

**Julie Parker**  
practice success

## New Employee On-boarding Process



## Goals of an On-boarding Program

The new employee gains a deep understanding of the vision and goals of the practice

**The new employee settles easily and happily into their routine and team**

Minimises anxiety

**Swiftly creates a relationship of safety and trust**

Provides clarity of responsibilities and expectations for both the new employee and employer

**Reduces errors and confusion**

Creates environment that encourages best performance

**Reduces stress**

Avoids new employee overwhelm

**Develops a positive attitude**

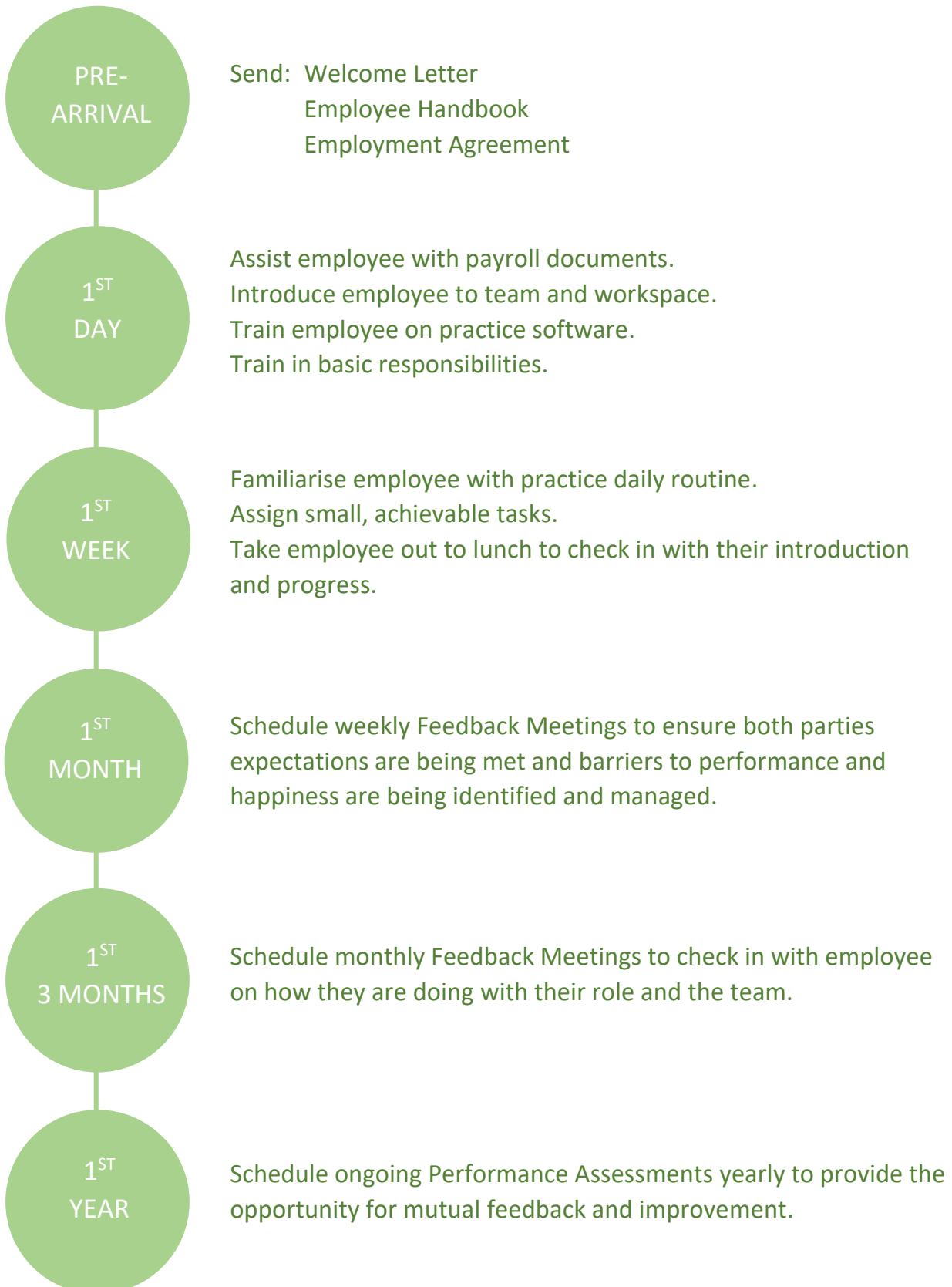
Creates happy work environment

**High job satisfaction**

Saves time for supervisor

**Reduces staff turnover.**

# The Process



# Employee Handbook

Think of a new employee like a foster child coming into your home to live. Consider all the things they would need to know to feel secure, familiar, and welcome. Things such as:

- Do I get a house key?
- When is dinner time? Do we eat at the table?
- What activities do you have on the weekends?
- What do I do with my dirty laundry?
- Is swearing acceptable?
- What do I do when I feel unhappy?
- Can I have friends over?
- Is there a curfew?

The lack of understanding of the family dynamic, how they behave and what their routine is contributes to alienate the child. The same is true for your new employee.

The Employee Handbook should include:

- Basic Information sheet detailing:
  - Car parking
  - Entry keys
  - Alarm code
  - Storage of bag and personal items
  - Uniform
  - Lunch routine
  - Holidays and process for requesting leave
  - Sick days and process for notifying when ill
  - Process and who to contact should they ever be running late for work
  - Personal calls and mobile phone policy
  - Process for registering concerns/complaints
- Your practice policies (behaviour/culture, appearance, customer service, privacy)
- Job Description (list of role responsibilities)
- Loose sheet for the new employee to complete and hand in to payroll (personal contact details, bank account, superannuation fund account number etc.)
- Employment Agreement for them to assess and sign.

