

Member Communication Experience

The Leadership Shift That Frees Up Your Calendar

Written by: Dr. Nanette Miner, Managing Consultant/Succession Strategist, The Training Doctor

You delegate a critical task Monday morning. Plan to check in Friday. Wednesday you're "just making sure" everything's on track. By Wednesday afternoon, you've basically taken it back.

Your team feels micromanaged. You're exhausted and frustrated, but next week, same pattern.

Every decision routes through you because that's what's always worked. But now you're trapped. The company can't grow because you're too busy, you're too busy because everything needs your input, everything needs your input because you haven't empowered or trained others to make decisions.

At this point, most leaders think they have a time management problem.

Maybe a new system, a new app, or a new productivity hack will fix it.

But time management isn't the problem. Leadership is.

When leaders say, "I don't have enough time," what they usually mean is this:

I don't trust the work will be done the way I would do it.

It takes longer to explain than to just do it myself.

If this goes sideways, it's on me.

Micromanagement often shows up disguised as responsibility. You're protecting quality. You're preventing mistakes. You're making sure deadlines are met. On the surface, it looks like diligence. Underneath, it's a lack of clarity and capability – not



in your team's intelligence, but in their authority.

Those are leadership issues, not calendar issues.

Time management assumes your work is fixed and your role is static. Leadership assumes the opposite – every day is unique and often requires immediate and thoughtful decisions.

If your team doesn't know:

- » What decisions they own
- » What "good enough" actually looks like
- » Where their judgment ends and yours begins

They will default to you. Every time. And you'll keep reinforcing it by stepping in.

Leaning into leadership won't give you more hours, but it

does change how the hours get used. The first step is decision design, not delegation. Delegation isn't "here, take this task." It's "here's the outcome, the constraints, and the decision rights – you take it from here."

Leaders who build capacity spend more time upfront clarifying expectations, boundaries, and success criteria. Yes, it *is* slower at first, but it's the only way work actually moves without you hovering over it.

Another leadership frustration hiding behind "time management woes" is tolerance for learning curves. If every mistake triggers a takeover, your team learns exactly one thing: don't decide without you. Speed comes from allowing thoughtful mistakes – and coaching through them – not from preventing them altogether.

And finally, there's your identity.

Many leaders are promoted because they are excellent doers. So, letting go of control can feel like letting go of the value you bring to the organization. But leadership value isn't in how much you personally handle. It's in how well the organization functions when you're not in the room.

If your calendar is full of follow-ups, approvals, and rework, don't ask how to manage your time better.

Ask:

- » What decisions am I holding onto that others could learn to make?
- » Where have I been unclear about authority?
- » What capability am I avoiding building in others because it feels like it will slow me down?

Time management is a survival skill. Leadership development, and delegating decision making authority, are growth strategies.

If you feel stretched thin, it's tempting to look for a better system to manage the chaos. But the real constraint isn't your calendar – it's how decisions flow through your organization.

When every decision requires your involvement, you haven't built a scalable company. You've designed a bottleneck. The moment you shift from managing time to developing decision-makers is the moment growth becomes possible.

And ironically, that's when time finally shows up again. 



About the Author

Dr. Nanette Miner is an expert in building ready and capable leadership teams for succession and exit.

Any views and opinions expressed in this article may or may not reflect the views and opinions of the Construction Management Association of America (CMAA). By publishing this piece, CMAA is not expressing endorsement of the individual, the article, or their association, organization, or company.