Consultant's Consultant

Managing Upwards

Managing Upwards
A checklist for unrealistic expectations

It's often the case that your manager (or theirs) has some unrealistic expectations.

This happens a lot in mergers or take overs, when you are working remotely from the nerve centre of a multi-national, or when maybe, just maybe, someone in your management chain is a psychopath (surely not!).

Here are some questions and ideas for how you might approach unrealistic expectations.

Good luck!

Cindy

Think

- stay calm

Who

- the stakeholders are:

- what's important to them

- engage them early: when? ☐ / ☐ / ☐

- make a good relationship: prepare 5 paces you can use with them

What

- deadline date:

- priorities: list your current work in priority order, then ask where this project comes in the list

- what's underneath this? What's the project really trying to achieve?

- deal with the facts: reasons

- deal with the facts: what are the risks

- define scope: how big is it

  time

  cost

  quality

- resources available in addition to what you have

How

- what is an alternative you could offer to this

- what's a compromise (e.g. minimum viable product)

- what will it cost?

- what are the benefits?

- why is this not realistic?

- try to bend the expectation: 5 paces you'd use to make it clear that you know what they need, want, want to achieve

your lead (a bent expectation)

Bonus section: Idiotic expectations

Get their attention.

- what are they trying to achieve
- what problem are they trying to solve
- what are the limitations

- what are the capabilities
- what are the unintended consequences
- offer alternatives if available

What's next:
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If your team is hard to manage, your stakeholders are cranky and budgets are tight, then she can help.

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