

Fair Process: Managing in the Knowledge Economy

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People care about outcomes. But, they also care about the processes that result in the outcomes. They want to know that their point of view was considered, even if it was rejected.

Fair process has a strong influence on the attitudes and behaviours that are needed for high performance. Fair process builds trust, unlocks ideas and ensures that employees voluntarily cooperate while pursuing the most difficult goals.

Fair process takes into account the human need to be valued and respected. People want their ideas to be taken seriously, and understand the logic behind specific decisions.

There are three key elements in fair process: *engagement*, *explanation* and *expectation clarity*.

Engagement: Individuals whom the decision will impact are asked for their input. Engagement communicates management's respect for individuals and elicits greater commitment from them, while implementing the decision.

Explanation: Explanation ensures that the people involved in and affected by the decision, understand how and why the decision was made. People understand the thinking behind the decision, and feel confident that the decision has been made impartially and in the best interests of the company.

Expectation clarity: Expectation clarity means that, once the decision is made, employees understand by what standards their performance will be judged, and the penalties for failure. Expectation clarity minimizes favouritism and the likelihood of political behaviours.

Concluding notes

Fair process is not the same as decision making by consensus. The objective of fair process is not to achieve harmony, or win people's support through compromises. Fair process gives every idea a chance. But, at the end of the day, it is merit that drives the decision.