# Welcome Letter

First impressions are crucial so get off on the right foot and welcome your new employee with optimism and confidence. You want to convey that you are grateful for the chance to incorporate their character and skill into your practice and assure them that they will likewise be thankful for this opportunity.

See the following example of the Welcome Letter:

Dear (Name),

This is a quick note to tell you that our whole practice is excited about your decision to accept our offer of employment. We could not be happier to welcome you to the team. As we agreed, your first day on the new job is (date). We will expect you at (time).

Much of your first day will be orientation. We will:

- ensure payroll have all the necessary information, such as banking details, Tax File Number Declaration and Superannuation Fund,
- go through your Employee Handbook together to make sure any questions you may have are answered,
- introduce you to the team and workplace,
- familiarise (and train, if needed) you in our practice software (name of software) and,
- train you in your basic responsibilities.

Included with this letter is your Employee Handbook. This provides you with all the information you need to confidently commence your employment with us.

Our goal is to orient you to both your new job and the practice. With this in mind, we have allocated (Name) to work closely with you and provide on-the-job training. She is experienced in all aspects of the job you need to learn.

The person you are directly responsible to is (Name). Please feel welcome to discuss your incorporation into the practice with them freely. We have set up a series of Feedback Meetings to provide the opportunity to check in as to how you are doing in your new role. It is important we identify any barriers to your success and happiness. These meetings are also a good time to discuss how well your expectations of us, and ours of you, are being met.

If you have questions, please feel free to email or call me. My details are (email) and (mobile).

We really look forward to working with you.

Kind regards,

# Day 1 - Orientation

Day 1 is important as it sets the tone for your new employee's employment. Make it a fun day and be sure not to overwhelm them with too much information. Your goal is for your new employee to finish the day feeling confident, happy and optimistic for the future.

