

Employee Expectations

Owners and managers often complain that today's employees aren't as motivated as they used to be. That they may not be as loyal as they once were. That may be the case, and the reasons for that may not be what you think. Here's a less obvious reason for the lack of commitment and passion.

Paul is a terrific employee. He is techno-savvy, knows his company's products inside and out, and has outstanding people skills. He's good at maintaining positive relationships with customers around the world, with other staff members and VPs.

When he was hired, Paul was assured that travel associated with his job would likely diminish over time. Five years later, Paul has been to 10 countries and five continents with no relief in sight. He has expressed his dissatisfaction repeatedly, to no avail. The person who was to take his place at important conferences hasn't been fully groomed yet. His boss is required for an important meeting here at home, so Paul must take his place at a meeting in Europe. Next month it will be to South Africa, and after that to Australia.

He's tired of giving up his Sundays to get on a plane for a Monday meeting or conference a continent away. He'd like to be home to tuck his kids into bed far more than he can right now. *How long before Paul starts interviewing?*

John became frustrated after many years with a good employer. He frequently witnessed shoddy work on the part of technical staff who were seldom reprimanded and almost never fired. He left specifically to go to a company where he'd be fired if his performance was inadequate!

Natalie was hired to do outside sales—a job that she loved and was good at. Her boss accompanied her on sales calls as she learned the ropes, and never did let her go out on her own. Soon, her outside sales job became an inside sales job—a job she couldn't stand. Her boss should have known he'd want to keep the outside sales for himself and hired an inside sales person. Natalie wouldn't have taken *that* job...

Ginny is smart and conscientious. She learns quickly and is great with people. Her normally high motivation takes a beating, however, as her boss keeps asking her the details of her many projects. He'd hired her to relieve some of his own burden, but couldn't seem to let go. His micro-managing drove Ginny to look for another job. *Is there any wonder why?*

Do you have an outstanding employee that you are relying on more and more these days? Have you promised one change or another and failed to deliver because your perfect person doesn't complain—or hasn't complained recently? Are you unknowingly driving them away?

Your employees need to know their expectations about work are being satisfied. And

those expectations are different from one employee to another.

It's not just your salary and benefits package. Would they like to work independently, or be part of a team? Do they want increasing responsibility, or are they satisfied with doing their best at the job they have? Is professional development important to them? Do they love to learn new things? When they've done something outstanding, do they want public recognition, or just a quiet thank you? As their employer, it's important information for you.

How can you learn what employees *really* expect from their jobs? You can find these things out by having regular one-on-one meetings with the individuals on your staff. Find out which of the things above are most important to them, and do what you can to accommodate those expectations. If you can't, be sure to communicate with them so they understand why things may be different than they'd like. Give them some idea of a time frame, if you do decide to make changes for their benefit.

Not everyone wants or expects the same things from a job or an employer, and if we don't ask, we run the risk of delivering the opposite of what they want.

Too often we reward people with the very things we'd like to have if we were in their shoes—but we're not!