



You're in My Kitchen...

And You're Standing on My Foot!

By Libby Wagner, Founder and President

I grew up on sailboats. On a sailboat, the kitchen is called the galley, and my family refers to this type of kitchen, on land or on sea, as a “one butt” kitchen. This means there’s no room for anyone but the cook or the dishwasher, and certainly not at the same time. Kitchens, in most modern homes, have become the centralized focus point for visiting and connecting, even if you’ve got a lovely living room right over there with comfy sofas and candlelight. Everyone wants to stand in the kitchen—that’s where things are happening!

A lot of frustration, stress and inefficiencies occur when people in a company are gathered around the kitchen, and some feel like they are getting in the way of the work that needs to be done. What can be done?

1. Clear roles and responsibilities: make sure everyone one knows what’s his or hers to do—and not to do! This is an important distinction. A lot of inefficiencies

occur when we are repeating or redoing steps because we haven’t been clear about who’s doing what.

- 2. True delegation:** don’t practice Mirage Delegation—where you pretend to delegate and let go, but you’re in there hovering and messing about in the details. Set an expectation, and then let go—get out of the kitchen and let the cook work!
- 3. Specificity:** increasing your specificity can help both you and those whose boundaries you might be tempted to cross by either taking over or doing it for them. Be specific about what you want, your expectations, including a “by when” phrase, and allow the person to adjust to the new process.
- 4. Trust:** If you’ve done 1-3 effectively, then this one will be a natural by-product of your delivering High Levels of the Core Dimensions (Respect, Empathy, Specificity, and Genuineness)—Trust. Don’t waste a lot of time being suspicious about people not following through or letting you down.

Micromanaging vs. Specificity

Many people confuse high levels of Specificity with micromanaging. Not the same thing at all. Specificity means that I give you the recipe, I might let you try my practice batch, and I share some things I know about this particular stove or oven. In other words, I set you up for success!

Micromanaging, on the other hand, is about being in the middle of the kitchen with you, wrangling the electric mixer from your hands and standing on your foot at the same time. I don't trust you'll actually be able to pull this off, so I better get in there and do it myself—take over!

Sound silly? We do this all the time in our companies and on our teams. Why not set the person up for success, and get out of the kitchen so you can focus on something else? Just try it!

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