JAMES**SCHRAMKO**

How to Avoid Being Held Hostage by Over Controlling Employees

Just one employee with too much control can overturn office dynamics. VirtualDOO's Lloyd Thompson discusses how to avoid falling hostage to your hire.

James Schramko and Lloyd Thompson

James: James Schramko here. Welcome back to my podcast. This is episode 972, and today we're talking about how to stop being held hostage by a staff member. For that, of course, I've brought along my repeat special guest, Lloyd Thompson from VirtualDOO.com. Hey, Lloyd.

Lloyd: Hey, James, thanks for having me.

James: You've been a busy man lately. I believe you've launched your new book.

Lloyd: Oh, thank you. Yeah. So here it is.

James: Oh, look, he's got one. That's it.

Lloyd: Nine Ways to Leave Your Day-to-Day Operations: And Realize Your True Vision.

James: I love it. So what would we discover in that book?

Lloyd: So it's really a primer to help the founder realize what they can do to extract themselves from the daily operations, and how to get started in preparation for bringing in a director of operations. And of course, that's an area we can help.

James: Love it. Okay, so, of course, Lloyd and I met in the surf. He's been on this podcast, previous episodes. He's helping a lot of my clients, like visionary people, to actually achieve their vision by getting in there. And I always say, people and systems, that's what Lloyd is really good at, a good communicator. It doesn't matter where your business is, and it doesn't even matter how big it is, there's probably a package for you.

But the reason I brought along Lloyd is I love sharing these little stories, some case studies, some real-world examples that we may relate to. You know, if we can get a couple of tips from an episode like this that might help us identify a situation that we're having, or potentially going to have, or avoid a situation, even better, learn from other people's experiences, then this will be a useful episode.

So, by the topic here, it sounds like in this case, Lloyd, we're going to be talking about a staff member and things not running so smoothly for a company. Why don't you set the scene for us, what happened in this situation?

Not a new scenario

Lloyd: Well, I've seen this one a few times now. It seems to pop up where a team member is holding on to some key processes and not letting go of those key processes. And the motivation behind this is perhaps, I mean, I don't know exactly what's in their mind, but perhaps it gives them power or some kind of security, perhaps they feel untouchable.

And it's really hard for the founder, because then they feel like they're blackmailed, or they're scared to push something from this team member and try and get it out of them. And I've seen it manifest itself in a few ways. So they're not letting go of these key processes. It might be that they're not being responsive, or it might feel like batteries aren't included, they're not being so motivated.

A few other ways, like, perhaps they're making demands, because they feel like they've got you of something, you know, it might be, oh, I feel like, this is a team or area I should be running, and the founder doesn't believe they can push back on them. Or perhaps it's that they've got whatever leverage they need, but they can push back on the founder and say, You know what, I would like more money. And then the founder is in a position where they don't really feel like they can say no.

The difficulties of a black box situation

James: Yeah, well, a word that comes to mind here is compromise. This is a classic scenario of compromise. It's so common, I've seen it all the time, my whole time in business and online, this comes up all the time. I've got a word for it, too. I call it a black box. The team member is holding on to a black box.

They won't tell you what's inside, they've got their own proprietary IP. If you're in a service business, they'll try and hook the customer into the idea that this black box is so valuable that if they were to leave, then they could only deal with this person and not the company itself. So it can actually extend into a situation where it becomes really bad if that person ever leaves.

So the owner is thinking, well, if I call them out on this, if I try and confront it, they'll leave with their little black box and take all my customers with me and even poach some of my current staff.

Lloyd: Yeah, not just a black box, they feel blackmailed.

James: It is, it's a really dark situation. Avoid the pun there. You remind me, the batteries not included. I saw some post recently where a parent gave their kid some batteries at Christmas and said, toy not included.

All right, so the founder is there in this situation. They've got this employee, the employee is holding on to processes, they may have their own little black box, they're protecting it, their little fiefdom.

