



## Stay in Your Lane, Please

I recently witnessed a senior executive team as they effectively managed a crisis. In large letters posted on the wall were guideline reminders of the rules of engagement for crisis management meetings. One guideline in particular caught my attention: *Stay in your lane*.

The intent of this simple message was to remind the team that roles are important. Amid a crisis, we tend to swerve over into a role, responsibility, or action held by a colleague or an employee. Picking up the work of another can be helpful when invited to do so, but routinely assuming an employee's duties can be problematic to the organization's overall efficiency.

According to Gallup's American Workplace report, 60% or more of employees report that they cannot do their work, partly because their boss does the work for them. Their boss swerves into their lane.

We often see this inefficient pattern of a boss doing an employee's job for them. The guilty executives often struggle with productivity themselves, yet they find time to take on additional duties otherwise assigned to their employees. Sometimes, these leaders are micro-managers who find it easier to do the work themselves rather than appropriately train or instruct an employee. Other job-sharing executives operate from fear-based leadership beliefs by striving for perfection or not wanting an employee to take credit for the task. In most situations, the leader is attempting to protect an area of insecurity they have about themselves as a leader.

While assisting employees with their work is sometimes necessary, routinely doing someone else's job is a non-productive use of a leader's time. Additionally, job-stealing bosses rob the employees of the opportunity to learn and grow their skills.

Highly engaged employees will likely only tolerate the job-stealing boss briefly. Engaged employees reinforce their engagement by making daily progress toward meaningful work. Having your boss do your job for you is neither progress nor meaningful.

If you are a leader who cannot stay in your lane, carefully consider why you insist on doing your employees' work. If your employee is incapable of doing the work, that problem will require training or the replacement of that employee. However, if you are doing the work of an otherwise capable

employee, please reconsider. You may see your employee exit the organization, leaving you with an empty lane that is all yours.

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