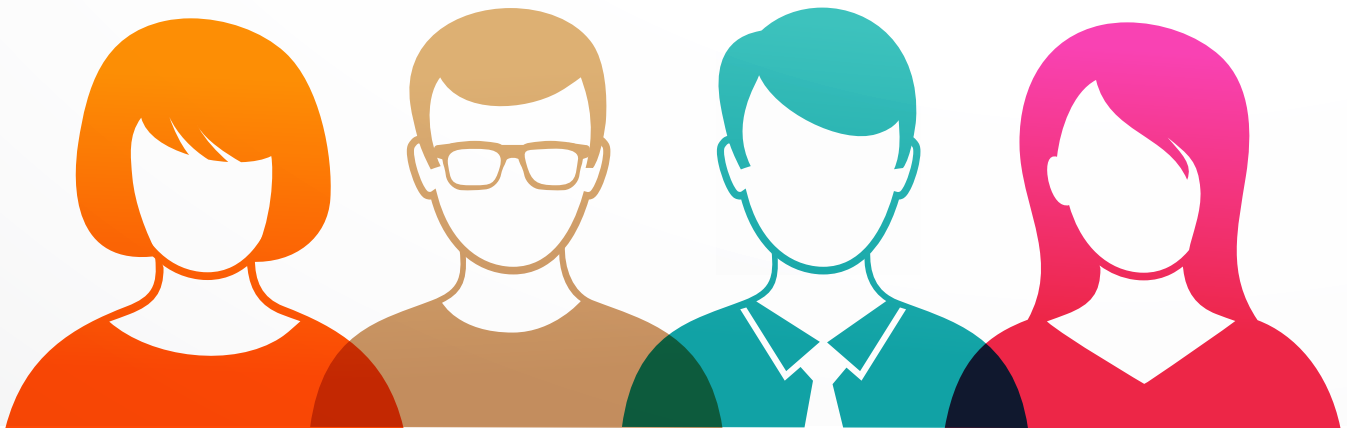




TRANSFORMING YOUR WORKPLACE WITH GRATITUDE

*The Surprisingly Simple Way to Engage Your Workforce
and Improve Business Results*

By gThankYou! Employee Gifts



WORKPLACE GRATITUDE

What if you could flip a switch and your workforce would be nearly 50% more productive? What if you could push a button and your sales team would generate 35% more revenue, or your business could grow 4 times faster than your competitors?

Sounds like magic? It's not.

This powerful force already exists – and it is within your reach. It is called gratitude. And all you need to do is turn it on.

To learn how you can generate better business results through the power of gratitude, read on...

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WHAT IS WORKPLACE GRATITUDE?

“Appreciate everything your associates do for the business. Nothing else can quite substitute for a few well-chosen, well-timed, sincere words of praise. They’re absolutely free and worth a fortune.”

*Sam Walton
Founder
Walmart*

“THANK YOU.”

We’re taught this phrase from the time we learn to talk. It’s as common as “Hello” or “How are you?” Maybe that’s why so many of us tend to dismiss it as an unnecessary gesture. So, how does this seemingly insignificant phrase have the power to change you, your employees and your business in a profoundly positive way? Actually, it’s one of the easiest things you can do to transform your work environment. And that’s what this guide is all about.

Let’s start by defining our terms. As a fundamental expression of gratitude, the phrase “thank you” is common to most cultures. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, **gratitude** is “The quality of being thankful; readiness to show appreciation for and to return kindness.” In Latin, the root **gratia** means favor and **gratus** means pleasing. Words that are based on these roots – including gratitude and generosity – represent universally understood principles.

In his book “The Little Book of Gratitude,” the world’s foremost gratitude expert, **Professor Robert A. Emmons**, calls gratitude “the ultimate performance-enhancing substance.” Although his work to-date has focused largely on the impact of gratitude on individuals, he believes that gratitude also plays a vital role in energizing teams and organizations to produce broader benefits.

