Q12® SUPPLEMENTAL GUIDE

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Q01. I KNOW WHAT IS EXPECTED OF ME AT WORK.

Gallup's research shows that many great workplaces have defined the right outcomes; they set goals for their team members or work with them to set their own goals. They not only define the job, but also define success on the job.

For team members to be aware of their expectations, they should have a way to rank, rate, or count as many of the desired outcomes as possible. Also, these measures of performance should fit with what the rest of the organization is saying and doing.

Ask yourself

- What are the measures used to evaluate the performance of our team and of each other?
- How do I set objectives with my team?
- How often do I sit down with my team members and discuss their progress?

Ask your team members

- What do you get paid to do?
- How does this help us achieve our team's goals?
- List your personal goals for the year. What do you wish to accomplish?
- Name five expectations that you feel are appropriate for our organization to have for your position and the outcomes of your work.
- What are the standards for a great performance in your role? What are your points of comparison?
- Have you talked to your peers in the past six months about what they expect of you? What did you learn?
- Have you talked to your internal customers in the past six months about what they expect of you? What did you learn?
- What do you expect from people on your team or your internal customers?
- Do you think they are aware of these expectations? How do you communicate your expectations to them?
- What are the best ways to communicate what is expected of you?
- What does excellence look like in your current role?

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Some best practices

- Schedule a goal-setting meeting at least twice a year with each team member. Set goals in measurable terms.
- Schedule short, 10-minute "sunrise meetings" to provide clarity on transactional matters: prioritize, identify problems, and communicate progress.
- Circulate "team notes" every week with a quick recap of events that might be of interest to the team. Use any media that are appropriate such as a chart pad or intranet page.
- Ensure that team member performance reviews address the following three questions:
  - Where are we going (our team's vision or outcomes)?
  - What do we believe in (our team's guiding values or principles)?
  - Why do we exist (our reason for being, mission, or purpose)?

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Q02. I HAVE THE MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT I NEED TO DO MY WORK RIGHT.

Based on Gallup's extensive research, great managers find out what people need in terms of materials and equipment. Place the responsibility for this on the team members to make sure they know how to earn the right to certain materials and equipment.

A great way for team members to increase their responsiveness to this question is to determine what "materials and equipment" means to them. Sometimes they are referring to accessibility of information, rather than specifically to materials and equipment.

Ask yourself

- What do people mean by "materials and equipment"?
- What do I tend to say to people who ask me for a new piece of equipment?

Ask your team members

- What do you define as "materials and equipment"?
- How much value would this investment generate for our customers, our company, and yourself?
- Are there things that distract you and keep you from being productive or accurate in the work you do?
- How can these distractions be alleviated?
- Have you identified any process improvement that makes us faster and more effective? What is it? Did you share it with others?

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Some best practices

- Update the team about the status of requests.
  - Make it an agenda item in the staff meetings, or
  - Make an associate on the team responsible for raising the issue in staff meetings on an ad hoc basis.
  - Proactively discuss the progress (positive or negative) and indicate what has been done and what the timelines are.
- In situations where the request cannot be granted,
  - Communicate a logical reason and rationale as to why it cannot be accommodated.
  - Always offer an alternative or "work-around" solution. Not offering a solution creates more dissatisfaction even if the rejection is accompanied by a logical explanation.
- Design a template to evaluate requests:
  - What is needed?
  - Why is it needed?
  - Are there any other costs associated with it?
  - How will it affect productivity? Cost savings? Quality? Speed of delivery?
- Where there are different requests but limited resources, ask the team to prioritize these requests during a group meeting.
- If there is concern with getting information from another department, invite the department head and a couple of other members of that department to a team meeting focused on gathering the required information.

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Q03. AT WORK, I HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO DO WHAT I DO BEST EVERY DAY.

For this item, it is important to keep each team member's talents in mind to build relationships and to help others identify their unique talents. It is vital that every individual understands his or her strengths and weaknesses.

A good way of promoting this is to discuss what each person believes his or her leading strengths are in terms of skills, knowledge, and innate talents. Writing these strengths down often helps.

Ask yourself

- Do my team members know about and understand their strengths and non-strengths? Do I understand mine? Theirs?
- Why are team members saying "no" to this item?

Ask your team members

- What do you do best in your role?
- Are there things within your workplace that keep you from working at your best levels? If so, what are they?
- What do you enjoy the most about your work? Which parts of your current job bring you the most satisfaction or greatest sense of accomplishment?
- What changes do you personally plan to make this year so that you can do more of what you like to do the most?
- How do you use the strengths of your team members to accomplish work goals?
- What do you not do well?
- Are there parts of your role that you find difficult? What do you think can be done to help make it easier for you?