In my experience, what happens in this situation is they would be reluctant to train anyone else on their thing. They'd be very resistant to other people coming into their patch, or their turf or territory. They would fight them. In fact, if you bring in new people, often they would just destroy them as quickly as possible, and burn them so that they protect their fiefdom.

Another little interesting correlation I've seen, often when you've got people who don't want to share their processes or are a bit secretive, there might be other things where they don't take a lot of annual leave. There's often when you find theft or fraud, it's going to come down to the person who was secretive and not transparent about what they're doing.

Now, there'd be a number of reasons why someone would do this. You speculated on a couple, Lloyd. But I suspect, yes, they feel that they're unsackable or unremovable.

Lloyd: Untouchable.

James: Untouchable. It is. They've compromised the owner, and they're unremovable. So that's one thing. Second thing is, they might be a thief or a crook. That could happen, and it does happen, and it's a reality of business. The other thing is, they might just be insecure and not feeling very safe.

What it means for the founder

You haven't created a good environment where they feel empowered to share information and still not lose their job. Right? So often, you know, if we're going to have to find an area of responsibility for how this happened, it kind of points back to one person in my mind, what do you think?

Lloyd: I think it does point to the founder for not taking action. And the problem is, they have this fear about themselves. They think, well, I'm scared to act. I'm scared to disagree with this person, I feel paralyzed.

James: Well, a lot of people are people pleasers, too, right? They avoid conflict, they won't do reviews, they won't check in on their team members, they avoid meetings, the communication basically becomes paralyzed. And it just actually gets worse and worse that the toxicity builds up.

The rest of the team know this is going on. And it does not endear the performers, or the people who are transparent, because they think, well, how does this person get away with blue murder? And I've got to share everything I do. So you start to see staff churn. Obviously, the person who's in charge of the business whose vision is not being realized is getting emotionally torn by this.

I mean, I had this as recently as yesterday, this happened yesterday. A guy's got - one of his team members has called a review after two years, and he's demanding a pay rise. And when I speak to the owner, he's like, This guy is not - he's got a bad attitude and doesn't even do a good job. And I've been putting off talking to him about it, because I don't want to upset him, I want to avoid the conflict.

I'm like, It doesn't get better, the longer you leave it. And I said, This is fantastic. You should thank them for calling this, because you've been meaning to share some feedback.

Lloyd: I think, I mean, the impact too is, firstly, it's just emotionally exhausting for the founder. And as you said about, they're not executing their vision, they're executing someone else's vision, they're executing the vision of the person who's blackmailing them.

James: That's true. So if you give too much power to these people, and this is really a power play, as you've rightly pointed out, if you transfer the power to the team member, that's not helping the whole team. I remember even sports coaches, they talk about, if they have a star player, they'll tune up the player because one star can disrupt an entire team. The team is better without the star, and as my mentor used to say, an empty flat is better than a bad tenant. Now, for our international people, that'd be like an empty condominium is better than a bad tenant, or an empty property is better than a bad tenant.

I fully, wholeheartedly agree with this. So there's definitely ways I've dealt with this.

But I'm curious, Lloyd, how do you deal with it? And we'll see if we can trade some notes and get some good tips here. So, so far, if you're listening to this podcast, Episode 972, I'm chatting with Lloyd Thompson from VirtualDOO.com.

And we're chatting about when you're being held hostage by a staff member who refuses to share or be involved in sort of teamwork or cross communication with the other parts of the business. What do we do in that situation, Lloyd?

How the problem impacts the team

Lloyd: You know, just before I go down that road, there was just something you said about team, and I just want to go back to that for a second, because the impact on the team is massive. Like, it feels so unfair to those people in the team. And the longer this goes on without taking the action, the bigger the impact is on the team. And then that can come back to the founder.