“There are **countless ways** in which gratitude could pay off in the workplace,” Emmons says. For example, according to research from Emmons and others such as **Professor Kim Cameron**, genuine gratitude has the potential to:

- Improve employee well-being, productivity and job satisfaction
- Strengthen manager/employee and peer/peer relationships
- Develop a healthier corporate culture



“Appreciation is a wonderful thing: It makes what is excellent in others belong to us as well.”

*Voltaire
Classic French philosopher*

- Increase collaboration
- And even spark more creativity and innovation.

In other words, the virtue of workplace gratitude is both its own reward and it leads to other rewards.

Why does something so simple and basic have so much influence on our work lives? Emmons explains, **“Most of our waking hours are spent on the job, and gratitude in all its forms is a basic human requirement. When you put these factors together, it is essential to both give and receive thanks at work.”**

So workplace gratitude is not just good manners. It is also good business. And a growing body of evidence is revealing precisely how genuine workplace gratitude can actually make the difference between profit and loss. In the next few sections, we examine this relationship more closely.



GRACIAS



THANK YOU!



MERCI



GRAZIE

HOW EVERYONE BENEFITS FROM GRATITUDE AT WORK

“The way you treat employees is the way they will treat your customers... People flourish when they are praised.”

*Sir Richard Branson
Founder
Virgin Group*

GRATITUDE: THE MISSING LINK?

We say “thank you” in restaurants, at the supermarket and even at home -- or at least we think we should. But how often do we actually express gratitude on the job? You may be surprised how seldom we bother.

Think about your own work environment. Is “thank you” a popular phrase in your organization’s vocabulary? When was the last time you acknowledged another employee’s efforts or accomplishments? When was the last time someone else acknowledged you?

A 2013 survey by the John Templeton Foundation revealed that **people are less likely to show gratitude at work** than anywhere else. In fact, 60% said they never or rarely express gratitude to co-workers. And perhaps more interestingly, 74% never or rarely express gratitude upstream to their boss.


Similarly, 2017 research by WorkHuman revealed that 45% of workers had not received recognition in at least 6 months, while 16% **had never been recognized** at all! And according to Reward Gateway, although 90% of leaders say they make employee recognition a priority, more than 60% of workers say their colleagues deserve **more frequent praise**.

With U.S. employers investing more than **\$46 billion on recognition** every year, why is there still so much room for improvement? And what’s at stake for organizations that don’t rise to this challenge?

Experts from **Gallup** and **Accenture** agree – lack of appreciation is the primary reason why people are unhappy at work and quit their jobs. Recognition is clearly a step forward. But recognition, alone, is not enough to make people feel appreciated. It takes something more. It takes gratitude.

So, does the solution lie in expressing gratitude more frequently? That sounds easy enough. But when human behavior is involved, solutions aren’t always as easy as they seem.





“95% of my assets drive out the gate every evening. It’s my job to maintain a work environment that keeps those people coming back every morning.”

*Jim Goodnight
Co-Founder and CEO
SAS*

THE GIVE-AND-TAKE GAP

Ask anyone if they feel happier and more motivated when someone acknowledges their work. No doubt they’ll say yes. That’s what Templeton’s extensive survey confirmed. In fact, 81% of respondents agreed that receiving gratitude prompts them to work harder.

But what happens when we turn the tables and acknowledge others on the job? 88% agreed that expressing gratitude for others at work makes them feel happier and more fulfilled. However, there’s a catch – only 10% are actually willing to do this regularly! In other words, a whopping 90% of us may be unconsciously standing in the way of our own fulfillment and a more positive work environment.

What’s behind this self-defeating behavior? 35% of study respondents are concerned that if they express appreciation on the job, coworkers might perceive them as “weak” and try to take advantage of them. But that’s illogical. Appreciating others isn’t a weakness.

Think of how you feel when someone compliments you on a job well done. We tend to value that kind of feedback, as well as the source. In fact, when gratitude is authentic and sincere, it motivates us to raise our game.

