

A Powerful Yet Simple Framework for Employee Development

Expectations for Climbing the Corporate Ladder

It is the goal of all quality organizations to provide their employees superior opportunities to grow, both individually and as professionals. Nothing has greater impact than hiring the right people and having them develop simultaneously with the company's own growth. This creates continuity of management and knowledge and also an environment for employees to thrive and grow. It has been frequently shown that appreciation and growth can be stronger motivators for an employee than money and can result in reduced turnover rate, improved customer service and ultimately generates higher profits for the company. With this in mind, it is best to lay out clear expectations for performance so that employees can achieve both personal and professional growth. Employees should understand that their employer is committed to making every effort to educate them so that they can expand their horizons and take on new responsibilities over time.

A system like this provides some transparency to the “mysterious” process of promotion and professional growth that many employees think is biased, unfair, or a function of pure politics. These beliefs can cause people and organizations to stagnate as everyone becomes resigned to the fact that they cannot compete, based on some untrue belief. Using a system like this makes more transparent the process of professional growth. It lays out for employees what people must do to move up the organizational ladder and achieve certain career goals. It forces people to internalize, not externalize their limitations so they can work on them and not blame others, politics or other factors. Publishing it inside your company can make it clear to your employees that rewards and promotions are there for those people that earn them, and not for those that play politics, look busy, or cozy up to the boss.

In the top organizations, reward is always based on merit and political factors are simply a way to generate more opportunities for visibility. The following is designed to describe the typical expectations of employees at various levels, and to provide a framework for their personal and professional development. It should have a huge impact on many people and hence your entire organization.

Diagram – Management Methods

Method	Appropriate For
Micromanagement (MM)	Individual Contributors (Also appropriate in new working relationships in order to get up to speed on each other's strengths, weaknesses and styles.)
Management by Objective (MBO)	Experienced Managers (including some Supervisors)
Management by Exception (MBE)	Experienced Executives
Leadership	Business Managers, CEOs, GM, Managing Directors

Expectations of Individual Contributors:

Employees at this level require daily supervision, if not even more frequently. As such, they are "micromanaged" and cannot be expected to pursue larger objectives than fairly simple, straightforward and repetitive tasks (See article on Management Methods). The bulk of all employees fall into this category and will stay there until they are shown how to develop into a management level employee. The necessary skills and traits for this level are as follows:

1. Can identify, resolve and avoid basic problems in their narrow functional area of the business.

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2. Can interact and influence co-workers, customers, clients, suppliers, vendors and job applicants in a courteous and professional manner to produce favorable results.
3. These employees are expected to effectively and efficiently manage their time, materials and space.
4. Can proactively initiate ideas, set simple goals and account for results.
5. These employees are expected to be bright and have a positive, can-do attitude. Clearly there is a law of averages here in larger companies, but bright employees should warrant additional compensation and all businesses should strive to hire the best people it can find.
6. Can perform specific short-term tasks with no more than daily management/supervision.
7. Some younger employees may not have developed a specific valuable skill-set, or decided on a career path, but all employees are expected to seek the training and practical experiences they need to carry out their responsibilities and improve themselves.
8. Need to work on their ability to understand the business and organization as a whole.
9. Need to work on their ability to plan in advance and, therefore, deliver projects on time.
10. Seek to inform their manager of ways to improve customer service and increase productivity.

**Removing The Mystery of
Climbing The Corporate
Ladder Will Motivate People
To Develop Their Abilities
For Both Personal Growth
And Corporate Benefit.**

11. Help others in their group achieve their goals by filling in where necessary and cross training.
12. Need to develop a consistent positive attitude and a plan for skill-set development.
13. Generally, only expected to work 40-45 hours per week. A greater level of commitment in time for self-development will be necessary for advancement to managerial responsibilities.

“It is one of the most beautiful compensations in life that no man can sincerely try to help another without helping himself.”

-- Ralph Waldo Emerson

Supervisor - A supervisor is someone who is capable of managing a small group (1-7 people) with a specific skill-set (i.e. telemarketing, physical jobs). Generally, they have done the job before and understand all of its requirements. Although many of the skills of a manager would be beneficial, this is a much less demanding

position. It requires the expertise to hire, train, and fire people and to plan one week to one month in advance for workload variations. A supervisor may be working on becoming a manager, or alternatively, could be a career supervisor, who has reached their limits, or desire, for professional growth.

Additional Expectations of Managers:

(Includes all of the above PLUS:)

Employees at this level can be “managed by objective” (MBO) and left to “take a small hill” by themselves. They do not require “micromanagement”. A weekly meeting with their superior is generally all that is needed. (See article on Management Methods) Typically, a company needs one manager for each 5-8 employees, although this can vary

greatly. A good manager can effectively manage this number of people well and still complete the work necessary for their own projects (scope). A manager must have the following skills and traits:

Successful people have formed the habit of doing those things that unsuccessful people don't want to do.

1. Good working relationship with people and is considered "fair" and consistent. Has the ability to manage 1 to 25 people effectively with 3 to 7 direct reports.
2. Can communicate effectively to subordinates, peers and other functional areas in writing and orally.
3. Documents well so that everyone above and below them knows what happened or is going to happen, in advance when appropriate, and can leverage their work product, not repeat it.
4. Can evaluate, hire, fire and train people to perform all tasks in their department (understands each area well).
5. Can develop written short-term (one month) and long-term (one year) plans, set priorities and allocate resources.
6. Can anticipate all the needs of their department, at least one-year in advance (both people and other resources) and prepares in advance for the need (i.e. finds people in advance of need so they arrive just-in-time).
7. Measures performance (quality and quantity) in their area and aggressively fine-tunes it (quality and quantity). Is constantly improving the efficiency of their department and its people as well as developing the skills of those people.
8. Delivers promised projects on time and within budget. If a project is expected to be late he/she always gives plenty of advanced notice of this to his/her superior and all others to whom the project may impact.