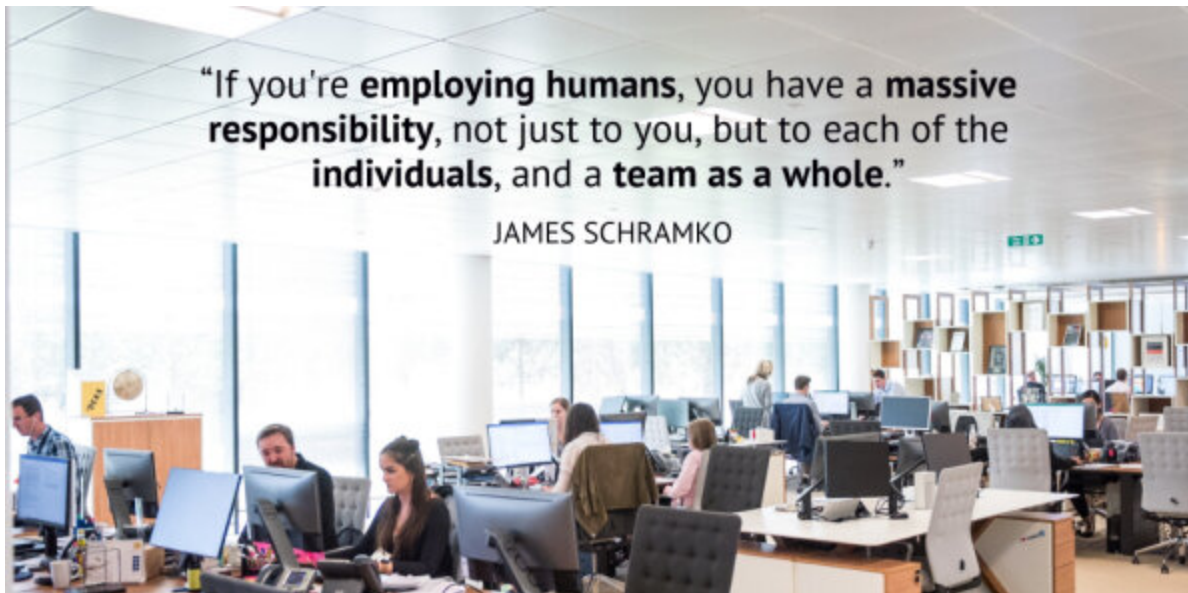**James:** Well, they don't respect the founder anymore.

Lloyd: They don't respect the founder. They think, why is this person getting better treatment than I am? And then after that, they can think, well, what do I do? Do I put up with this? Do I leave? Or worse.

James: Or do I create my own black box?

Lloyd: Do I do the same? Yeah.

James: You're literally telling them, listen, you should create your own black box, or you should go work somewhere else where the founder has got more of a grip on this and won't tolerate - it's kind of passive-aggressive behavior in a way, a lot of this time.

Lloyd: Yeah, I think passive-aggressive is fair. It's just one of those cases where one bad apple can spoil the whole bunch, and then you've got a few bad apples, and the whole thing is rotten.

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James: And it's fixable. That's the thing. And we're going to get on to the fixability part here. And what I want to point out here is, this can be messy, this is a messy part of being an entrepreneur. If you're employing humans, you have a massive responsibility, not just to you, but to each of the individuals, and a team as a whole.

The whole purpose of your business is to create and keep a customer, right? Peter Drucker said something like that. If that's true, then everything you do must be designed to make sure this business actually survives, because the vast majority of new businesses are not functioning five years later, right?

And if this is a common cause of a team breakdown, or a toxic workplace, or just in very simple terms, if your vision is not getting translated into results, it's very likely someone in your team is hanging on to a black box. So that being the case, let's talk about some action steps we could do to fix this situation.

What to do if it happens to you

Lloyd: Well, all up, first thing we need to - we need to reduce that key person risk, we can't keep depending on that key person. And so before we reduce it, the first thing we need to do is stop giving them more responsibilities, because you're just making the problem worse. So stop giving them more before we're then going to figure out how we're going to reduce some of that risk.

James: I want to talk about that, because the first objection that comes up for most people is, Aren't they going to be aware of what I'm doing here, are they going to leave straightaway? Or aren't they going to call me on it and say, Hey, you're not giving me responsibility anymore? Or you're pulling back my work. Is this like an enforced termination over time?