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Some best practices

- Reorganize some department activities to focus on team members' talents and to better position them for success and talent use.
- Consciously observe and point out incremental improvements to reinforce how talent feeds performance.
  - Tell the team member as soon as an improvement is noticed, because immediate feedback will help him or her relate to it better.
  - Do not be tentative about repeating; repetition reinforces the message.
  - Make it an "agenda" item during reviews.
- Design a system to track every team member's personal bests.
  - Use this as the basis for setting the next performance target.
- Help team members identify skills and knowledge that would be necessary to help them use their talents better. Encourage them to discuss this with each other.

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Q04. IN THE LAST SEVEN DAYS, I HAVE RECEIVED RECOGNITION OR PRAISE FOR DOING GOOD WORK.

Workplaces that excel on this question rely on forms of recognition that are specific, predictable, frequent, and instantaneous. They are known to promote a recognition-rich environment, with praise coming from every direction and with everyone knowing how others like to be recognized.

Many wonder how often people should be praised, but a good rule of thumb is about once a week. If this seems too often, consider why frequent praise is so important. Whenever a person does something, there are consequences. Those consequences will affect whether team members engage in that behavior again. We know that to get the results or consequences we want, frequent praise can encourage the behavior that produces it.

Ask yourself

- How often do I praise my team members?
- Do I know what kind of praise/recognition is most meaningful to each individual team member?

Ask your team members

- For what do you think you should be recognized, and by whom?
- Whom else should I tell when you do something that positively affects the business?
- What does recognition look like to you?
- What is the best recognition you have ever received? That you have received in the past six months? Why?
- What type of recognition do you prefer? What are you most comfortable with?
- If you were to receive a lifetime award, whom would you want to present it, and what would you want him or her to say?
- Please list three colleagues who help you most in your job. Please explain how you have thanked them or recognized them for their help.
- As a team, how can we build a culture that encourages and values recognition and praise?

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Some best practices

- Educate the team about the importance of positive recognition and the significance of a praise-oriented culture.
- Ensure that for every recognition that is given, there is an emphasis on *why* the recognized act was important.
  - Insist that the recognition be individualized, specific, and deserved.
- Play the advocate for team members by promoting their areas of competence and expertise.
  - Your advocacy creates opportunities for others to seek the person out and ask for his or her opinions and comments.

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Q05. MY SUPERVISOR, OR SOMEONE AT WORK, SEEMS TO CARE ABOUT ME AS A PERSON.

Remember, people leave managers, not companies. A productive workplace is one in which people feel safe — safe enough to experiment, to challenge, to share information, and to support each other — and are prepared to give the manager and the organization the benefit of the doubt. None of this can happen if team members do not feel cared about. Relationships are the glue that holds great workplaces together.

Ask yourself

- How do I let my team members know that I care about their successes?
- How do I let them know that I am there to support them?

Ask your team members

- What does "care" mean to you?
- What makes you feel cared about? Can you give an example in the past six months when you felt cared about?
- Will you tell me how you are doing or feeling? Or do I need to ask?
- How do you show other team members that you care about them?
- How can team members set each other up for success?
- What are some things we could be doing in our workgroup to increase the feeling of "care"?
- What are some examples of behavior that demonstrates a lack of caring?
- Who do you feel cares the most about your success?
- Is there anything about your personal life we need to be aware of so that we can support you better?

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Some best practices

- Sharing the manager's Clifton StrengthsFinder report with the team is a good way of building trust. This helps define expectations in terms of what to expect from the manager and what not to expect.
- Study and discuss the Clifton StrengthsFinder report with each individual, with a special emphasis on how to relate to the person. Talk about the best relationships he or she has had and what made them special. This helps you to individualize better.
- Encourage team members to share what is going on in their personal lives.
  - Try to use the information to assign jobs/manage workloads because it affects their performance.
- Maintain notes for each team member about requests/questions/clarifications he or she has asked for. You will communicate respect and care by keeping track of such requests and closing the loop with each person.
- Maintain a calendar of important dates for each individual — birthdays of family members, work anniversaries, wedding anniversaries, etc. Send notes to the family members on these occasions.
  - Also send a "congratulations" message or an "all the best" message on occasions such as first day at school or winning a contest at school.
- Pair team members up with people they are likely to relate well to. This will nurture stronger bonds.
- Make sure team members understand the implications of organizational changes or initiatives.
  - Hold meetings with each team member to help him or her understand the effect and address individual concerns.

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Q06. THERE IS SOMEONE AT WORK WHO ENCOURAGES MY DEVELOPMENT.