9. Always keeps his/her people highly utilized.
 10. Does whatever it takes to deliver output on time, including being proactive enough to find out what he/she needs to know to achieve goals and make quality decisions. Unfortunately this is a skill possessed by less than five percent of all people. It is “self-actualization” or an inherent drive to improve themselves. This is someone who is aware of what he/she doesn't know, and seeks to learn it in advance of the need. They are not only thinking ahead, but also always improving themselves to be prepared for those future requirements. Without this skill an employee is not likely to make it to the executive level on merit and will not keep up with a fast growing company.
- “Man's mind, once stretched by a new idea, never regains its original dimensions.”**
-- Oliver Wendell Holmes.
11. Has good overall judgment and knows the limits of his/her knowledge and that of others so as to avoid making decisions that should be brought before his/her superiors. (A fallback to the previous requirement when there is not enough time to learn everything needed).
 12. Can budget for a department and manage within those financial limitations at all times.
 13. Can negotiate with outside vendors to get a good deal for the business.
 14. Needs direction from his/her superior on a weekly to monthly basis.
 15. Manages his/her superiors (managing up) and keeps them informed of all successes and failures with advance notice on important issues.
- “Luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity.”**
-- Elmer Letterman

16. Works 50-hours minimum and 60 to 70 hour weeks as and when needed (not all the time or even on-site, but as needed) to achieve promised goals.
17. Sets an example of professionalism, quality, effort and positive attitude.
18. Works at developing a greater level of understanding of the other functional areas in the business.

Confucius said, “A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.”

19. Understands who is responsible for everything done in the organization and confers with other managers and executives as needed.

20. Expected to ignore, not create, bureaucracy except as absolutely needed and circumvents it when needed to perform quickly
21. Anxious to take on new responsibilities, knows when to avoid this because of resource constraints, among other things.
22. Responsible for representing the company in a positive way to all employees and the outside world
23. Should develop his/her abilities to "sell" their ideas and the company both internally and to the outside world.

Additional Expectations of Executives:

(Directors and Vice Presidents)

(Includes all of the above PLUS:)

Employees at this level can run a business, or division thereof, and be “managed by exception” (MBE), which requires infrequent intervention to test and calibrate goals with the company's CEO, Board of Directors or shareholders on major strategic goals and decisions. (See article on [Management Methods](#)) Although only one executive may be



needed in smaller companies or those that do not seek high growth or more than 20 employees, For a company to be truly successful on a large scale it will need one "executive" level person in each key discipline that is required for the company to deliver its products or services to customers (i.e. sales, operations, customer service, product development). Sometimes this is called the "3-legged stool", as they look for experts who have "done it all before" in sales, operations and product development (or whichever areas are the critical success factors for that business):

“The expectations of life depend upon diligence; the mechanic who would perfect his work must first sharpen his tools.”
-- Confucius

Winners expect to win in advance. Life is a self-fulfilling prophecy. A great pleasure in life is doing what people say you cannot do.

1. Can oversee 1 to 10 managers and leverage their skills and knowledge with 50+ people.
2. Never lets others prevent personal and departmental goals from being achieved (proactive).
3. Proactive self-starter who identifies problems and implements solutions for those problems (in any area of the company) before they are a real issue for his/her area of responsibility.
4. Views the business broadly and understands the constraints placed on it by financial, personnel, management, industry, sales and other factors both inside and outside the organization.
5. Seeks to learn everything he/she needs to know without someone else suggesting it. Always on a self-improvement program.
6. Manages his/her superiors by keeping them well informed in advance of needs.

7. Responsible for the protection of all the company's interests within his/her scope.
8. Explores each and every option before making any major decision.
9. Tests new items and ideas on a smaller scale and takes reasonable risks, which can improve the business.
10. Comes up with larger scale ideas for the executive team to evaluate.
11. Is thinking 2-3 years in advance of the company's needs, and develops and revises these plans as necessary by maintaining a 1 to 3 year plan for his/her functional area.
12. Creates his/her own development by helping to grow the company and creating new responsibilities and new business opportunities.
13. Does what it takes to help others deliver on time.
14. Helps managers grow and develop their executive skills.
15. Averages 50-60 hour weeks with 70 and 80 hours as needed (not all the time or even on site, but if and when necessary) to accomplish their goals and remove any growth restrictions for the business.
16. Looks for ways to save costs and improve productivity throughout the company.
17. Needs little direction other than the vision of the company and long-term strategic goals from the CEO and Board of Directors.
18. Proactive, not reactive. Manages risks through a regular plan to seek out and identify both risks and opportunities.

**The man who believes
he can do something is
probably right, and so
is the man who
believes he can't.**



HOW TO MANAGE A BUSINESS FOR RAPID GROWTH

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19. Has a strong legal, fiduciary responsibility and understands that, as an officer, he/ she may bear some personal liability for their individual actions and those of the corporation.
20. Demonstrates ethics that put business interests before personal benefits in decisions that may result in personal impact or conflict of interest.