

What Employees Want

The Growth Coach research and writings have identified ten primary items that employees want in their "employment package". And, perhaps surprisingly, money isn't one of them! Let's get started with a description of each and then relate all back to integrating them into a checklist for success that will add velocity and an upward trajectory to goal achievement.

1. To know the vision, direction and priorities of the organization (organizational clarity). Employees want to feel like they are "in the know" when it comes to the company's goals, anticipated changes, product/service developments and even critical challenges due to market conditions and/or regulatory matters. As the business owner, your job is to satisfy this need by being transparent enough to show a willingness to be open. However, that does not necessarily mean sharing every detail with every employee.

2. To know their roles, responsibilities and what is expected of them. Much of this desire centers on a sense of job security. That is not to say "guaranteed lifetime employment". It does mean knowing what performance standards are required and accepted as meeting the employer's expectations. Management's job is to clearly state goals and objectives, plus make them both attainable and measurable.

3. To feel appreciated and valued - that their work and ideas matter. One recent study revealed that 75% of employees want their manager to appreciate them for who they are and what they do. This is more than just a cry for "Stroke me, Boss". Employees want to feel proud of what they do for a living, and to be recognized for their contributions to the organization.

4. To be coached, challenged, motivated and held accountable. Employees want direction, guidance and the boss's help when they ask for it or it's obvious that they need it. Micromanagement is not valued as helpful. Employees do want consistent feedback to improve their level of performance.

5. To have the right tools, training and authority to do their jobs. Employees want to perform and need to be spared the frustration of being hamstrung by not having the resources to do so. That may take on the mantle of lacking up-to-date software, proper training and being responsible for a task but without requisite authority to execute.

6. To contribute in a meaningful way. Employees seek to "make a difference" on the job. Assuming they've been properly trained, employees want management to trust them to do their jobs well, and given the freedom to work "their way" so long as the work product and job profitability are not compromised.

7. To utilize their talents in the best way possible. Your employees want to feel there is a purpose in their work, beyond the obvious reward of a paycheck. A motivator to peak performance is knowing that the boss does not "play favorites" but rather awards the perks and promotions based on merit.

8. To have a say in the direction and goals of the company. Management's satisfaction of this employee want is often no more complex than listening. As the business owner, take the time to solicit input from employees about changes or improvements that could help grow your business. That doesn't mean accepting every bit of advice offered, but it will help demonstrate and reinforce the respect you have for your employees, and the knowledge they possess.

9. For a chance to grow and develop - reach their potential. Two key approaches to this issue are training and mentorship. Training is welcomed by employees as an opportunity to learn and grow in their careers. Studies also show that training is considered a perk and an expression of appreciation of employees' value to the company. Training takes on an added dimension when coupled with the personalized attention of a mentor. A mentor offers a "willing ear" as well as coaching and encouragement to enhance performance and satisfaction on the job.

10. To have an emotionally connected, competent manager/leader of character supporting them. Employees want a boss they respect. Respect is earned in part by demonstrating fairness, honesty, mutual trust, accessibility, holding people accountable, fostering teamwork, and a genuine caring about each employee.