

9 things employees want from their managers (and 5 things they don't)



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Different employees crave different things from their managers.

For example, some employees want a hands-on boss who stops by with a "How are things going?" every couple of hours. Others don't care to see their boss but once a year at the performance review.

Unless you're a mind reader, it's impossible to know exactly what your staff wants from you.

But a survey of 500 U.S. employees—published in the book *What People Want*, by Terry Bacon—reveals what matters most to workers.

9 things they crave

1. **Honesty.** 90% say they want honesty and integrity from their manager. Lies and secrets are the biggest killers to credibility.
2. **Fairness.** 89% want their manager to be fair and to hold all employees accountable to the same standards.
3. **Trust.** More than 86% want to trust—and be trusted by—their manager.
4. **Respect.** 84% want to respect—and be respected by—their manager.
5. **Dependability.** 81% say they want to be able to count on their manager when needed.
6. **Collaboration.** 77% want to be a part of their manager's team and be asked to contribute ideas and solutions. Shutting employees out will shut them up—and send them shipping out.
7. **Genuineness.** 76% want their manager to be a genuine person. Employees sometimes spend more time with their boss than with their families—they don't want a phony.
8. **Appreciation.** 74% want their manager to appreciate them for who they are and what they do. When was the last time you handed out a "Thank you!" or "Great job!" to employees?
9. **Responsiveness.** 74% want their manager to listen, understand and respond. Be a sponge, not a brick

wall.

5 things they don't need

While it's important to know what your employees need, it is just as vital to understand what they don't want from their manager. Among the survey's somewhat surprising findings:

1. **Friendship.** Only 3% want their manager to be a friend. As in parenting, it's more important to be a leader, mentor and example than a buddy.
2. **Conversation.** Only 14% want to have interesting conversations with their manager.
3. **TLC.** 24% say they want their manager to "care for them." That doesn't mean you have to be cold and detached, but most employees aren't looking for a best friend in their boss.
4. **Emotional support.** 25% want emotional support from their manager. Employees typically look for that among co-workers rather than a boss.
5. **Cheerfulness.** Only 28% want a cheerful or happy manager. They'd rather respect you than like you.

Bottom line: These traits are important to understand, but they don't apply to every employee. That's why it's best for managers to understand what each individual employee craves and then try to fulfill those needs. In the end, more satisfied employees stick around longer, are more loyal, do better work and make a manager's job much easier.

Dish out praise—when it's due. And then let co-workers know. Recognizing a job well done isn't expensive, but it will mean the world to your employees.

Lead by example. Employees of great leaders will go to the ends of the earth to do a good job for them. Employees under poor leadership will simply go.

Keep workers engaged. Bored employees are neither happy nor productive. To keep your employees engaged and satisfied, present them with challenging assignments and opportunities to grow and develop.

Conduct a "stay" interview. Don't wait for employees to leave before you ask them how things are going. Use regular "stay" interviews to get feedback, compliment high performers and inspire them to do more. Use these interviews to gauge how well you are meeting employees' needs. Seek out their suggestions on what you and the company can do to improve.

Create a circle of trust. Employees are happier and work harder when they trust their leaders. They decide which leaders they can trust based on how their fellow employees, company vendors and customers are treated. Ask yourself: Do I treat people at work with respect?

Plus, remember that trust is a two-way street. Your employees need to feel that you trust them as well.