I can't remember the technical word for it. But I saw a LinkedIn post about it the other day, and I remember this, this is where you work someone out of a job slowly over time. And everyone knows what's happening, but it's not really official. Is there a chance you're going to get resistance immediately, when you start reducing the workflow?

Lloyd: Well, I would say, it's going to be a gradual thing. I mean, you're not going to do it immediately, you're going to think about what steps you're going to take. And it might not be targeted specifically at one person. So for example, you might be missing having those key processes documented.

You might not aim it directly at that person and say, Hey, you know what, we're missing some SOPs, I'm going to drive an SOP initiative across the organization, I want to start getting things into SOPs. And so that key person who you're trying to get their processes documented is going to be a part of that.

James: Well, this is the part where they go to the lunch room or the chat room. And they go, This is bullsh*t, we're getting turned into a bureaucracy, the founder's lost his mind. This place is going to be a sh*t place to work now, because we're going to have all these rules and SOPs. And they're going to start trying to poison the other team members at this point, like immediately, that's what's going to happen, right? They're going to resist.

Preparing to let the offender go

Lloyd: Well, you're going to have to start thinking about how you're going to share that person's responsibility. So you can think, well, am I not going to share this person's responsibilities with other people in the team, do they have capacity to pick up this person's responsibilities? Or am I going to need to hire someone else?

Now that person might not be a direct replacement for this person. This is just extra capacity in the team, who's going to pick up some of the responsibilities that this person has. And these responsibilities can be shared out in the team as an early step.

James: Yeah. So my first thoughts are, I plan for this person not being there, I plan for, at the very first wind they catch that there's change and they're not going to be happy with how the direction it's going, they've got a foot out the door if not already, and they could leave, they could abandon their post.

That's my first contingency when you have a key person role, or when you have a single source of dependency, is they might leave and they might take their black box, right, before we can find out what's in it. We've already left it too late. Like, you should have been under this way earlier, before they create their black box. Like, Hang on, what's that over there? Show me what's inside. Like, as soon as you find a black box, get inside it. Earlier the better.

Lloyd: It's hard to have that perfect solution, but the longer you leave it, the worse.

James: Five years later, you've got no chance, right? No chance of getting into that black box. So let's prepare for the fact they may leave. This is a very significant reality, they may leave. And I always draw on my grandfather's wisdom here. He said, Son, take your hand out of a bucket of water and see what hole it leaves.

And he was teaching me that things will re-form around the new situation. And I've seen this time and time again, where someone leaves, who you thought was indispensable and would kill the whole thing, people step up. They just move in. And what I do in my company is a little bit different to others.

How James handles a team member's departure

Like we sometimes, it's very rare, and it hasn't happened for a long time, maybe six years, someone left to go into a new industry, and I think become an insurance salesman. And he'd been with us for like, six or seven years, he was great, great guy. And it was all great. And he was doing a pretty responsible role. And we did have some coverage.

But when someone goes, I get a list of their tasks, and we auction them off into the rest of the team.

Lloyd: [laughs] Auction.

James: Yeah. I say, Okay, we have a meeting as soon as possible. I say, Hey, such and such is leaving, we celebrate his new venture, we're really happy for him, he's done a great job. You know, that's like the whole, here's-the-golden-watch-everyone's-happy thing. But you need to stabilize the team when someone leaves.

And then I say, Now, here's the roles that were being done. Here's the tasks. Now, I'd like to know who's interested in some of these tasks, like if there was support desk, or there was video editing, or there was sending out emails. And as you know, I've always thought about a role as a collection of tasks not being a predefined, lead tin type scenario where it's, you know, preset.

And what I find is people say, Oh, boss, I'd be interested in doing the email part, or I'd be interested in doing support. Often, they'll be learning a new skill, or just taking on more of a mix of that in their portfolio of tasks. Look, we treat it like this. And so they lean into it, and I offer to give them training on it or whatever.

