

Appreciation in the Workplace

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Posted on August 30, 2022



What is appreciation? Appreciation means “recognition and enjoyment of the good qualities of someone or something.” In the workplace, appreciation plays a crucial part in developing a positive and encouraging atmosphere. In return, appreciation can strengthen employee relationships and motivate employees to be more productive, determined, and committed to their job.

A recent book I read, *The 5 Languages of Appreciation in the Workplace: Empowering Organizations by Encouraging People*, provides an insightful look into what makes people feel appreciated. Whether you are a team leader or a team member, understanding the different languages of appreciation is an excellent tool to improve and strengthen workplace relationships. Below are a few areas the book highlights to improve staff morale, create a more encouraging workplace, and increase employee engagement.

Three languages of appreciation are highlighted below.

Words of Affirmation:

This language uses words to communicate a positive message to someone else. Ways you can express verbal appreciation to your coworkers include positive messages about achievements, character, and personality. For example, suppose a team member handled a situation in a way you appreciated. In that case, it’s valuable to express your appreciation so the next time they will think about handling the situation the same.

Quality Time:

Although we may have a busy schedule and often multitask throughout our workday, it is crucial to recognize when quality time is needed. Quality time can vary for each individual and situation, but most of the time, it involves giving someone your undivided attention. During this time, all individuals can share their thoughts uninterrupted. Another approach to quality time in the workplace is to share experiences. Sharing experiences can be more personable and some employees feel more connected. There are multiple methods to have quality time with peers. Over time, you will want to recognize each employee's preferences to ensure you use the time productively. People's preference for discussion may vary from one-on-one to small or large group variations. The people involved in the conversation can also include different levels of staff. It may be helpful to apply the different types of conversation settings in your work environment to get the most from each employee.

Acts of Service:

This appreciation language is focused on employees assisting each other. A few strategies when assisting another coworker include:

1. Make sure your responsibilities are covered first
2. Ask before you help
3. Do not assume you know what help is wanted
4. Volunteer your time to coworkers
5. Have a positive attitude when helping
6. Complete what you started

Special Considerations for Remote Working Environments:

In addition to the languages of appreciation, the book also highlights appreciation in a remote environment. As more workplaces are utilizing remote work, it is essential to ensure appreciation is displayed. Employees can effectively communicate appreciation; however, we need to be more proactive in a distant relationship than we would be face to face. Many opportunities for brief encounters that may arise in an in-person environment do not occur as frequently when working remotely. Another tool to ensure virtual conversations are still valued by one another is to create conversations with coworkers that are not only focused on work and the task.

Lastly, remember that appreciation does not only come from the employee you are completing the task for or your supervisor. Not only is it essential to hear positive feedback from supervisors or managers, but it is also crucial for employees to receive positive feedback and support from colleagues. The support and encouragement from a peer are often more realistic when it comes from someone you interact with daily.

Understanding appreciation forms is a powerful tool that employees can use to build an engaging and positive culture. I encourage you to take some time out of your schedule to learn more about showing appreciation in the workplace. It is important to understand our own appreciation language and the preferences of others.

References:

Chapman, G. D., & White, P. E. (2019). *The 5 Languages of Appreciation in the Workplace: Empowering Organizations by Encouraging People*.

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