



It's not all about them - To attract and retain the best talent, companies often put a great deal of effort into making sure employees have the best possible working environment and a raft of competitive benefits. That's all great because employee engagement and happiness are incredibly important – we want fellow human beings that we work with to enjoy what is often a big part of their week/ life, plus evidence shows that a happy and fulfilled workforce are 20+% more productive.

After putting lots of effort in, however, managers regularly express disappointment that their teams just 'want more and more' and give less

than is required in return. Right from the start, it's important to remember that it's not all about them, it's about the business too. It's a 2-way contract and both sides need to work hard to keep up their side of the bargain.



Keep the scales in balance - From interview, through to onboarding and regular reviews with individuals, there is an opportunity to outline what the company gives and – in return – what the company wants and needs from that person. Thus, the weighing scales stay level and in balance. Stephen R. Covey would describe this as a 'Win Win' situation, with both parties receiving something adequate in return for their efforts.

Top Tips

Clarity of expectations

be crystal clear what you need the person to deliver in terms of KPIs as well as behaviour (what's okay/ not okay around here in the way we behave)

Check understanding

we all see and interpret the world differently. You may think you've explained it many times and they should therefore 'get it' but, unless you ask what key messages they have taken away from your discussion, you won't know if you are both seeing things the same way

Nip it in the bud

the first time you see anything that doesn't fit with expectations or your 2-way contract, give the person specific behavioural feedback. If you don't, the message you send is that you condone that behaviour and you will see it repeated

Don't dodge it

if you've let it go previously, it's not too late to deal with it. Check what the person believes is expected of them. Educate by filling in any gaps as required. Then ask them how they feel they are currently measuring up against those expectations – what is going well, what could be better? Often, they will mention the aspect that is not quite right before you have to. If they don't, be ready to describe what's good and what's missing

Watch out for fractures in team collaboration

if high performers believe others are underperforming or taking advantage of you and the company, they may lose motivation themselves and a willingness to collaborate with those people. This can lead to silo working and inefficiencies which will damage your business

Check your side of the bargain - Your side of the 2-way contract must include effective management and leadership skills. Top talent will start to disengage if there is a lack of vision, feedback or learning opportunities. A fancy beanbag won't make up for poor leadership.