- Familiarise your new employee with the staff room, show them where to store lunch and personal items. Let them know your registering of worked hours process.
- Take them on a tour of the practice, telling them some history so they get a good picture in their mind of the development of the practice.
- Introduce team members, explaining all their roles and longevity with the practice.
- Provide password access to the practice software and allow them a chance to familiarise themselves with how you use the software.
- Move through only the basic tasks they will need to perform that day (for example, a receptionist needs to know telephone use, scheduling appointments and processing patient payments). People become productive sooner if they are firmly grounded in the basic knowledge they need to understand their job.
- Allow your new employee to have lunch on their own, if they wish, and ensure they get their full hour. Give them this chance to rest and reflect. For you, it is a normal day, but for the new employee, it is a lot of information, new relationships, new processes...new everything, so it can be tiring.

# First Week

By the end of the first week, your new employee should know what the daily routine is.

They should know how to open the practice each morning and close it down each night. If it is a receptionist position, they should be confident in appointment confirmations, lab management, scheduling effectively and following up on patients and end-of-day reconciliation.

Start introducing additional tasks for your new employee to manage, such as (for a receptionist) Recalls, Incomplete Treatment follow-ups, banking.

Take your new employee out to lunch towards the end of this first week to ensure they are feeling confident with what they have learned so far.

Identify any trouble they may be experiencing and takes steps to manage these areas.

Ask them for feedback regarding what else you can do to better serve their integration into your practice. Keep in mind this is not the time for a performance appraisal by you. The purpose of this lunch is to further build trust, safety and openness in a relaxed environment. (Performance appraisals should only be conducted when the employee is made fully aware of the type of discussion they will be entering in to.)

# Hierarchy of Competence

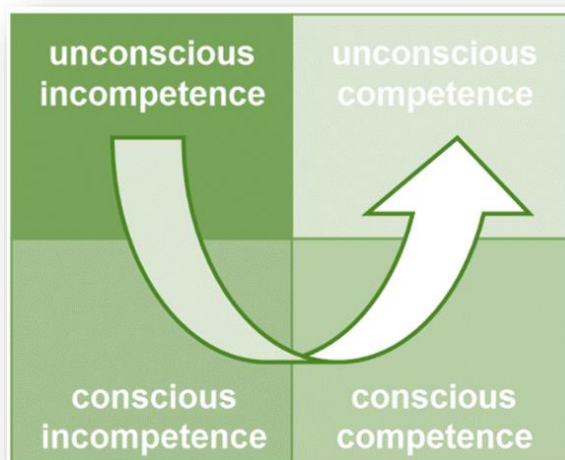
When human beings learn new things, they move through a process from incompetence to competence.

For example, when you learned how to drive a car, you initially had no idea about all the things you needed to learn. In the graph below, this is the **'unconscious incompetence'** quadrant: you were unconscious about your incompetence.

Then, as you realised you needed to learn about acceleration, braking and all the other skills it takes to drive a car, you moved into **'conscious incompetence'**. You were now conscious about your incompetence.

With practice you started to learn such things as how to apply the brake and how much pressure to put on the accelerator, but it still required conscious thought to perform these tasks. You had moved to **'conscious competence'**. You were consciously competent at driving a car.

Eventually, with enough practice and experience, you were able to manoeuvre a car around traffic and get from point A to point B without too much thought. You were on automatic pilot and had moved into **'unconscious competence'**. Unconsciously competent.



Your new employee will be functioning from a place of **'conscious incompetence'** when they are learning all the tasks that make up their responsibilities.

This is the most uncomfortable of all the quadrants, as we naturally prefer to feel competent in all that we do. To give them too many things to learn at once will cause overwhelm, anxiety and unhappiness and their confidence will plummet.

However, metering out their learning over time will help them move from conscious incompetence to conscious competence quickly, building their confidence to tackle further tasks.



# First Month

Continue adding tasks that are part of your new employee's responsibilities now that they are confident in their basic routine tasks. Where once the new employee felt quite consciously incompetent in their basic routine tasks, they now feel unconsciously competent and will be eager to take on board new and more demanding tasks.

**Schedule your Feedback Meetings. They should be weekly for the first month, then stretch out to monthly.**

Feedback Meetings are vital in the progressive improvement in performance of the new employee. It is your chance to share your observations of how well the new employee is establishing themselves into your team.