Numerous workforce surveys agree. For example:

- 81% told Glassdoor that they’re **willing to work** harder for an appreciative boss, and 70% say they would feel better about their efforts if their boss thanked them more regularly.
- 78% told BambooHR that **recognition is a major motivator**, and 69% said they would work harder if they were recognized.
- 67% who work in weak gratitude environments told Cicero Group that their **drive and determination would improve** if they were recognized on an ongoing basis, or when they outperform expectations.

Still not convinced that gratitude should play a central role in your work culture? Read on. We have even more compelling numbers to share with you.

THE BUSINESS CASE FOR GRATITUDE

“Business is simple. Management’s job is to take care of employees. Employees’ job is to take care of customers. Happy customers take care of shareholders. It’s a virtuous circle.”

*John Mackey
Founder and CEO
Whole Foods Market*

MEASURABLE BOTTOM-LINE IMPACT

Many social scientists and industry analysts have studied the connection between employee recognition and retention, engagement, teamwork, satisfaction and performance. Now a growing body of evidence is clarifying the direct relationship between positive employee experience and business results.

Study after study underscores the value of appreciation as a central element in the employee experience mix. Consider these highlights:

- Companies with a highly engaged workforce **outperform less-engaged counterparts** by a stellar 147% in earnings per share, on average. And growth in **earnings-per-share is nearly 4x higher**, compared with others in their industry. (Gallup)
- A recent in-depth analysis of 250 companies says organizations that invest in employee experience are **4x more profitable** than those that don’t. They also generate 2x more revenue on average. (Jacob Morgan/ Harvard Business Review)
- 58% of business leaders say employee experience (based on appreciation, connection, meaning and impact) positively **influences company revenue and earnings**. (YouEarnedIt)
- An IBM/Globoforce analysis of essential human workplace factors – including recognition -- found that employee experience directly influences employee work performance, discretionary effort and turnover intent. This translates into **quantifiable business benefits**. Specifically, companies in the top 25% on the employee experience scale are far more successful than those in the bottom quartile:
 - Return on assets is nearly 3x higher (6.3% vs 2.2%)
 - Return on sales is 2x higher (16% vs 8%)

- Among companies with “best in class” engagement, 55% consider recognition to be extremely important to their success. And their **return on investment in recognition is impressive** – 10.9% ROI for companies with programs supported by technology and 8% for others. (Aberdeen Group)

HOW GRATITUDE SHAPES KEY DIMENSIONS OF WORK LIFE

Want more specifics? We’ve mapped a variety gratitude-related research findings across 5 work dimensions – retention, performance, teamwork, happiness and customer relationships. The statistics tell a compelling story:

1 GRATITUDE IMPROVES EMPLOYEE RETENTION

Today, there are more U.S. job openings than ever in the 17 years this data has been tracked. Not surprisingly, as competition for top talent has intensified, **employee retention has risen to the top of workforce management challenges**, according to the 2018 SHRM/ Globoforce Recognition Survey.

With so many opportunities enticing employees to leave their current jobs, appreciation plays a more strategic role than ever in talent strategies. In fact, 68% of SHRM respondents say recognition programs have a positive impact on retention. Other surveys agree:

- Companies that scored in the top 20% of “recognition-rich cultures” achieved **31% lower voluntary turnover rates**. (Bersin/ Deloitte)
- 69% of workers said that receiving **recognition would motivate them to stay** at their current job. On the other hand, those who do not feel recognized for their efforts are 2x more likely to say they plan to quit in the coming year. (Achievers)
- 68% said their boss shows them enough appreciation. But 53% said they **would stay longer** if they felt more appreciation from their boss. (Glassdoor)

In addition, gratitude can be a highly effective recruiting tool. How effective? 55% of those surveyed by Globoforce said they would **leave their current job** to work for a company that recognizes employees.

That’s good news for companies with recognition programs, because employee turnover is expensive. The average cost of replacing an employee is typically 20% of a worker’s annual salary. That includes recruiting, training and even lost work time while the position is vacant. Comparatively, the typical investment in gratitude – **1-2% of payroll** – is a relatively low-cost way to keep employees onboard.

