

Fairness

We are not going to get into a debate about what is better: equality or fairness. The latter has gotten bad press because it implies unequal distribution. However, we believe that this is the condition to right certain injustices linked to the fact that not everyone starts off under the same conditions: equality means running the 100 metres against Usain Bolt in his normal physical shape. Fairness means correcting the inequality of opportunity by putting a pair of ski boots on his feet. At least then it would be a "race"...

Now we are exposed. We prefer fairness and the amount of inequality that goes along with it, without which we would not be able to envision proportionality between what is given (in terms of work, time, expertise, commitment, etc.) and what is offered in return (recognition, advancement, salary, etc.).

In short: fairness refers to proportionality which refers to... merit. Everything should therefore go well in the best of all worlds, since Davidson's case has shown us that the vast majority of Davidsonians prefer a meritocratic system over a strictly egalitarian one. And yet, if you are a manager, perhaps you have already heard these words during a review with one of your employees?

- "Why don't you raise my salary up above 50 euros? I've given my all this year in my job..."
- "I think I deserve a raise above the pay scale!

The others don't need to know..."

- "OK I missed my target, but only 2 days late because a customer cancelled a project, you're still going to approve my bonus, aren't you?"
- "I'd like a bigger budget for my company car, could you authorise that? The contracts I signed are very profitable..."

Personally, I loooooove these kinds of complaints:

1. They will inevitably make me look like "the bad guy who says no"... A devious reversal of the guilt by the "out-of-bounds" employee, since he tried to circumvent the commonly established rules, sometimes without acknowledging it ("the others don't need to know" ... As if the fact of not being caught in the act negated ... the crime).

I'll get over it: "managing is accepting that you'll be unpopular", I've been told that enough at Davidson...

2. They represent throwing a lifeline to unfairness, a hot, burning rope that I don't want to grab onto. However, in a "short-term" logic, I would have every interest in doing so. Inequity in this case is the shortest path to tranquillity.

Why not give an extra €50 per month to someone who asks me for them even though the rating system does not foresee it? Because he will go home



happy of course! Davidson will get over it and I will have avoided a tough negotiation and kept my aura of sympathy!

It would be a serious mistake, however, because what is at stake goes beyond immediate contentment (or relief)! For while Davidson will survive financially if I give in, we will nevertheless lose our fundamental principle of fairness. And I say "we" because the person making the request will pay the price for his/her unfair request: he/she joined Davidson because he/she thought that we were different, that he/she would never pass someone in the halls who, with equal experience and performance, would receive more recognition and

pay than he/she did, and now he/she is creating the conditions, the temptation to say yes and corrupt the whole system. The exception obviously disproves the rule, except in grammar.

Romain

Feeling inspired?

Everyone

Before responding to certain requests, ask yourself this question: is it fair to "others"?