

# Expectations At Work Can Destroy You if You Don't Communicate

## Them!

By Carole Nicolaides

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Expectations have a powerful impact on our emotions, behaviors, and most importantly, in our performances. Have you noticed what happens when you expect no raise or promotion at work? Most likely you will not get them! The bitter truth is that - not only will you lose a promotion - but most likely you will not perform to your fullest potential, either. Expectations have a direct link to our behavior and outcome. One of the most common reasons for low employee morale and performance is poor communication of work expectations. Why is this so difficult and what are we doing about it?

Many of these expectations are not written anywhere. That, in and of itself, can cause some trouble. If you are the head of a department and you hire a new director, you expect the new director to do X, Y, and Z. You do not bother with providing a written list of expectations because you assume he or she would know these things. Surprise, surprise... some things that are obvious and normal for you might be considered silly and unnecessary for your new hire.

The answer is simple. It is about communicating clearly, addressing people, and not allowing assumptions to overrun our lives. But as I mentioned, this is often easier said than done.

There are several things that can be done to alleviate this obstacle. Implementing the tips below can help open the lines of communication so that expectations are not only known, but also acted upon successfully.

1. Be aware of them. Obviously, we have to be aware of our own expectations before we try to communicate them to anyone else. Be honest with yourself. If you expect a promotion after you close a million dollar deal then you need to name what you expect. In this first step, you should claim what you want, whatever it might be, and should be honest with yourself and those around you.

2. My expectations or yours? Many times the expectations of a supervisor or manager can be quite different from those of the employees. Be willing to negotiate. You may find that there are merits to the other person's point-of-view, or that a compromise can produce better results than originally

thought.

3. What communication style fits you? It is extremely important to know this for several reasons. Some people communicate better in writing. Others do best with using bottom-line, verbal communication. Still more are “talkers” who need to fully discuss every aspect of a plan before it is implemented. Once you know your communication style, and the styles of those you work with, communication of expectations will be both better received and conveyed.

4. Seek feedback. As you realize by now, dealing with expectations is like dealing with perceptions, so the best way for you to learn how other people see your behaviors is to ask for regular feedback. Do not hesitate to ask what people expect from you. While you don't need to agree with them necessarily, you do need to be clear on what is expected of you in order to accomplish your goals.

5. Align expectations with your values. Values define what you stand for. Values act as your internal compass, keeping you happy at work and in your personal life. Obviously, the more aligned you are with your values (and your professional goals) the smoother your life will be. With that said, it is advisable to check from time to time that our expectations are indeed aligned with the core of who we are. If you value freedom and entrepreneurship in your professional life, don't seek positions that would land you in an environment opposite to your true values. Don't get stuck trying to live up to expectations that do not match with your personal values.

Managing expectations - yours and those of others - is an important part of our every day life. A merger with another company, a new boss, a sudden change at home, new coworkers... all of these are circumstances where people expect things from you. Understanding the most effective ways to communicate your expectations, and to understand those of others, is the best solution for overall team success in any organization.

Carole is President and Executive Coach of Progressive Leadership, offering executive coaching, organizational development consulting and leadership development training. Improve your business relationships, communication, team performance and bottom line starting now. Visit <http://www.progressiveleadership.com> for more info & subscriptions to Carole's FREE ezine.

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