thing. This could be an opportunity to show your leadership skills. In the absence of your boss you might be able to step in and help others. Be smart and keep the manager advised via email on what you're doing so there are no unfortunate surprises. If ever you find yourself in such a situation with a boss who's not giving support, I hope this helps.

That's The Extra Point. Get out there and make something good happen today. For 93.3 and the Ray Gibson Show, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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