

# Exchanging Expectations

It's the corner of a wine bar on a Friday night. Two friends are talking... "To be honest my Team are not quite coming up to scratch ...they just don't meet my expectations..."

Across town in another wine bar one of those Team members is chatting to one of their friends..." To be honest I don't know what my manager really expects of me. All my objectives are a bit vague and I'm not sure how I am doing most of the time ..."

We hear these tales of woe on a weekly basis and the sad part is, that with a little more thought this could be turned around. Discussing and agreeing expectations and objectives lie at the heart of any productive relationship and are therefore key to the success of your team and your business. Think about the knock on effect of just one Team member missing a target once a month...

Setting expectations is not just about laying out a job description for someone or giving them objectives; it is more about defining the terms of how the relationship will work and ensuring both parties get what they need from it. So how should we start?

Its best done on a one-to-one basis and to do it well there are a number of key steps...

- Allow preparation time. Tell team members you want to discuss this area with them and ask them to think what they want. Suggest they make some notes before the conversation
- Set aside at least one hour with each person...you'll be amazed how quickly time goes!
- Choose an appropriate environment where you won't be disturbed or distracted in any way
- Ensure you discuss *specific* examples. Common expectations are for managers to be "supportive" and for team members to be "loyal" but there are many definitions of these words
- Write down what has been agreed and ensure you each have a copy
- Review progress on meeting the expectations and exchange specific examples

They won't be tablets of stone and will change over time. Interestingly not one person who has taken the time to do this has ever said it was a waste of time...quite the opposite. What have you to lose? Nothing and you have a lot that could be gained