Feedback Meetings are a time to clarify whether the manner with which the new employee is tackling their responsibilities and the results they are achieving are in line with your practice expectations.

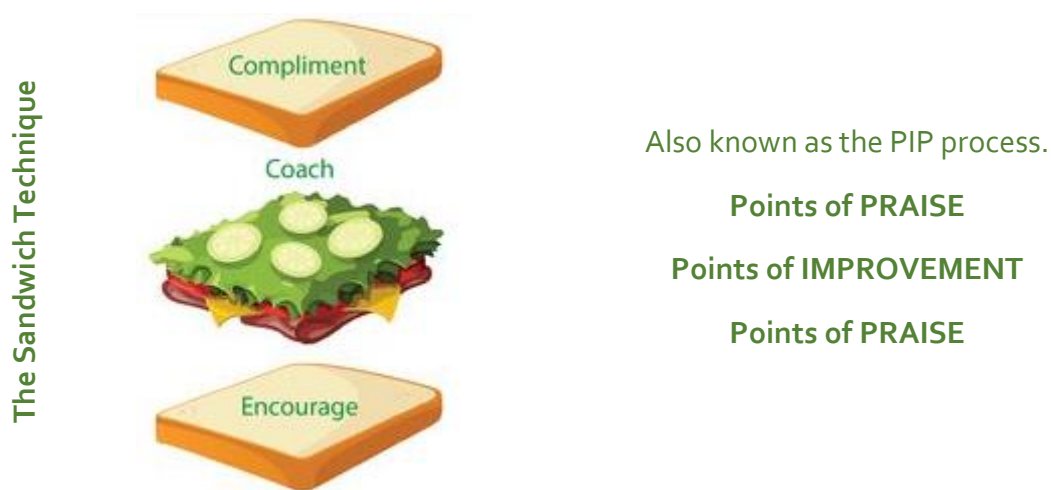
Ask for feedback. Everyone is unique and what has worked for previous employees may be different this new employee. Be curious how to get the best performance from your new employee.

**Feedback Meetings shows everyone's commitment to continual improvement and continual learning. This leads your new employee to feeling comfortable in asking questions and clarifying processes and systems.**

# Feedback Meetings

Always make employees aware of a Feedback Meeting day prior to it occurring. Allow them the opportunity (as you have had) to reflect and gather their thoughts.

During the session, acknowledge the employee’s achievements as well as offering areas to be improved upon. This is an important process to get right. In order to have the employee walk away from a Feedback Meeting feeling encouraged and empowered, it is best to use the ‘sandwich technique’. That is, constructive feedback sandwiched between positive feedback.



Don’t simply tell employees what they are doing wrong. Send them off with practical guidance they can put directly into practice so they can improve.