But here's something I do that's pretty amazing. I don't think, I've never learned this from anyone else. I just came up with it myself. When someone leaves, and other people take on the new tasks, I give everyone a pay bump. And that protects me for a few reasons. One is, I'm acknowledging they're taking on a little bit more work.

Two is, it makes them miss the person a little bit less. Sometimes, if someone were to leave on bad terms, in this case, it's very likely they're going to leave on sort of cloudy terms. They have this tendency to call back to the company like a week later, a month later, they're still trying to put that poison in there. Like, oh, did everything collapse? Are you guys okay without me? Like, they're just looking for that validation, Oh, you were so valuable, you were amazing. We can't survive without you.

Lloyd: And it rarely collapses.

James: It doesn't.

Lloyd: I mean, normally the whole team is better, that toxicity is gone, and the founder feels, like, relieved that they can now execute again.

James: They never say, Oh, I wish I kept them a little bit longer. They never ever say that. And the thing is, now these people, they're like, What? You know, yeah, we're okay, thanks very much. Like, hang on, this guy left, I got paid more, and I enjoy my work more. It actually was a pretty good thing.

So I think it's a nice sort of mitigation strategy. So that's what happens, just in case you start introducing some of these things and the person leaves, these are some of the tools that are in the toolkit for you to explore.

What else can we do, Lloyd, on our continuation?

Lloyd: I just want to go back to that, the task auction is brilliant. I'm going to call it the task auction, I don't know if that's a James Schramko TM.

James: Yeah, because I want people to work on projects and things they're really interested in. Like literally, Who wants this? And they're like, I'll do it. No, I'll do it. Like, Okay, you can both do it, right?

Lloyd: What's good about that approach is you're not pushing and saying, Hey, you need to do this task.

James: Exactly.

Lloyd: The buy in has come from them. They're saying, Hey, yeah, I'll do this. It's not, Hey, we need to separate Fred's tasks amongst the team. So I really like that approach.

James: Yeah, instead of like, You get this, you get that, or I need you to do this, or you're now doing this. I'm always thinking of it from the point of view of the team members because I've been a team member. And I've been in that position where - I've told the story before, this is one of my biggest lessons on single-source dependency.

When I was a regional administrator for a telco company, there was one division already. And then we set up the second division, and I was employed to be the regional administrator, and I had a team of salespeople, seven or eight salespeople, a sales manager, and I was the regional administrator. And we were a clone of Team A, we were like, Team B.

And unfortunately, the person who did my role in Team A, who was supposed to train me and get me up and running, was involved in a fatal car accident. And now, there was only one person in this entire global telco brand, it was Vodafone, who could do this one role. And it was a complex role, and I wasn't properly trained on it. And now I had double the workload.

So overnight, I went from seven salespeople to 14 or 15 salespeople. I had two sales managers. And I'm just one guy. And I was, at the time, was $35,000 a year, and there was so much pressure. And that pressure turned me, the coal, into a diamond, because it was only two years later that I was a salesperson at BMW earning $78,000 in my first year, and becoming number one in the country. It was because of things like that.

But I realized that you always need to have someone else who knows the role. So I call that the Noah principle, two people should know every task in your business, because we must assume that they will leave, whether because they had a black box, or whether because of something else, they may leave.

And maybe they get a great opportunity, or they change countries, which happens to me sometimes with some team members, they go to a Western country, which has a higher cost of living, and they just can't do that role anymore. So it does happen. We need to prepare for that. And that's why it's good to pass out the task and go deep with your skills.

I would hire a couple more people than you need, or that you think you need, so that when you do have these setbacks, it's basically just, continue on. And it's okay to rest people up and not stretch them all the time. These people are not, they're not robots, you know, they have limits.

Lloyd: What's that Tarzan quote I heard the other day? Tarzan does not let go of the old vine until he's got the new one. So if you're bringing in those people, you want to make sure that they're ready, and they've got the new processes, and then when the time is right, and it's as clean as you can, then you can let that past person go, the bad apple.