GRATITUDE INFLUENCES 5 DIMENSIONS OF WORK

- 1 Employee Retention
- 2 Employee Performance
- 3 Team Performance
- 4 Employee Happiness
- 5 Customer Relationships



“People work for money but go the extra mile for recognition, praise and rewards.”

*Dale Carnegie
Legendary Leadership Expert and Author*

2 GRATITUDE ELEVATES EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

In a famous experiment at MIT, behavioral economist Dan Ariely used LEGO assembly tasks to prove that **people are more productive** when their efforts are recognized. In this case, subjects whose work was acknowledged were nearly 50% more productive than those who were ignored. In short, recognition drives engagement, and engagement drives productivity.

Over the years, the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) has reached the same conclusion while tracking real-world **recognition outcomes**. For example, among companies that invest 1%-2% of payroll in recognition, 85% have seen a positive impact on employee engagement and 59% have seen **stronger financial results**. Other studies support these findings:

- Cicero Group indicates that 79% of **employees who receive strong recognition are highly engaged** (in contrast with only 25% who are highly engaged in weak recognition environments).
- According to YouEarnedIt, 87% of executives say that employee experience is deeply connected with their company’s productivity, and they realize **appreciation is central to that experience**.
- 64% of companies with “best in class” engagement view **recognition as extremely valuable** in driving employee performance. (Aberdeen Group)
- 55% of employees agree the quality of their employer’s **recognition program affects their job performance**. (Achievers)

3 GRATITUDE STRENGTHENS TEAMWORK

Several years ago, professors Adam Grant and Francesca Gino investigated the effects of gratitude in a series of experiments involving social interdependencies. They found that appreciation increased feelings of self-worth and trust. It also **boosted participants’ productivity and caused them to help each other more**.

Other workplace research shines additional light on gratitude and team dynamics:

- In **strong recognition environments**, 32% of teams work at 80-100% capacity, compared with only 17% of teams that receive weak recognition. (Cicero)
- In an independent study, when various work groups were given a bonus to share with teammates as a “thank you,” their **teams performed far better** (in some cases, more than 47% better) with peer recognition than when their manager awarded bonuses individually.



“The way to develop the best in a person is by appreciation and encouragement.”

*Charles Schwab
Founder and Chairman
Charles Schwab Corporation*

- Companies that rank “best in class” for employee engagement are 41% more likely to encourage teamwork through **peer-to-peer recognition** (65% vs 46%). (Aberdeen)
- **Peer-to-peer recognition can lead to higher profit.** For example, when sales professionals were asked to allocate financial rewards to themselves, every \$10 they spent returned only \$3 to their company – a net loss. But when they allocated rewards to teammates, every \$10 spent on peers returned an average of \$52.

If teamwork is important to your business, these findings should inspire you to invest in peer-to-peer and group recognition strategies.

4 GRATITUDE FUELS EMPLOYEE HAPPINESS

In his TED Talk, **“The Happy Secret to Better Work,”** happiness expert Shawn Achor explains that the mindset we choose determines our level of success at work and in life. Specifically, when our brain is in “positive mode” we perform significantly better than when we operate with a negative or neutral mindset.

That’s because dopamine activates our brain’s learning center, making it possible to be up to 31% more productive overall, and 37% better at sales activities, specifically. Achor calls this the “happiness advantage,” and credits gratitude as part of that formula.

Employees with a positive mindset are also more engaged and loyal. They’re less likely to display absenteeism, make errors on the job, or be involved in occupational accidents. On the other hand, they are more willing to make an extra effort. In other words, a small investment in employee happiness has potential to yield big dividends.

Want more proof about the link between workplace recognition and happiness? Consider these findings:

- 86% told Globoforce that they feel happier and prouder after being recognized, and 85% said **recognition makes them more satisfied** with their jobs.
- As mentioned previously, 88% told Templeton researchers that expressing gratitude to colleagues **makes them feel happier** and more fulfilled.



“Take good care of your employees and they’ll take good care of your customers, and the customers will come back.”

