

Are you delegating too much?

Effective managers empower their employees to be accountable and provide them with enough creative and intellectual stimulation to remain engaged. Delegating work can help ensure your employees are exposed to work that is diverse and challenging—but what's the fine line between giving your employees autonomy and ownership, and being a detached, unsupportive manager who over-delegates?

If you can relate to the scenarios below, it could be a sign that you've delegated too much, and could benefit from recalibrating the workload and re-engaging with your team.

1. You don't really know what your employees are doing. You may know which projects your employees are involved in, but if you don't know how much of their workload is dedicated to each project, what specific tasks or deliverables they're managing, or the challenges they're encountering in the process, it may be a sign that you need to re-engage.

Ask your employees to take the lead in your one-on-one meetings so they have an opportunity to explain how their tasks are prioritized, and provide detail on what each of their responsibilities entail.

2. You don't know if the work your employees do aligns with their skill or interests. A busy employee doesn't equate to a challenged, satisfied or happy employee.

As *Harvard Business Review* explains, effective delegation isn't just farming out work; it requires getting employees inspired, excited and motivated about the projects they've been asked to manage. Dedicate time in your employee meetings to assess whether they enjoy the work they do, and what they hope to learn from it based on their longer-term career interests.

3. You couldn't do the projects your team manages. It's human nature to do what you feel interested in and skilled at—but outsourcing all the tasks you never learned (or don't particularly want to learn how to do) can lead to an unhappy group of team members.

Take an honest assessment: If an employee quit tomorrow, could you honestly step in and do that person's job?

True leaders are as invested in their own continual learning development as they are their employees. If you're not willing to learn alongside your team, you could find yourself in a position where your team doesn't need you at all.

4. Your employees are coming to you with a lot of issues. Noticing a lot of emails marked with a red exclamation point in your inbox? Hearing from secondhand sources that projects your employees are involved in are stressing a number of teams in the company? Both can be signs that it's time to be more involved with your staff.

Even if employees welcome the challenges, part of your job as a manager is to be a source of support for your team.

5. You couldn't explain how, where or why your team fits into the broader corporate mission. If

you're so detached from your team's collective priorities, workload or contribution to the company that you can't make a strong and compelling case for why they're important to the company's broader mission, they may feel the same way.

Employees who know that their work and purpose aligns with the overarching goals of the company are more likely to feel like what they do matters.

6. You couldn't say for sure whether any of your staff are happy in their jobs. As the experts at *Inc.* magazine report, the most damaging employees to your team are not the ones who quit and leave; they're the ones who quit and stay. It also cites Payscale research indicating that the average employee stays in a job no longer than 24 to 32 months.

A manager who has over-delegated will be entirely surprised to learn that an employee is putting in her two-week notice—and will have no idea whether those who remain on the team actually want to be there.