James: That was me, man, I always use the Tarzan metaphor.

Lloyd: Well, I'm stealing your Tarzan. [laughs]

James: Yeah. It's swinging from one vine to the other. I often use that in the case of moving from one business model to another. We get a good grip on the new vine before we let go of the old one. But if you've got someone, if you've got a team player who you are being held hostage to, who's got this magical black box, then basically, when they decide to hop down to the jungle floor and disappear, there's no way you get to the other end of the jungle, right? You need to have a few vines in play at the same time, maximize your chance.

Another consideration when someone leaves

Lloyd: I will mention another thing, which, especially if you suspect that they're going to have ulterior motives, if you get a feeling that they're leaving, one of the first things you want to do, if you've not done this already, is get all of your passwords in a password safe, like OnePass, any of those good commercial ones, because if they leave, and they've still got their access, and they don't like you very much, then they can do some pretty bad things. And I've seen this with an e-commerce company where someone still had access and went back and did some pretty dark things.

James: Look, people who are desperate or in a difficult situation can - if they're scorned, there's no limit to what people will do. It goes well beyond financial, or logical, we're talking about emotional, illogical, irrational, crazy scenarios. I've seen it. I've seen like, a business breakup that was to the level of War of the Roses, where one person ended up dying. Like, it was hardcore.

So I've seen how far this can go. Yes, you need to contain as a matter of principle. So one thing we do is when someone leaves, we change all the passwords, even if they're in a password safe situation, we just change them as a matter of protocol. It's a standard operating procedure. We have a leaving checklist, and on the leaving checklist - and you know, back in the dealership, it will be like, Hey, give us your car key, your business card, your training materials, etc. Like we had a checklist, tick, tick, tick, tick, tick, a letter of resignation, etc., etc.

So you should have a leaving checklist in place. Of course, that's an SOP. But absolutely protect your passwords and look for backdoors. And again, that little pay bump technique can really help protect you from someone slipping a password or leaving the backdoor open, or accidentally not fixing something that they could have fixed if they're compromised by this person, because if they've compromised you, the employer, the founder of the business, there's a good chance they've compromised some employees as well.

Lloyd: Absolutely. And the good news is, they make it to the other side, the employee's gone, the task auction has happened, the team are now in their happy place. And it's such a good place to be, just think, why didn't I do this earlier? You know, I've seen the founders, they're so scared to act on this. And then when it's done, they feel so much better that it's done.

And it's amazing how the team will be able to, just as you said about your hand in the bucket of water, as soon as that person's gone, people will step up, they will find the gaps, they will fix it, you just need to take the action. And it's hard at first, but the quicker you get it done, the better it is.

James: Yeah, and I say a couple of things around this. One is you're freeing that person up to go on and be good at wherever they're supposed to be, maybe somewhere that likes having black boxes or tolerates it. But that's not your place, you shouldn't have black boxes.

The value of cross-training

There's a couple of other points. When we look at it from the employees' perspective, they could come up with a list of reasons why a black box would be amazing. They feel unsackable. They feel special. They've got power in the organization. But maybe they haven't thought about the reasons why it's a bad idea. So when I'm approaching this with my team, I say to them, I want you to train someone else on everything you're doing. Right?

Because this is the first layer of breaking this down. And their first thought might be, oh, is that so that I could be sacked or replaced, and you've got all the power, and I've got none? And I would say, No. It's so that you can have annual leave, it's so that you can have time off with your family. It's so that if we get really busy that people can come in and assist you and help take the load off your shoulders. Like, this is for longevity. It's not for brevity.

Lloyd: And you also ask them to step up, like how can I give you more opportunity to step up in this business?

James: That's it. How can I promote you or have you go into a more senior level while you're stuck on this vine? I want you to get a hand on the next vine and get someone else's hand on the vine you're on now to move through.

Everyone in my team has leveled up and gained more experience over time because we've changed as an organization. Like, for context, most people in my team have been with me for over 10 years. So, you know, over 10 years, you know, we've changed team configurations and sizes.