*JW Marriott
Former CEO
Marriott International*

5 EMPLOYEE GRATITUDE ENHANCES CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS

When front-line employees are encouraged to give and receive recognition, customers benefit, too. An environment of appreciation creates a ripple effect that influences customer satisfaction, customer retention and customer lifetime value. For instance:

- 91% of HR professionals say there is solid evidence linking employee engagement with **customer service excellence**. (HR.com)
- Companies with social recognition programs are much **more likely to retain customers**. On average, customer retention is 9.5% higher for organizations with programs supported by technology and 7.7% higher for others. (Aberdeen Group)
- 41% of companies with peer-to-peer recognition have **higher customer satisfaction** rates. (Globoforce)
- Among customer-facing employees, 77% told YouEarnedIt that appreciation affects their ability to deliver a **high-quality customer experience**, while only 65% of executives agreed. Executives who fill this gap with appropriate levels of recognition can expect to see both improved employee performance and improved customer outcomes.

With so many impressive statistics, the proof is undeniable – appreciation-based recognition makes a measurable difference. **But what makes workplace gratitude so effective?** In the next section, we explore key behavioral drivers.

WHY GRATITUDE IS SO EFFECTIVE

“Gratitude is the ultimate performance-enhancing substance at work. It heals, energizes and transforms lives in a myriad of ways.”

*David Emmons
UC Davis*

UNDERSTANDING GRATEFUL BEHAVIOR

How can something as simple as saying “thank you” improve relationships, productivity and performance in the workplace? Let’s look at evidence that demonstrates just how significant the role of gratitude can be.

Until recently, the study of gratitude focused almost exclusively on attitudes and behaviors of individuals. But now a growing number of psychologists are turning their attention to **“institutionalized gratitude”** – appreciation that is embedded in organizational cultures through customary aspects of daily work life. This scenario illustrates the kind of difference gratitude can make in a work setting:



SNAPSHOT: WORK SCHEDULE FLEXIBILITY

WITHOUT GRATITUDE

Mary’s son is struggling with problems at school, and his teacher wants to meet on Monday morning. Mary tells her supervisor she’ll need to arrive late for work – hopefully by 10:00 am. She actually arrives an hour later. Mary’s supervisor docks her pay and demands that she work the same evening to make up lost time. Then he files an incident report with HR.

This response triggers fear and resentment in Mary. Although she works additional hours that day, she is not as productive as usual. She starts thinking seriously about finding a new job.

WITH GRATITUDE

When Mary tells her supervisor about her son’s school situation, he asks how much time she’ll need. He assures her that it won’t be a problem if she is willing to make up lost time at a later date. They discuss several scheduling options. When Mary agrees, he wishes her good luck with her son and thanks her for her flexibility.

Instead of feeling resentful, Mary is grateful for her manager and her employer. It is a reciprocal response, triggered by her supervisor’s appreciation of her.

Clearly, gratitude makes a difference – not just in this interaction, but over the life of Mary’s ongoing relationship with her supervisor. This is how organizational cultures develop and evolve – based on the cumulative effects of countless similar scenarios.

WHY SHOULD WE CARE?

If you’re interested in creating a culture of gratitude, you’re probably wondering if it’s worth the effort. After all, organizations have a long history of using penalties and fear as motivation. That approach often achieves immediate results, but it comes at a heavy price.

Overwhelming evidence proves that organizations based on appreciation are far more productive and profitable over the long run. That’s because gratitude appeals to basic human needs. Consider another example:



SNAPSHOT: FIRST DAY ON THE JOB

WITHOUT GRATITUDE

Brad’s first day in the mailroom was hectic. He needed to learn sorting procedures and delivery schedules, not to mention names and office locations of everyone in the company. To be sure he made a good first impression, Brad even spent his lunch hour studying the employee directory.

But that didn’t prevent his first error - delivering a package to the CEO instead of its intended recipient. “The label says Burnett not Burnell,” his supervisor barked. “Pay attention.”

WITH GRATITUDE

The supervisor would get better results by putting himself in Brad’s shoes and resetting his expectations. A more empathetic response would be, “We all make mistakes. But if you keep at it, you’ll get to know who’s who soon enough. I appreciate you taking time at lunch to familiarize yourself with the employee directory.”