In this case, "development" does not mean promotion. It does not mean each team member gets what he or she wants. It means helping individuals find roles that fit their natural strengths: their unique combinations of skills, knowledge, and talent.

Previous Gallup findings have concluded that workgroups that receive high scores on this particular item do not try to put in what was left out, but rather, they try to draw out what was left in; they provide constant feedback and find creative developmental opportunities for each other.

Ask yourself

- How do I help my people develop?
- How do I help them find the right tasks, jobs, and career paths?

Ask your team members

- How do you define development within your current role?
- What does development mean to you?
- What would help you increase your performance in your current role?
- What is the most effective way for you to learn?
- What would you like to be doing three years from now? Professionally? Personally?
- What challenging experiences are you giving yourself this year? Who is your accountability partner?
- Who are your mentors?
- Who holds you accountable for your development goals?
- In the past six months, have you developed any new partnerships to support you or your work?
- What new partnerships would you like to develop in the next six months?
- How do you want to develop within your current role?
- What further opportunities would you like to pursue to help you be more successful in your current role?
- What is the learning style that suits you the most?
- With some of the changes coming up over the next few months, is there a particular skill or job you would like to learn?

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Some best practices

- Understand each team member's personal style of learning. How does he or she like to learn?
- Make a development plan for each team member for a one-year time frame.
  - Plan for specific milestones for the next six months.
  - Ask team members to take ownership of the development plans.
- Ask team members to track their personal bests.
- Support new members of the team.
- When a team member reaches the highest level of certification in a given area, think of cross-training or of ways that team member can be involved in teaching others.
- Pay special attention to associates who are working on new, innovative, and different initiatives.
  - Highlight the effort in group meetings to signal that such innovative efforts are encouraged.
  - Verbalize, support, and reassure often.
- Hold meetings in which team members state their commitments and learn what everyone else has to do. This process removes the tentativeness in giving feedback and puts pressure on each person to perform better because he or she has made a public commitment.
- Convene "roundtables" every month for the team; select a topic and discuss it thoroughly.
- Use the Clifton StrengthsFinder framework to identify potential and to identify skills and knowledge that will maximize potential.
  - Every quarter, build a specific goal around a particular talent.

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Q07. AT WORK, MY OPINIONS SEEM TO COUNT.

Team members who give high scores on this item feel they have access to channels of communication across different levels or divisions of the organization, and their managers work to maintain those channels. Groups do not function well when group members feel insignificant or irrelevant.

Ask team members for their opinions, and include their ideas in the decision-making process whenever possible. This means that everyone should have the chance to express his or her ideas.

Ask yourself

- Why are team members saying "no" to this item?
- What is my feedback process? Is it working?

Ask your team members

- What makes you feel valued here?
- How do you know your opinions matter?
- Who needs to hear your ideas?
- Are you comfortable raising opinions in a group setting? What can be done to help you voice your opinions?
- In the past six months, when have you felt your opinions mattered?
- Have you ever voiced an opinion but it was not implemented? What were the reasons? Did you ask for an explanation?
- Have you done anything in the past six months to understand the opinions of others?
- If you have an idea, is there someone with whom you can speak to help you polish and fine-tune it?

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Some best practices

- When a team member requests to talk about something, immediately schedule a time to listen.
- Let the team member know that his or her attendance at a meeting is appreciated.
- Give the agenda for a meeting, especially if it is a brainstorming meeting, well in advance; this respects the ideation of the associates and communicates that the brainstorming meeting is important.
  - "Virtual" team members should also be called in. It is better to call the virtual associate, instead of making him or her call in.
  - Circulate the minutes of the meeting to communicate that all opinions have been heard; communicate the next steps.
  - Ensure that "thread facilitators" are nominated for these meetings to make sure every opinion that gets voiced receives follow-up.
  - Encourage team members to open discussion.
- Convene a question-and-answer forum every month for team members to raise any issues they want. Invite some key leaders to the forum. This reinforces transparency and that the culture believes in seeking opinions and acting on them.
- Encourage and empower team members to always ask for the rationale behind decisions.
- Actively advocate and get others to consider the opinions and suggestions voiced by team members.

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Q08. THE MISSION OR PURPOSE OF MY COMPANY MAKES ME FEEL MY JOB IS IMPORTANT.

This question measures a key source of motivation for team members — the idea that their organization represents values that they themselves share. Effective workplaces cultivate that feeling, including providing constant clarification of the overall mission of the organization, as well as the ways in which each individual team member contributes to the achievement of the mission.

As human beings, we like to feel as though we belong. Individual achievement is great, but we are likely to stay committed longer if we feel we are part of something bigger than ourselves.

