

# EMPLOYING PEOPLE YOU CAN TRUST

You need people to make your organisation work. But you need the right people – people you can trust – to make your organisation a success, writes *Vanessa Hall*

**A**t the risk of being slightly controversial, I believe that these times, where good people are hard to find and even harder to keep, call for good old-fashioned honesty.

I've spent a lot of time looking through hundreds and hundreds of ads on various internet job sites and the thing that scares me is the promises that organisations are making in order to attract people to the job. People are drawn to the promises that meet their needs. 'Flexible working hours', 'work-life balance', 'good remuneration package' and 'great team' are all great examples of promises I've seen recently. The problem is they also create expectations in the minds of the successful applicants.

We know that people join organisations and leave their managers. We also know that the number one reason why employees leave their jobs within the first six months is because their expectations have not been met.<sup>1</sup>

If you really want to attract and retain good people, here are seven key things you need to know:

1. 'Good people', people you can trust, are those who can meet your expectations and needs, but you need to be honest about what those are
2. Only make promises in your job ads and interviews that you can and will keep
3. Understand the expectations and needs of the people joining your organisation. If you fail to meet them, you will break down their trust in you
4. Make sure your managers, supervisors and team leaders understand what makes and breaks down trust – they are responsible for people staying or leaving your organisation
5. Remember that your marketing and branding make promises and create expectations in your existing and future employees' minds
6. When you build trust with your employees, managing their expectations, meeting their needs and keeping your promises, they stay
7. When you break the trust of your employees, they leave and tell others about it, or they stay, are unproductive, and drag others down

Let's look at an example of what can and does happen:

Sarah sees a job ad for a well-known and respected company looking for an upcoming executive assistant who is ready for the 'next step'. The job requires a self-starter with initiative and offers 'flexibility'. At the interview with HR, she is told the last person left for a role in marketing for another organisation.

She meets the executive, Lauren, who seems nice and friendly, and Lauren explains that she is out of the office, travelling, quite a lot so Sarah would need to be able to work on her own. Sarah has heard good things about this company and is keen to move on from her existing PA role, with the possibility of moving into a marketing or sales role like the previous person.

Lauren gives Sarah the job. Sarah starts in two weeks and, in turn, is placing her trust in this company, and in Lauren. She is relying on both to deliver on her expectations, her needs and their promises – the basis of all relationships. I use a diagrammatic model, called The ENP® Wall, to explain what happens with trust. In our example here, the dynamics are as follows.

Sarah is thrown in the deep end, organising Lauren's travel, arranging the team offsite strategy day and producing reports for the executive meetings. She's coping well and enjoying the work. She takes some initiative and adds some graphs to Lauren's report to the executive to clarify a few key points. Lauren is furious. 'How dare you change my reports like that!' 'Sorry.'

A week later, when Sarah asks if she could come in an hour late and work back an hour each day while Lauren is away, Lauren says suspiciously: 'How will I know you won't slacken off and leave early? I'd rather you work your normal hours.' She then goes and asks one of the other managers to 'keep an eye on Sarah' while she was away. Unfortunately, Sarah finds out. She decides that after only six weeks this isn't the right place for her, she can't stand her boss, the company isn't that great to work for after all, and begins looking for another job – in work time!

Pay attention to three key things – expectations, need and promises, and ENP® – and you'll attract and retain people you can trust. Remember, trust is fragile. Handle it with care. **HC**

1. James Adonis, *Love Your Team: How to halve your employee turnover in less than 90 days!*

## About the author

Vanessa Hall is Australia's leading expert on trust. Her business, Entente Pty Limited ([www.entente.com.au](http://www.entente.com.au)) teaches and supports organisations and individuals to build trust. Vanessa's recent book *The truth about trust in business* is receiving world-wide acclaim, and is available in all good bookstores.

