

Responding to: PKT E1-6

**Summary, outline, or diagram of key concepts:**

Managers have many demands on their time, including:

- Boss-imposed time: required by boss, unavoidable
- System-imposed time: supporting peers
- Self-imposed time: decides to do himself, not imposed by anyone else → not punished by anyone else
  - Two types:
    - Discretionary: personal time, often gets overtaken by subordinate imposed time.
    - Subordinate imposed
- Ways that the managers discretionary time gets taken over by subordinate imposed time (passing the monkey):
  - 1) Not dealing with employees' problems immediately, and taking on the responsibility to deal with it later
  - 2) "Send me a memo."—once the subordinate sends a memo, now the responsibility is on the manager.
  - 3) "Just let me know how I can help"—leaves himself open to the needs of the employees
  - 4) "I'll draw up an initial draft for discussion with you"—takes the responsibility on to himself.

**Don't make your subordinates' issues a joint problem!!!**

Levels of Initiative (From E-5):

- 1) Wait until told (No control over when/what you will do)
- 2) Ask what to do (Control over when, but not what)
- 3) Recommend, then take resulting action (Control over when and what)
- 4) act, but advise (Control over when and what)
- 5) Act and report (Control over when and what)

**Don't be #1 or 2. Be #3,4, or 5!**

3, 4, and 5 empower the subordinate and give more discretionary time to the manager.

When subordinates come to the manager with a problem, they should either decide right then and there what to do about it, or establish a level 3, 4, or 5 of initiative for the subordinate to take so as to solve the problem without wasting anyone's time.

How to deal with problems brought by employees:

- 1) Immediately decide to either fix it or rule it out.

- 2) Only allow a realistic amount of problems that can actually be looked in to.
- 3) Schedule in when you will look at problems, and don't let other problems in.
- 4) Only fix problems face-to-face or by telephone, never by email.
- 5) At each appointment for looking at problems, decide the degree of initiative that should be taken, and schedule the next appointment to review the problem.

**So . . .**

Managers need to let subordinates take care of their own problems. Doing so not only increases subordinate productivity as he/she take responsibility of their own work, but also prevents the manager from being entangled in problems that he doesn't have time for. This will make everyone (manager, subordinate) happy. When managers start taking on their subordinates' problems, it is a form of micromanaging. I've seen this in my own work as an employee. When my manager trusts me to make decisions and act on them, I have more confidence in my work, which improves the quality of my work. On the other hand, when I feel like I constantly have to get my manager's opinion and approval, my productivity and confidence decrease.

**I'm still not sure about:**

What are some ways that you can help employees have higher levels of initiative?