

“Raising Expectations”

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Raising expectations can be a challenging task if it is your intent to get the entire crew to ‘buy in’ to the new, higher standards of performance.

The wrong way to attempt this is the **direct approach**...to come right out and announce to your group of employees that it will now take higher productivity to earn the same compensation, promotion, etc. Why wrong? It can be a slap in the face to your best performers who believe it’s impossible to increase their personal productivity above current levels...that they are already running flat out. Worse, these top performers may react badly. Without discussing the matter, they may immediately begin a job search outside your organization and bolt away from you at their first good opportunity. If this occurs, you’ll find yourself in a much worse situation than at the onset.

A better way to go about this is the use of the **indirect approach**...dealing with individual performances, publicly & privately. The tried and true “stick & carrot approach” requires patience on your part because it takes time to generate the desired results but in due course it does work every single time. Here are a few of the elements of this approach.

Targeting all team members:

1. Announce a contest with valuable prizes for the top few performers.
2. Make its duration 6-12 months.
3. Monthly, publish the standings top to bottom.
4. Publicly praise the leaders and urge those who are trailing to do better.
5. Publicly award the prizes to the contest winners at a recognition banquet attended by all, including some of the higher-ups in the organization who may be called upon to say a few words of praise about the top few and encouragement to those bringing up the rear.

Targeting your poor performers:

1. Spend extra ‘face time’ with each / get to know each better / determine what makes each click / give each a few ‘bright ideas’ to aid their performance.
2. If performance fails to improve, implement a regimen of “Strict goals & objectives” (more detail on this later).
3. If this fails to turn them around, get rid of them.

Targeting your top performers:

1. Determine the career objectives of each.
2. Promote those desiring to climb the firm’s organizational ladder assuming positions of greater responsibility (within or outside the unit) and do it with lots of fanfare (i.e. stage a going away party at a nice spot away from the workplace and give everyone a full day to celebrate the occasion).

3. Promote 'in place' those who prefer not to leave their current unit, workplace, coworkers, supervisor, etc. This is accomplished by changing the title of the person's position (i.e. "Marketing Representative" can become "Sr. Marketing Representative" and later on "Territory Manager"), adding a few more regular assigned duties and paying more in base weekly or monthly compensation. Throw a party to celebrate this event. Make it just as good as you did for the person described in # 2 above.

If you implement each of the above right actions, the productivity of your group will continually increase (assuming all other factors remain equal and outside threats are neutralized). As the group productivity increases year after year, so do the expectations of the leader and of every member of the group.

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