



TriMetrix®HD Realistic Expectations

Realistic Expectations:

The ability to have expectations of other people that can realistically be met, either in quality of production or quality of performance.

Why is this skill important?

A person who is good at setting Realistic Expectations is able to accurately evaluate another person's capacities and set standards and expectations at a reasonable level for that person. He or she can accept various performance levels based on abilities and interests, and can be accepting of a person who is not achieving at his or her maximum level.

Why is setting Realistic Expectations so important? Have you ever had a boss who seemed to constantly demand too much of you? Someone who pushed and pushed, but what you did was never good enough? How did that make you feel? Angry? Unworthy? Frustrated?

Or maybe you had a boss who didn't ask enough. Someone who never gave you direction and seemed overly surprised when you did good work? How did that make you feel? Apathetic? Irritated? Unmotivated?

People who don't have good abilities in setting Realistic Expectations are not capable of accurately judging other people's capabilities. They will expect a person to be able to perform to a pre-established level, not at a level that matches up with the person's real abilities. People with unrealistic expectations have standards that they expect other people to fill, regardless of the fact that they have no right or authority to set these standards.

People who set unrealistic expectations almost always set themselves up for disappointment. If they aren't really paying attention to the other person's capabilities, interests, and even existing workload, they will make assignments that take too much time, require skills the person doesn't have, or are too difficult for the person to handle. Under those circumstances, the employee is bound to fail at the effort—either underperforming or not performing at all.

Setting Realistic Expectations is a key component of being a good personnel and resource manager. Having a good idea of what your employees' limits are—mentally, emotionally, and time-wise—will help you make assignments that use everyone's skills to their best effect and result in the highest-quality work.

What are skills associated with having Realistic Expectations?

Someone who has mastered skills associated with Realistic Expectations:

- Expresses confidence in others' ability to perform, regardless of skill level.
- Identifies developmental needs and encourages initiative and improvement.
- Makes assignments based on individual abilities and interests, not his or her own personal standards.
- States realistic expectations clearly and effectively.
- Judges others against stated expectations, not personal opinion or unstated requirements.
- Sets challenging but realistic expectations for him or herself.

How do you develop your own skills in setting Realistic Expectations?

- Make sure that any external expectations you receive are clear and focused. If they aren't, ask for clarifications.
- Use assessment tools to determine a person's needs, interests, and abilities.
- Communicate with employees and team members—ask what their own internal expectations are.
- Help employees understand regulations, policies, etc. Share updates and new information promptly.
- Set up team building sessions to better understand employees and team members.
- Pair or team employees with complementary skill sets.
- Match project assignments to employee capabilities and interests.
- Let people stretch their skills—encourage development through challenging assignments and professional development workshops.
- Set challenging but realistic expectations for yourself and share them with others.
- Judge people's performance against STATED or WRITTEN expectations, not your own expectations of how YOU would perform the same tasks.
- Separate your own personal standards and biases from company standards.
- If you see someone struggling with a new task or project, ask what you can do to enable them to complete it—don't do it for them, but see what you can do to assist.
- Be available to your team members and employees whenever they need assistance.
- If someone regularly fails to meet expectations, determine how to encourage them to develop the required skills and/or adjust your expectations.
- Express confidence and promote growth in everyone you interact with, regardless of their natural ability and interests.
- Conduct assessment meetings after important assignments are complete. Discuss strengths and mistakes made while pursuing the assignment to enable the experience to be a constructive learning one.

- State your own expectations clearly and effectively—get buy in from team members or employees before finalizing assignments.
- Make regular observations and progress reports for employees or team members. Help them recognize their skills and weaknesses.
- Ask for, and be interested in, receiving feedback on your own performance as well as your team's performance.

Realistic Expectations

Activities

Activity 1: Learning from Disappointment

Think of a past experience when you felt disappointed in an employee's or team member's capabilities.

1. Why were you so disappointed?
2. Did they really fail to meet reasonable expectations?
3. Were they capable of reaching the expectations set for them? Why or why not?
4. Do you think they really wanted to meet the expectations you wanted for them to meet? Why or why not?
5. How has this person performed on other projects or tasks?
6. Was that an isolated experience, or part of a pattern?
7. What should you do about similar situations that arise in the future?

Activity 2: Priority Practice

Make a list of at least ten things that you expect of yourself. Make them specific behavioral or performance attributes.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Now review your list. Can you realistically meet each expectation? Why or why not? Re-phrase or adjust any that seem unreasonable to you now. Would you expect the same or more from someone else? Why or why not?

Activity 3: Good Leaders

Make an appointment to talk to your manager, a mentor, and a peer about how they set expectations for others. How good do they seem to be at doing it? How do their employees seem to perceive them? What advice do they give you? Does it seem reasonable?

Write down at least five key comments that each person makes about setting realistic expectations. See how you can implement their thinking into YOUR daily routine.

Manager's Name: _____

Five Key Comments:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Mentor's Name: _____

Five Key Comments:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Peer's Name: _____

Five Key Comments:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Activity 4: Point for Discussion

Make an appointment with each of your employees or team members. Discuss with them what your expectations of yourself and of them are. Ask them for their feedback and make sure you understand what their OWN expectations are.

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