Ask yourself

- Am I helping my team members find the link between their own values and those of the organization?
- How?

Ask your team members

- What is the mission of our organization?
- What do you do that adds to the mission/vision/values of our organization?
- What part of our mission/vision/values is most important to you?
- What is your personal mission?
- What, according to you, is the mission of our organization?
- What is the connection you see between your personal mission and the organization's mission?
- What have been some instances in the past three months when you felt the organization was living its mission?
- Are there any policies or procedures that you think are inconsistent with the mission of the department or the organization?
- Do you understand how your performance metrics connect with the mission of the department or the organization?
- Have you thought about how your performance in the past six months has affected the mission of the department and the organization?
- At what specific times did you feel your job was important?

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Some best practices

- Ask each team member to write a personal mission statement every year, and use it as the guiding anchor for discussions about learning, growth, and development. The process of writing a mission statement for the year provides clarity to the team member and helps the manager individualize better.
- Create awareness of the "big picture" of the department.
  - Tell team members the implications of the department's job.
  - Explain to team members how clients use our department and how it benefits them.
  - Individually explain to team members that they are wanted and that what they do makes a difference to the final outcome.
- If possible, arrange for the workgroup to interact with top management at least twice a year.
- Encourage team members to specifically understand the mission of every project that they work on by asking about the objective, mission, and benefit of the project to the client.

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Q09. MY ASSOCIATES OR FELLOW EMPLOYEES ARE COMMITTED TO DOING QUALITY WORK.

Workgroups that score well on this question tend to be good at providing clear quality standards and keeping those standards at the forefront of team members' minds. Thus, team members are capable of accurately evaluating their own performance, as well as that of their teammates.

Clear communication of standards enhances accountability and builds trust among coworkers. We also know that not everyone will see quality in the same way if everyone's concept of the word is different. To remedy this, having a clear definition helps. The best place to start is with customers, both internal and external.

Ask yourself

- Does everyone define quality in the same way?
- Do all departments support one another?
- Does everyone know and agree with what the organization uses to measure performance?
- Does everyone understand what each of the internal partners does?

Ask your team members

- What does quality look like?
- What do you do that makes our customers want to come back?
- How do you help your team be as successful as possible?
- What do you do that contributes to the reputation of your team?
- How do you measure your own productivity and quality? How do you judge the quality of others' work?
- Has there been an incident in the past two months when you thought the entire team worked together to produce high-quality work? What were the key success factors?
- Have there been cases in which you consistently found substandard quality work being delivered? How can our team address this issue?
- Have you done anything specific in the past six months to improve the quality of your work?
- What departments are we delivering work to? Have you done anything specific to improve the work we are sending to internal teams?

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Some best practices

- Set quality standards for the workgroup so that every team member has a common reference point.
  - Ask the team to help develop the quality standards.
  - Specify gradations in quality standards — from minimum acceptable quality to superlative quality.
- Educate the team about the implications and effects of substandard quality.
  - Quantifying the costs of substandard quality is a powerful way to communicate the importance of quality consciousness.
- Communicate the message that team members should raise quality issues with others on the team. Reinforce that these conversations should not be perceived as threatening to their personal relationships.
  - Reinforce that tolerating substandard quality is actually harmful to the relationship and the team in the long run.
- Every six months, require team members to seek feedback about the quality of their work from at least three internal customers.
  - Incorporate internal customer feedback into regular performance reviews.
- Reward high-quality performance.

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Q10. I HAVE A BEST FRIEND AT WORK.

This question measures team members' perceptions of the quality of their relationships with their coworkers. Gallup data reveal that the strongest working environments are those that foster friendships among team members and encourage them to establish bonds that blur the line between professional and personal relationships.

Some people say that work is serious business and that there is no place for friendship at work. They are wrong. Human beings are most productive when we cooperate, when we combine our efforts, and when we do not have to waste time watching our backs. Friendship is the gateway to trust. Best friendship is the proof of trust.

Ask yourself

- What does this concept mean to my team members?
- Do they feel they have someone to watch their backs?
- What do I actively do to encourage positive relationships?

Ask your team members

- Define what a best friend means to you.
- How do relationships within the team help you do your job better?
- How do you use your relationships to help others be successful in their roles?
- What would help you build stronger relationships at work?
- Are there team members within our organization that have values similar to yours?
- Do you feel you have one or more team members whom you can trust and depend on?
- How do you contribute to a positive and productive workplace?
- Has there been an incident in the past six months that you depended on someone else for your success? Describe that incident.