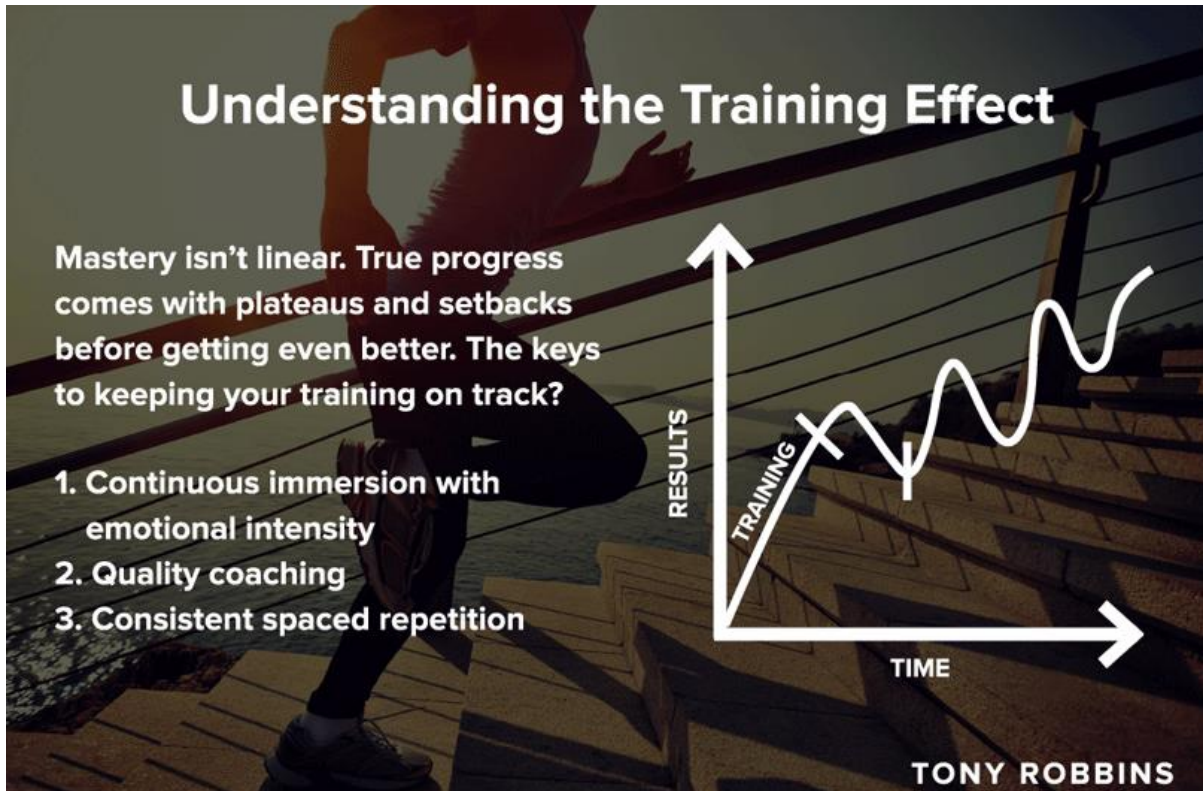
Always flip the feedback meeting to be one of 360-degree feedback.

This is when the employee is encouraged to discuss what they find effective with the practice and your leadership and what they would like to change in order to foster a better performance. It is a scary notion to be open to ‘criticism’. However, your performance will improve enormously if you do and it is a powerful example of great leadership.

Formalise the points of discussion by writing them down. This helps to create importance and accountability and provides a reference for future meetings to gauge progress.

## First Three Months and on...

Continue with your Feedback Meetings for the duration of your employee's term with you. Schedule them monthly for the first three months and then they can become your Performance Appraisals that occur annually.

The graphic features a background image of a person in athletic wear running up a wooden staircase. Overlaid on this is a white line graph with a vertical axis labeled "RESULTS" and a horizontal axis labeled "TIME". The graph shows a line that starts at the origin, rises to a peak, dips to a trough, rises to a higher peak, dips to a lower trough, and then rises to its highest peak. The word "TRAINING" is written vertically along the first upward slope of the line. Below the graph, the name "TONY ROBBINS" is printed in white capital letters.

### Understanding the Training Effect

Mastery isn't linear. True progress comes with plateaus and setbacks before getting even better. The keys to keeping your training on track?

1. Continuous immersion with emotional intensity
2. Quality coaching
3. Consistent spaced repetition

TONY ROBBINS

# Keeping Great Employees

Providing a positive and supportive work environment over the long-term will help you keep your great employees.

## **Be consistent**

Ensure your behaviour and responses to team members are consistent... something they can easily predict. It is very unnerving for team members when superiors display inconsistent behaviour with their responses changing depending upon their mood. Research reveals that employees would prefer to work for a consistently negative boss than one who shows inconsistent positivity. Your consistency will build trust and your inconsistency will reduce it.

## **Create the environment for people to be successful**

If you want your team members to be successful, you must create the environment for them to be so. Providing the training, support and feedback that team members need in order to meet your expectations. Many times, I have seen employers put a new staff member in place and expect them to magically fit in and achieve their goals without ever offering adequate training and direction.

