

Clarifying Performance Expectations

When setting performance expectations for those we manage, we usually tend not to have too much difficulty in expressing the more 'tangible' things we want to see.

We wouldn't, for example, tell our teams at their annual performance review to 'sell more next year' and leave it at that...we would add meaningful figures and specific timescales. There needs to be sufficient measurement for both parties to be clear on what 'good' looks like going forward.

So, why do we ask our people to be 'more professional', 'better communicators' or have 'more visibility'? Most probably because it is these 'intangible' or 'behavioural' performance expectations that cause us the most concern. They often seem more personal and we struggle with making them measurable.

When setting behavioural expectations, we need to define them just as carefully as any other performance result we want to see, so that there is less chance of confusion, and ultimately, disappointment, when people don't perform in the way we are hoping they will.

The following questions will raise your chances of being crystal clear in your expectations of others:

- What is the business objective, behaviour or skill you want the other person to focus on?
- What's the benefit to the person/their team/the business if they meet your expectations in this area?
- What will be the impact on other people/their team/the business if they don't meet your expectations?
- What will success look like? What do you want to see them doing/hear them saying?
- What do you want them to avoid? What *don't* you want to see them doing/hear them saying?
- When do they need to have achieved this by?
- How will you measure success?