

Controlling vs Trusting – A Fine Balance

Are you guilty of controlling actions but not your business? Or perhaps you control your clients but not your client relationships? Or perhaps you control the work but not the outcomes?

Sometimes we are very good at controlling things: we control how work is done, how clients are engaged and even how our staff learn. Yet, controlling these elements takes us away from what is really important – controlling our business.

Learning to trust others by breaking your “bad” control habits has multiple benefits for your own development and for your business and in this Update we discuss simple techniques that can help you let go.

The definition of trust is very straight forward – placing reliance in another person or entity to deliver something you need. In other words, you relinquish control over the action and rely on someone else to undertake those actions. The problem with this arrangement is immediately apparent – relinquishing control and placing reliance on someone else introduces uncertainty.

You become uncertain about the actions the person (who now has control) will take and what the result is likely to be. All you can do is sit back and monitor progress – a far more passive role than you have played before.

So if letting go creates this level of uncertainty, then it's no wonder you may be reluctant to delegate some of your “control”!

Learning to trust others revolves around expectation management. You trust those who you expect to behave/respond/react in a certain way. Within your business, managing expectations occurs at multiple levels:

- You need to begin managing your own expectations around how actions are completed. While others may not complete work the same way you do, let go of controlling the “how” and trust others to contribute to a streamlined efficient, process. It's not wrong because it's different – it's just different. This is where checklists and procedures help – by implementing standard checklists and procedures across the business, you are establishing the expectations for quality, timeliness and accuracy.
- You need to start managing your team's expectations on a number of levels – the scope of authority they have to complete the assignment, the assistance you will provide, the quality level you expect to be attained, the time taken and of course, what training or coaching they will receive.
- One important expectation to manage is how you will react or respond to any errors that may be made as part of letting go. If you typically get angry at an

error or perhaps don't bother telling your team member that an error has been made, you now need to change that expectation and build a new one with your team.

By changing your expectations of how a person will react when you relinquish control, by setting clear expectations with your team and by establishing consistent processes and tools that embed standards of quality and timeliness, you are beginning to let go and trust others. The reason is simple: because much of the uncertainty you have in "letting go" and trusting others has been dealt with and removed from the trust equation.

So letting go can be straightforward – I want to relinquish control but I am not certain of the actions this person will take. Solution: implement processes that create certainty. So trust a staff member to prepare Mr Jeffrey's advertisements, car, eye-test or whatever – show them the process they need to follow, provide training and then let them get on with it!

See the next page for a comparison between a business owner who has let go and one who is still maintaining control.

Kindest regards,

Brad Huckel

CONTROLLING VS TRUSTING – LEARNING TO LET GO

The following table provides an insight into some of the more common evidence that a business owner has not yet “let go” and begun to trust others.

If you see yourself in any of these situations, sit back, think about how you can let go, and then start practicing.

Action	Controlling	Trusting
Training staff	I don't have time to do that – staff need to teach each other	Part of my job is to develop and coach my team
Delegating	By the time I explain the job, I could have done it myself They are just going to botch it up and I'll have to do it again	Delegating frees me up to work ON my business and provide essential coaching so team members can learn. Within boundaries, the team can make mistakes – that's one of the ways they learn
Changing clients	I've looked after the Smiths for years. They might be a \$500 per annum client, but nobody knows them as well as I do	I am more than happy to explain to the Smiths that they will now deal with an account manager
Introducing Managers	A waste of time – I am just going to spend hours training someone up when I could do it myself (starting to notice a trend?)	What a great initiative! Frees me up from the day to day work and gets me focusing on adding value
Mistake made	I told you. It just proves that I need to remain in control. I've fixed it. It would have taken longer to get Janey to fix it, let alone identify it as an error	Janey, let's take 10 minutes to go through this work so we can discuss a couple of areas which I'd like you to look at again.
Standards	None of my team works at the same standard as I do. Hence its only logical I do all the important clients	I recognise that I have significantly more experience than my team, but don't necessarily have all the answers. It's my responsibility to develop my team
Checklists and procedures	Why would I need those? I know exactly what I'm doing	Invaluable! I know exactly how my team is working and trust them to work to the expected level of quality.