

If Everyone Exceeds Your Expectations, Your Expectations Are Too Low

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There is nothing quite as satisfying as building a team of strong, competent individuals; employees who look at each day as a challenge to be overcome on their way to greatness. Having a strong team means that: no problem is too big; no challenge too great; and no achievement too challenging to be reached. A strong team knows it is just moments away from being able to say “yes” to any demand because they have the intelligence, creativity, and tenacity required to overcome any obstacle.

As leaders, we need to keep our eyes open to the true strengths of our team, and their weaknesses as well. This can be difficult when looking at our own team because we are looking at a reflection of ourselves. But it is just that cold, hard look in the mirror that separates many managers from leaders.

Managers want the process to be smooth and efficient. They focus on minimizing problems and distractions. Leaders know that bumps in the process are usually caused by someone taking the initiative to change and make improvements. Those changes don't always go smoothly.

***High achievement always takes place in the framework of high expectation.
– Jack Kinder***

This means that managers' expectations are somewhat lower than those of leaders:

Managers want consistency, while leaders want innovation.

Managers want trouble free operations, while leaders want to push the envelope.

Managers want to minimize the bumps in the road, while leaders want to break down the barriers.

Raising your expectations for yourself and your staff can result in your team achieving heights you did not know were possible. People will generally achieve to the level of expectations. Having low expectations results not only in low achievement, but in the belief that low achievement is acceptable.

There is an old saying, “If you set your expectations low enough, you will never fail to achieve them”. And while that statement is certainly true, high expectations are what separate the best from the rest.

One way to tell if you have set your expectations too low is to see how many of your team members are exceeding your expectations. If most or all of your employees are exceeding your expectations, then it may be time to consider raising the bar. Raising the bar on your expectations will challenge your better employees to excel and will clearly identify those employees who are not capable of doing more.

Think about what it means to be a leader versus a manager and think about how your expectations either drive your team to new heights, or shelter them in a safe environment. The higher you set your expectations, the more your team will be challenged.

An engaged and energized workforce leads to higher productivity, reduced costs, improved customer service, and increased profitability. Employee engagement happens when your Corporate Culture, Leadership Style, and Employee Expectations are in synch.

The Fusion Program from ECI Learning Systems is designed to align these 3 concepts in your organization – engaging your employees and creating positive energy that will propel your company to new heights.

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