At one point, we had an SEO business and we had a website business. So they've been involved in different parts of the business and built skills over time. Everyone gets paid more than when they started with me, like most of them in that 10-year time have doubled. And that's great. And also, I'd say they're like three, four or five times more effective than a new person, because of all that time in.

And they're happy to share because there's been no evidence, zero evidence that there's any negative for sharing what they do. They just now, they can collaborate. They can say, Hey, can we work together on this thing? Can you help me do this email broadcast? Can you help me come up with keyword titles for our YouTube video? Like, they're collaborating, and we're one big happy group with a great cooperation and teamwork dynamic.

The role of core values

And I will say this, and it hasn't come up in this episode, so far, it's underpinned by our values. So one of our core values is communication. We're excellent communicators. Now, having a black box or hiding a process would be considered anti-communication. And that would be grounds for firstly, not hiring, secondly, performance reviews and thirdly, exit. We can't have a black box.
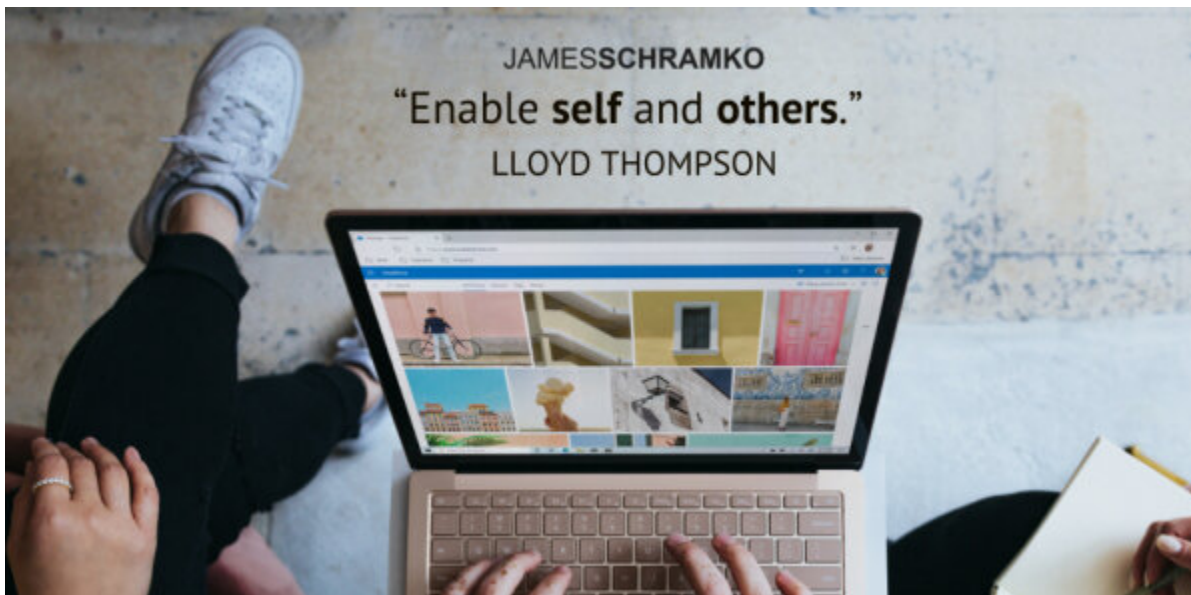
Lloyd: And I've got a similar one, enable self and others. And so it's not just about enabling other people in our team, it's also about enabling the clients how to make them better. And so part of the reason you're probably letting go of a toxic team member is because you didn't hire well in the first place, or you didn't take your core values into consideration.

JAMES**SCHRAMKO**

"So many people when they're **hiring** focus just on the **skills**."

LLOYD THOMPSON

And so many people when they're hiring focus just on the skills. But you've also got to focus on, do they want it? Do they have these core values? Do they really understand what needs to be done? And that's the first lens I think of is, are they adhering to these core values? Are they going to fit with a team? Are they a team player? So important.

