GALLUP®

Q01. I know what is expected of me at work.

FOCUS ME

Perhaps the most basic of employee needs in the workplace is knowing what success on the job looks like. Employees need to know what is expected of them at work so that they can commit, deliver and focus on what matters most.

Expectations serve as an employee's point of focus, helping them know what to do and where to go. And importantly, expectations provide direction on how each person can meet the desired outcomes of their roles.

*On average, **about half** of workers are not completely clear about what they are supposed to do at work.*

At face value, providing focus and clear expectations for employees seems simple — but it's not. Role clarity is much more than just a job description or a list of things to do. It is about an employee understanding their contribution, value and fit within the team.

Groups with high scores on this item are more productive, cost-effective, creative and adaptive.

Substantial gains on the first engagement element are often associated with productivity gains of 5% to 10%.

The most effective managers define and discuss direct and indirect expectations for the role and the team. Knowing what is expected can motivate employees to meet or exceed those expectations. It provides a benchmark for performance and helps individuals strive for excellence.

Clear expectations make it easier to provide constructive feedback. Managers can assess performance against specific criteria and offer employees guidance on how to improve.

Transparent expectations foster trust between managers and employees. Employees feel more secure knowing what is expected of them and how their performance will be evaluated. Defining expectations paints a picture of outstanding performance.

As a manager, you should routinely ask yourself:

- ✓ Are my team members always clear about what to do and when to do it?
- ✓ What do I hope for beyond the basics?
- ✓ How do I measure my team members' basic expectations?
- ✓ How often do I sit down with my team members to discuss their progress?
- ✓ Am I helping my team members to prioritize their daily and weekly tasks?

Why Expectations May Be Unclear

Often, expectations can become muddled because of:

- inadequate prioritization
- an excess of priorities
- contradictory and conflicting priorities
- unexpected priorities
- unclear ownership
- an unclear organizational direction
- changing priorities
- multiple or conflicting instructions from different managers
- misaligned expectations (i.e., hired to do one thing but recognized or rewarded for doing another)

Recognizing What Success on the Job Looks Like

High performance in every role starts with the manager consistently communicating expectations, the purpose of the role, a clear understanding of priorities, and objective targets for improvement and growth. This communication helps employees understand what is expected of them and why.

Engaging Conversations

The most effective workgroups consistently communicate expectations, goals, priorities, and targets of improvement and opportunity. This communication helps each team member understand what is expected of them and why. Asking individual employees and the collective team the following questions can help ensure that they understand what is expected of them at work, even if situations change:

- What does excellence look like in your current role?
- Are there times when you just don't know what your top priority should be? How can we as a team help one another communicate needs and priorities during these times?
- What are the most crucial parts of your job?
- How can we communicate better when work is hectic and we have to quickly move from one task to another? Do we have the right mechanisms or systems in place so everyone knows where to get current information?
- How can we be clear in terms of our expectations of others?
- What is expected of us at work? What are our essential responsibilities? How does this help you understand what is expected of you?
- List your goals for the year. What do you want to accomplish? Do your goals align with what we are trying to achieve as a team?
- Have you talked to your peers in the past six months about what they expect of you? What did you learn?
- Have you talked to internal and/or external customers in the past six months about what they expect of you? What did you learn?

Q01. Best Practices

The most effective managers provide employees focus and direction by incorporating the following behaviors into their management style and approach:

- Define excellence in each role. Be clear on what excellence looks and sounds like.

- Communicate each employee's role and responsibilities, and ensure the entire team knows each person's responsibilities.

- Set aside time to explain to each employee how they contribute to the team's success.

- Conduct regular team meetings to clarify expectations regarding performance goals. Use a RACI chart or other tracking mechanism on a shared site so individuals know who is doing what and when it is due.

- Help employees make sense of the changes around them and better understand how they can expect team members to respond and interpret events and issues at hand.

- Communicate expectations through various channels such as meetings, emails and written documents to ensure everyone receives the message.

- Explain why the expectations are important and how they align with the team's and organization's goals to help employees understand the bigger picture.

- Use SMART criteria (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-Bound) to set expectations to more easily track progress and measure success.

- Encourage questions: Create an open environment where team members feel comfortable asking questions to clarify any uncertainties.

- Write down the expectations and share them with the team. Doing so serves as a reference point and reduces the risk of misunderstandings.

- Schedule regular check-ins to review progress, address any challenges and adjust expectations if necessary. Acknowledge when expectations are met, and provide guidance on how to improve when they are not.

- Ensure that expectations are consistent across the team to promote fairness and equity.

- Provide the necessary resources, training and support to help employees meet the expectations.

- Be flexible: Be open to adjusting expectations based on changing circumstances or new information. Flexibility can help maintain motivation and productivity.