## **Set clear expectations**

No-one can read your mind and intentions. Do not expect any expectation to be met unless it has been clearly stated and understood. Be very specific in what you expect as an outcome, the timeline to achieve this outcome and the desired process. Give ongoing feedback to ensure you are both on the same page.

## **Be fair**

All too often I have seen employers become disgruntled with a team member because the team member has somehow failed to live up to their expectations, only to realise these expectations were quite unreasonable in the first place. For example, expecting team members to respond to work emails outside of working hours, or expecting a casual employee to behave as a permanent employee. Be fair and reasonable in what you ask and expect of others, honouring the people they are.

## **Align the practice goals with the practice philosophy and values**

The values and philosophy of your practice are only powerful if all decisions made within the business are consistent with these principles, including the goals you choose to set from time to time. Both employees and patients will develop faith and trust in your message when your behaviour displays your commitment to your stated values, even if it is going to cost you money!

## **Assure everyone's psychological safety**

Providing a caring, supportive environment where team members feel they can rely upon you to watch out for their best interests means that they won't need to, and they can relax into their work. You do not want to generate a suspicious or "unsafe" environment.

## **Get things done**

There is nothing like an air of progress to generate further progress. Getting things done shows people you are in positive movement. Constant small achievements feed the motivation when completing bigger goals.

## **Have regular "off-the-record" discussions**

Often, staff will remain silent about underlying issues that can become destructive in the workplace because they don't feel 'safe' or 'entitled' to raise them. They fear situations like:

- embarrassing another individual,
- being seen as a troublemaker,
- retribution from other team members, and
- putting themselves 'out there', only to have little or no action taken, and they have made themselves vulnerable for no apparent good reason.

I have always found it valuable to have regular (once every 3 months or so) one-on-one confidential discussions with each individual team member. A wonderful question to ask each team member is, "If you were the boss, what would you change or implement?"

## **Embrace "problems"**

The purpose of most businesses is the same; to solve problems. Patients have the problem of dental issues and the dental practice solves all the problems that are blocks to getting this job done effectively. Practices will never be problem free so embrace every issue that comes up as an additional opportunity to become more and more efficient, productive, and successful, and thereby thrive even more in our competitive dental industry.

## **Celebrate success**

We all work hard to achieve our successes. Without celebration, we lose motivation to continually reach higher and higher levels of accomplishment. Setting a goal is a 'future-seeking' action and the celebration of this achievement motivates your team to set and achieve more goals.

# Micro-Management

Despite the damaging effects that micro-managing or demanding too much control over employee's actions has, micro-management is still the most common reason I see good employees leave a practice.

Micro-management is demanding or requiring excessive control over the details when team members are completing their tasks. It is exerting your power to control your employees and pay extreme attention to even minor tasks.

Identifying a tendency towards micro-management is the first step, as many people who manage in this style do not see themselves as a micro-manager.

Review the following list to discover whether you are exhibiting micromanagement behaviours:

- Do you immediately step in as the leader when a new process is needed?
- Do you believe that only you know how best to manage a task?
- Do you struggle with delegating tasks?
- Do you monitor other's performance too closely?
- Are some of your directions stating the obvious?
- Do you disregard the knowledge and experience of others?

Regardless of a micromanager's motive for their conduct, its potential effects include:

- Creation of resentment in manager-employee relationship
- Damage to trust in the manager-employee relationship
- Interference with existing teamwork and inhibition of future teamwork
- Erosion of employee confidence
- Drop in employee creative and innovative thought
- Employee can experience heightened anxiety and, in extreme cases, depression.

If you identify yourself as exhibiting micro-management tendencies, take steps to modify your management style and grow to be a leader who inspires only the best from your employees.



[JulieParkerPracticeSuccess.com.au](http://JulieParkerPracticeSuccess.com.au)

[julie@julieparkerpracticesuccess.com.au](mailto:julie@julieparkerpracticesuccess.com.au)

0407 657 729