James: You know, that's the bulk of what we do in our recruitment, and I don't worry so much about the skills, we can skill people very quickly in our business because we have SOPs, because they'll share with someone else. Like, I had a webmaster who was getting a little bit single-source dependent, which concerned both of us.

Like, she can't have time off or be too far away from the site, because if it goes down, like no one else knows how to fix it. So we got an assistant. So I'm like, Hey, I want to give you an assistant, I want you to teach her everything you know, so that we got some sort of peace of mind for you and for me, right? Everyone's in a good place.

So now we've got that comfort. And now the good thing is, she can pass the core duties to the assistant and start working on cool stuff, like new stuff, or investigate things without stressing that the core stuff is being handled or not. And so, it's so empowering when you take this approach, and we have a long term view of it.

The other concern about when a team member is holding you hostage, is they might also be infiltrating the clients. And we've seen this, haven't we, Lloyd, in a situation where a team member will start putting their black box IP into the client, so that they can't ever leave the business, because they're the only one who knows how that client system works, or they have some back end control of it.

That's super dangerous. And we were on to that instantly. Remember, like, that set my radar off big time. Like we can't have that at all. We've got to watch out for these black boxes that leave the premises and start overlapping the client world.

Lloyd: Yeah, get that out ASAP, call it out.

This episode in summary

James: So in summary, hopefully, as a result of this episode 972, which is up on JamesSchramko.com, and we'll put the notes there, and I'll link to Lloyd's great new book, we've been talking about how to deal with when a staff member is just taking on too much possession of something and not willing to share.

They don't want to share their toys, they want to keep it a secret, they create a little black box, how to start getting access to that black box, you know, avoiding this situation, hire based on values, reduce the key person dependency, single-source dependency, key person responsibility, whatever you want to call it.

Use centralized passwords and have control of your assets, have standard operating procedures that are shared and known by at least two people for everything in the business. Share your responsibilities, especially when someone leaves, you could auction them off or find people who are interested in the tasks. That's winning the game before it even starts.

Lloyd: Task auction.

James: Who actually wants to be doing that task? And then hire before you need it. Have people coming through the machine before someone leaves and you get stuck, right? Because if it's just you doing everything, and you can't work, your business is destroyed instantly. If it's you plus one assistant, which is very common for a micro business, and that person leaves, it's back to you. And that sucks. If it's you plus two people, and one of them leaves, the other person can train the new person. And you're all good. From two on, it's so much easier.

Lloyd: And of course, if you're the founder, and this whole thing sounds incredibly painful to have to do it, then are you missing a director of operations? Because the director of operations can do all of this.

James: They do everything. They identify what you've got in place. They'll review all your KPIs, your SOPs, they'll see each of the team members, what they're actually doing. They'll translate that according to what is the vision of the founder and see where the gaps are, and then implement the people and the systems to get you there.

Of course, Lloyd is my favorite DOO, Director of Operations, and your team of course, now you've got a great little team, and you're global, you can work in different time zones and different types of businesses. Lloyd, how do we get in touch?

Lloyd: Yeah, just email me at lloyd@virtualdoo.com.

James: So that's two L's, Lloyd, L-L-O-Y-D @ VirtualDOO.com. Lloyd works with lots of my clients, so I've seen it firsthand. I've been around for the entire formation to now of Lloyd's empire. He does great work. I do get emails from people saying best hire I've ever made, which is great. And since they're a client of mine, that's like, it's even more special, I suppose. I won't be offended. But in any case, thanks for all the good stuff you're doing.

I really enjoyed sharing these stories. If there's a story or scenario that's happening in your business right now that you're not sure how to handle, and if you want it handled in anonymity for us to talk about, send me through an email, just reply to any of my emails. And I'll get it. And I'll get Lloyd. I'll ask him if he'd like to come along and talk about that scenario with me and we'll trade some other stories as well. So much fun. Thanks, Lloyd.

Lloyd: Thanks so much, James.

JAMES**SCHRAMKO**

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