General Work Expectations

General work expectations are a prudent measure to ensure staff know what behaviors are expected in the workplace. Setting behavioral expectations for your employees is an essential responsibility that many business owners gloss over. Clear employee expectations benefit not only your staff, but your business as a whole. Clear behavioral expectations can eliminate or reduce confusion and increases the chances of employees being successful in achieving the goals set for them. Every employee wants to be successful at work, and this can only be achieved if they know what is expected of them from their organization and their team.

Unlike general policies, general behavioral expectations are also universally known, despite employee claims that they were never informed. Again, having an orientation, trainings, and an employee handbook prevents the excuse, “I was never told.”

* Display a positive and respectful attitude.
* Work with honesty and integrity.
* Follow the code of conduct.
* Speak with formality.
* Be polite.
* Say please and thank you.
* Conduct yourself professionally.
* Represent the organization in a responsible manner.
* Follow established company policies.
* Avoid gossiping.
* Abide by safety policies.
* Keep your workstation clean.

It is important to set clear employee and performance expectations for each new person during the onboarding process. Be specific and clear as to what the expectations are and how you will measure them. Performance expectations should be measured by the company and communicated by management or leadership.  The following improve the chances of employees meeting or exceeding the expectations you have set.

**1. Determine what your expectations are.**

Before you can have a conversation with your staff members, you need to have a conversation with yourself and write down what your realistic expectations are. For example, you may expect staff members to do the following:

* Complete projects within the given timeframe.
* Have a positive attitude.
* Take initiative on starting new projects and coming up with new ideas that can benefit the company.
* Come to work on time.
* Follow the dress code.
* Remain professional at all times when communicating with clients and other staff members.
* Follow up with clients within two business days.
* Respect each other.

**2. Minimize confusion by making expectations clear.**

Clear communication from leaders is imperative for success. If staff members don't fully understand what you expect from them, it'll be difficult for them to meet your expectations. You can do these things to make them clear:

* Lay out exactly what your expectations are in paperwork for new hires.
* Provide existing employees with a digital or print guide as an amendment to your employee handbook or their job responsibilities.
* Don't just hand staff members your expectations guide – meet with them to discuss what they are.
* Address any questions employees have about your expectations.
* Ensure they understand what your expectations are.

**3. Let staff members know why your expectations are important.**

When employees understand why expectations are important, it can help them see the bigger picture and feel like their role in the company matters.

* Don't just tell staff members what your expectations are – communicate why they are important.
* Help staff members see how the company as a whole can benefit when they meet or exceed your expectations.
* Beyond communicating the importance of your expectations, break down the "why" in as much detail as possible to minimize confusion.

**4. Provide examples of why expectations are important.**

Offer concrete examples as to why you've set certain expectations, and explain to your team how these expectations connect to the big-picture goals of the company.

* Being on time for work ensures operations run smoothly.
* Adhering to the dress code casts the company in a professional light among customers.
* Displaying a positive attitude at work helps employees deal with stress and keeps morale up.

**5. Get an agreement and commitment.**

Formalize the expectations by requiring employees to sign off on them. When employees sign off on your expectations, it makes them feel more serious. In the event they don't meet your expectations, you will have the documentation to hold them accountable and make a case as to how they have fallen short of the agreement.