

Unlike Raises, You Can Afford to Give Your Team All the Recognition and Praise They Have Earned

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Appreciate your employees, and everything else falls into place.

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It is time for the people side of the business not to be separate from business. You will never give an epic customer experience if you don't offer an epic employee experience. Employee recognition contributes to an overall positive employee experience that will drive the creation of high performing teams. A [Glassdoor](#) survey revealed that more than 80 percent of employees said they were motivated to work harder and stay at their jobs longer when they received appreciation for their work.

Appreciation doesn't have to be warm and fuzzy. The reality is the current workplace landscape struggles to attract and retain their talent, and the most obvious approaches are often overlooked. Sometimes, it is not that organizations are not appreciative of their employees, but perhaps expressions are not being felt. The act of being recognized creates an environment where people feel valued and a place where your people can

shout from the rooftops that they belong.

When you ask your people for help, you recognize and demonstrate that you value their talents throughout the organization. It fosters a trusted environment as you give people opportunities for leadership positions or key roles on high-profile projects. [Harvard Business Review](#) highlighted Paul J. Zak, author of *[Trust Factor: The Science of Creating High-Performance Companies](#)*. He said “people at high-trust companies report 74 percent less stress, 106 percent more energy at work, 50 percent higher productivity, 13 percent fewer sick days, 76 percent more engagement, 29 percent more satisfaction with their lives and 40 percent less burnout.”

When it comes to company culture, why reinvent the wheel? All you need to do is make the wheel work for you. A culture of appreciation must be engrained in your daily interactions to stain the fabric of the organization. Here are seven ways you can gain traction.

1. Value-based recognition.

[SnackNation](#), as part of their culture, manifests a weekly “Crush It Call.” Every Friday, the entire organization gathers in a communal space, and each team member names one person who performed exceptionally well plus one thing they are grateful for, either at work or in their personal life. Another way SnackNation recognizes outstanding employees is through the Value Victor Program, a monthly all-company award that celebrates the employee who most embodies the company’s values.

2. Platform to communicate and collaborate.

Recommendations from peers, over all other forms of media, are one of the reasons Facebook has been so successful. [Facebook Workplace](#) created an environment where employees can connect, communicate and collaborate on work-related projects. [Volkswagen Ireland](#) capitalized Workplace across their borders, driven by their leadership team, where more than 95 percent of their office uses the platform to communicate and celebrate their people.

3. Giving people a voice.

[Google](#) adopted two specific types of bonus programs -- one where managers can reward employees and one where employees can recognize each other. A monetary award or a non-cash recognition such as a dinner for two can be provided. [Peer bonuses](#) are encouraged to recognize each other’s work, and any employee can nominate someone. At a leadership level, executives can recognize teams for outstanding performance with incentives ranging from team celebrations to team trips.

4. Wall of Happy.

Simple, public recognition is one the most effective and most underutilized leader tools. Google created a “Wall of Happy” where their “gthanks” notes are posted and celebrated. Peers send a public shout-out via an online thank you note to coworkers.

Disney's newsletter showcases employee appreciation awards, milestones and success stories to demonstrate opportunities for succession. Disney's internal newsletter, “Eyes and Ears,” features everything from health, wellness, employee appreciation and magical moments between their people. Recognizing people events humanizes the employee experience at work.

5. Appreciate Your Staff Day.

Employee Appreciation Day will be celebrated on March 1 this year. It's a perfect opportunity to show your team that you respect, appreciate and care about their professional and personal success. There are many ways to celebrate your people. Here's some inspiration:

- Organize an afternoon at a winery to have lunch together and acknowledge your team's work.
- Award staff with prizes, like extra holiday hours, paid vacation, vouchers and team bonuses.
- Prepare handwritten appreciation cards, and hand deliver them.
- Provide opportunities to conduct Q&A post on the company blog.
- Host a Facebook Live to recognize people who help others.
- Give someone a chance to have dinner with the CEO.

6. Your people's best evangelist.

Recognizing people across an entire company is powerful. A manager must exhaust their bragging rights to relay their team's accomplishments, reinforce individual recognition and embrace with pride their collective achievement. Submit team achievements through newsletters, digital media and social media channels.

Barry-Wehmiller's recognition program acknowledges performance, but their most prestigious award shines a light on individuals who significantly contribute to their unique measure of success -- by touching the lives of others. A peer-nominated process invites all the team members at the location to the awards celebration which also involved the winner's family and special gifts. Winners are awarded the keys to a unique car to drive for a week.

7. Valuing people will impact a lifetime.

When it comes to culture, the basics are simple. Embrace people in your organization as if they are someone's precious child, not an object or a resource. [Herb Kelleher](#) led Southwest Airlines to five decades of financial success. His legacy supersedes because of the innumerable lives he touched along the way. When you value people, you value the total person, not just who they are between 9 am and 5 pm. You value whatever joy, grief, illness or celebratory times you hear about.

Kelleher created a "culture of commitment" in which his employees came first. His idea was simple -- happy workers, happy passengers. As Kelleher reminds us all, "the business of business is people."

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