MODULE OVERVIEW

Expect more, get more: The Pygmalion effect at work

Adaptive module | ~20 min

Without realizing it, a manager who believes in someone's potential gives them more attention, sets higher standards, and offers more chances to prove themselves; the opposite wastes potential, and nobody notices. Beyond a simple "believe in your team," the module turns the four channels identified by Rosenthal and Jacobson into levers managers can activate, ending with a one-month experiment with the person they expect least from.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

01 Understand how a belief about a team member changes our behavior until it creates the very reality it predicted.

02 Activate the four channels of the Pygmalion effect on purpose: climate, standards, feedback, and opportunities.

03 Recognize the Golem effect and its blind spots: the person we expect little from receives less and confirms our initial bias.

04 Question collective beliefs treated as facts, from women's access to leadership positions to the manager's working hours.

WHO IT'S FOR

Anyone ready to change their outlook to get the best from the people they work with.

- **Prerequisite:** none

HOW THE MODULE WORKS

Self-paced, with practice tailored to each learner.

1 **Self-assessment**: on 9 dimensions, to gauge current habits and guide the practice.

2 **Expert video**: 10 minutes, with 3 pauses for reflection.

3 **Practice scenarios**: the first 2 chosen from the self-assessment, then 16 optional ones. Every answer gets feedback: what it leads to, and one way to improve.

4 **Dated commitment**: one action to try, written by the learner or picked from the suggestions.

5 **Memo to download**: key takeaways, questions, commitment, personal notes and checklists.

ASSESSMENT AND COMPLETION

Pass mark: 80%

The score takes into account your answers to the practice scenarios, your commitment and, where relevant, any additional learning activities. Passing requires a commitment and a score of at least 80%.

METHODS & MODELS

- Pygmalion effect through 4 channels (climate, standards, feedback, opportunities) – Robert Rosenthal & Lenore Jacobson (1968)
- Self-fulfilling prophecy, inspired by Robert K. Merton (1948)
- Theory X and Theory Y (Douglas McGregor, 1960)
- Afthonios method: the placebo effect as a neurobiological illustration of the self-fulfilling prophecy

SOURCES & REFERENCES

- Robert Rosenthal & Lenore Jacobson, "Pygmalion in the Classroom" (1968): the Pygmalion effect demonstrated through a fake IQ test and a randomly designated "elite group"
- Robert K. Merton, "The Self-Fulfilling Prophecy," The Antioch Review (1948): origin of the term self-fulfilling prophecy
- Douglas McGregor, The Human Side of Enterprise (1960): Theory X and Theory Y
- McNatt, Journal of Applied Psychology (2000): managerial expectations and the Pygmalion effect

Module created by Afthonios.com.

Content reviewed on 13 October 2026