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Some best practices

- Take the lead in sharing personal or non-work-related information. This encourages team members to open up and gives a forum to make those connections.
- Facilitate common interest activities.
  - One team started a recipe exchange by creating a file that could be accessed by everybody on the team and to which everybody could post recipes.
  - One team thought of taking turns sending a "joke of the day" or an "interesting fact of the day" to the other members of the team.
  - One team discovered that most of their team members were thinking of investing in real estate. Consequently, they started a weekly one-hour discussion in which each person would share what he or she had learned during the week about the real estate investment decision.
- Intentionally design activities or projects that will give team members the opportunity to work together.
  - Smaller groups are better because the incidence of interaction will be greater and, hence, the likelihood of forming relationships.
  - The activity or the project should provide an opportunity for close interaction. At least six months is a good time frame.
- Do not ignore situations when you sense "bad chemistry" between two individuals.
  - Try to talk to the two individuals concerned and explain how their interaction is affecting their performance and the team.
- Make connections to other teams and departments.

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Q11. IN THE LAST SIX MONTHS, SOMEONE AT WORK HAS TALKED TO ME ABOUT MY PROGRESS.

One of Gallup's most consistent research findings has been that feedback improves performance. High-scoring groups establish structured feedback processes for their team members, which include clearly defining goals and achievement levels, and then meeting regularly with each team member to track his or her progress toward those goals.

We realize that we all need feedback to know how far we have come. We need signs to track our progress.

Ask yourself

- How can I show my team members how far they have come?
- How much feedback am I giving my team members?

Ask your team members

- What should we be tracking progress on?
- How do you define progress within your current role? How can this be measured?
- What topics should our team address at our midyear review?
- How often should you meet with your manager to discuss how things are going in your job and in the workplace?
- What have been your greatest accomplishments at work this past year?
- What achievements have you made this past year that you felt were worthy of recognition?

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Some best practices

- Send an agenda to team members well before their actual review.
  - Type a set of questions based on the key developments that have influenced the workgroup in the preceding six months.
  - Use different questions for every review.
- Maintain comprehensive documentation of reviews for each team member so that it provides continuity between successive reviews.
  - Develop your own template to document reviews.
  - Keep separate files to track the reviews of each person.
  - Refer to your files at least once a month.
- Encourage peer feedback.
  - Some managers create a set of questions and ask team members to get feedback from internal customers.
  - Some managers just ask their direct reports to talk to each of their internal customers before the review.
- Review the non-metrics.
  - New Learnings — These might be knowledge-related (What new books have you read? What new seminar did you attend?) or skill-related (What new technique have you mastered?).
  - New Experiences — What new or different experiences did you have, and what did you learn from them?
  - New Relationships — What new relationships have you formed? What is working well? What needs improvement?
  - Performance on Teams — What specific contributions have you made to the team's performance and success?

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Q12. THIS LAST YEAR, I HAVE HAD OPPORTUNITIES AT WORK TO LEARN AND GROW.

Engaged team members need to feel that their job contributes in some way to their professional or personal development. Great workplaces are those in which team members are provided with educational opportunities that address their development — this may include formal classes or simply finding new experiences for them to take on.

Each team member will define "opportunities" differently. For some team members, this may mean training classes and seminars; for others, this means promotions and increased responsibilities; and for others, this might mean working on special projects or assignments.

Ask yourself

- How do my team members define "opportunities"?
- Whose responsibility is it to find opportunities for my team members?

Ask your team members

- What opportunities to learn and grow have you had in the past 12 months?
- Have you achieved excellence in this role?
- How have you influenced others to achieve excellence in their roles?
- How do you measure your learning? What is your yardstick? How do you fare against it?
- What training has been most valuable to you? Is there any other training that you would like to receive?
- What learning style has helped you the most?
- How have you increased your skills and knowledge in the past year?
- What challenges have you overcome in the past year?
- Are there specialists on our team who could teach their peers (for example, software)?

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Some best practices

- Encourage each team member to speak up about what he or she has learned.
  - Make it an agenda item in reviews.
- Involve the entire team in charting achieved learning/outcomes of the team.
  - Organize the learning topics to be addressed in group learning sessions over the course of the year at the rate of at least one per month.
- Every team member is encouraged to come out with a learning goal that he or she wishes to pursue for the year.
  - Team members should be encouraged to share the goal with the team.
  - Team members should be encouraged to break the goal into smaller units of learning and attach a timeline to it.
  - The manager and team members are encouraged to voice their expectations of the individual in terms of how he or she could deploy the learning into the workplace.
- Every team member is encouraged to have one cross-training goal per year (i.e., a learning goal that does not relate to his or her area of specialization).
- When someone attends a training workshop or seminar, ask this person to brief the entire team.
- Encourage team members to job shadow when it is appropriate.

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