Establish Work Expectations

Work expectations should be established each time any one of the following occurs—an employee is:

- new to the position
- delegated a new responsibility or assigned a task
- performing below standards
- exceeding expectations and needs new challenges
- changing priorities

“SMART” Goals and Expectations

Think “SMART” when identifying specific work expectations:

- **Specific** identify the output and results expected
- **Measurable** indicate how success will be measured – quality, quantity, timeliness, cost
- **Aligned** be sure the goal is aligned with higher level business goals
- **Realistic** assure the goal is realistic, even when it is a stretch goal
- **Time-Bound** define when the goal should be completed

*Examples:*

Work with campus emergency responders to develop response strategies and train staff to use them before the start of the next semester.

Implement a new communication system within the College of Continuing Studies designed to capture customer data through telephone surveys scheduled to launch by Fall of 2010.
## Activity: Is it SMART?

Directions: Read each objective. Decide whether the objective meets all the SMART criteria. If it does, check the box under SMART. If it does not, determine what is missing and rewrite the goal using the SMART criteria. Assume that all objectives are aligned and realistic. Ensure they are specific, measurable, and timebound.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>SMART</th>
<th>Revision</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reduce graduate student application processing time by 5% for spring semester 2010.</td>
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<td>Prioritize time spent on each project.</td>
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<td>Complete training of all student workers on new distribution system by the end of this performance cycle.</td>
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<td>Lead a cross-functional task force to develop recommendations for new strategic initiatives.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scrap old items quickly and efficiently to prevent customers from receiving outdated materials.</td>
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“SMART” Goals and Expectations

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<td>SMART Goal Statement</td>
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Establish Work Expectations

Follow this outline for discussing work expectations:

1. Describe the major outcomes and goals expected and how they impact others, the department, the organization.

   An employee’s enthusiasm and commitment to getting a job done is affected in a positive way when the employee sees how his/her work connects with others. Employees are motivated when they see the value of the work they do.

2. Agree on how performance will be measured.

   Discuss with the employee the specific ways you plan to measure performance. Give examples of the specific outputs and results you will be looking for. Get agreement from the employee to ensure that there is no confusion if performance gets off track. Help the employee see what good performance looks like by outlining the criteria for success.

3. Together prioritize job responsibilities.

   This step is especially important when new tasks are added to existing responsibilities. Employees may feel overwhelmed and have difficulty placing the new tasks in line with other tasks. Often time employees put new tasks before old tasks and this may not necessarily be the best priority order. Tasks can be prioritized using the following criteria:

   - the tasks importance to the overall organization, department, and/or individual goals
   - availability of time and materials
   - task’s difficulty relative to the value of the results
   - the most critical needs
Establish Work Expectations

4. *Mutually identify the skills, resources, and guidelines necessary for successful performance.*

Find out from your employees their ideas on the best way to get the job or task done. Add ideas of your own only after the employee has voiced his. Look for every opportunity to get employees involved by asking them to identify the skills and resources that will most benefit them in their role.

Discuss the various responsibilities of the job and the appropriate authority level for each. Be sure to delegate enough authority to enable the employee to accomplish the intended results. Authority levels include:

- Level 1: Get the facts, I’ll decide.
- Level 2: Suggest alternatives, I’ll decide.
- Level 3: Recommend an alternative, I’ll decide.
- Level 4: Decide, wait for my approval.
- Level 5: Decide, act unless I say no.
- Level 6: Act, report results.
- Level 7: Act, report if unsuccessful.
- Level 8: Act, report not needed.

5. *Ask questions to check for understanding and commitment.*

By now you have covered a lot of information and detail regarding the job or task. Take time here to clarify commitment and ensure that you understand each other. Ask open-ended questions to get the employee talking so that you can hear in his/her own words what the expectations are for the job or task. Examples of open-ended questions would be: “Julie, what’s your reaction to all this?” or “What do you see as the priorities in this job?” Use closed-ended questions or probes to make sure the details are clear.
Establish Work Expectations

6. *Schedule a “safety-net” meeting.*

Many times employees face a number of questions after they get started and may hesitate to come to you for answers. Schedule an early progress review so that the employee stays on track. This is a good time to give recognition for work completed and provide input for work not yet accomplished.

A pitfall for some supervisors is accepting upward delegation. When an employee is having difficulty with a task, don’t automatically take it back or reassign it. Guide the employee, point him/her in the right direction but don’t just give away answers or take away the task. This is an opportunity to develop problem-solving skills and resourcefulness in the employee—skills needed for self-management.

7. *Summarize the discussion.*

Review the key points of the discussion before closing. Restate the key actions agreed to and who has responsibility for them. For example, the supervisor has stated that he/she will obtain additional resources or necessary approvals. The employee has agreed to specific action items and target dates.
## Establish Work Expectations

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