

BEING CLEAR WITH EXPECTATIONS

Few things are as frustrating as working for a manager who gives you an annual review and tells you all the things she thinks you should have been doing during the past year. How is this information helpful now? The year is over. Why weren't these expectations expressed earlier? If you are a parent, you know how important it is to communicate expectations with your child. So often, a clear communication of expectations will prevent both misbehavior and failure.

As little sense as it makes, I hear about similar situations all the time. Supervisors need to be clear about their expectations. This is true in my own company. When I'm specific with my requests about what I want, I almost always receive what I asked for. When I'm vague in my requests, I typically receive something other than what I had in mind.

If you're in charge of leading your group or even a company, consider whether you're communicating specific expectations effectively. Of course, micromanagement is a supreme trust killer, not to mention a spectacular waste of time. But in most cases, if you are clear about the outcome in mind, it will get done, sometimes even beyond your expectations.

My new marketing director was feeling overwhelmed and losing motivation. I could see it. When I inquired, she said she felt like there was so much to do but didn't know what to do first. Once we clarified priorities and expectations, her motivation, effectiveness, and enthusiasm returned. As her leader, helping her work through this was my responsibility.

If you work for someone who is vague about what they want, spend a few minutes talking with him or her about your work. Find out expectations, including the appropriate deadlines and priorities. If it isn't possible to finish everything on your plate at once, figure out what's most important. You'll foster greater trust and a more productive workplace at the same time. Visit us at www.TheTrustEdge.com to learn more about leadership, trust, and productivity.