This acknowledges Brad’s commitment to learning his job, but doesn’t give him too much credit. Most importantly, it is authentic.

It makes sense that an appreciated employee will be more empowered to succeed than one who feels whipped into pulling a heavy load. But this is not just about common sense. There is real science behind gratitude, and measurable effects that result in healthier employees who will work harder for your business.

THE SCIENCE OF GRATITUDE

Imagine what this world would be like if all of us embraced an “every man for himself” attitude. As sociologist **Georg Simmel** noted, “If every grateful action were suddenly eliminated, society would break apart.” History is filled with examples of natural disasters that prompted individuals to act selflessly in the interest of all. These actions bond communities through a spirit of mutual solidarity.



SNAPSHOT: REAL-WORLD LESSONS FROM TRAGEDY

Although more than a decade has passed since Hurricane Katrina devastated the city of New Orleans, its painful memories are still fresh. But that’s when the people of nearby Houston, Texas opened their hearts and homes to help Katrina victims get back on their feet.

So when Hurricane Harvey flooded Houston in 2017, it was no surprise when the people of New Orleans reciprocated with an outpouring of financial aid and a home-grown flotilla of rescue boats dubbed the “Cajun Navy.”

When journalists asked radio dispatcher Taylor Aucoin why he volunteered to help, he explained, “I vividly remember that many Texans came to our aid, which was incredible. I can’t describe the heartbreak I feel for them now. It’s a very small thing we can do to repay the favor for the help we received from them countless other times.”

It was not indebtedness, but gratitude that motivated the people of Louisiana to repay the kindness they had received. Indebtedness involves negative feelings associated with owing a debt or favor. Gratitude is a positive feeling that results from a choice to “pay it forward.”

This is what Simmel called “the moral memory of mankind.” In other words, the purpose of gratitude is to help humans survive cooperatively through extraordinary struggles. But that’s only a partial explanation.

GRATITUDE STIMULATES THE BRAIN AND BODY

Gratitude simply feels good, doesn’t it? There’s a scientific reason for that. Gratitude activates a region of the brain known as the nucleus accumbens. When activated, it releases a neurotransmitter called **dopamine**, which makes us feel good. It also makes us feel happier and healthier.

That’s right. There are real health benefits associated with gratitude, according to Dr. Robert A. Emmons and his colleagues at the **Greater Good Science Center** at the University of California, Berkeley. His team studied more than 1000 people age 8-80.

When they asked some participants to document in a “gratitude journal” things that cause them to feel grateful, journal keepers experienced multiple physical, psychological and social benefits.

Further studies by the Greater Good Science Center and others support these findings. For example, researchers Julia K. Boehm and Sonja Lyubomirsky relied on three different types of scientific studies to analyze the relationship between happiness and career success.

They concluded that, contrary to popular belief, happiness is not an outcome of career success. Instead, it precedes success. They also found that **positive emotions lead to improved workplace outcomes**.

PERSONAL BENEFITS OF PRACTICING GRATITUDE



PHYSICAL

- Stronger immune system
- Fewer perceived aches and pains
- Lower blood pressure
- Longer, more restful sleep
- Willingness to exercise more




PSYCHOLOGICAL

- Higher levels of positive emotions
- Feeling more alert and alive
- Experiencing more joy and pleasure
- Feeling more optimistic and happy



SOCIAL

- Feeling less lonely and isolated
- More willing to forgive
- More outgoing behavior
- More helpful, generous, compassionate behavior



“Take time to appreciate employees and they will reciprocate in a thousand ways.”

*Bob Nelson, PhD
Best-Selling Author
and Motivation Expert*

SCIENCE SUGGESTS THAT GRATITUDE CAN BE TAUGHT

Anyone can experience the benefits of gratitude – it doesn’t require any special aptitude. That’s according to **Professor Martin E. P. Seligman** of the University of Pennsylvania, founder of the **Positive Psychology** movement. Through his studies, Seligman found that optimists generally live healthier, more successful lives. He concluded that, although it’s easy to lapse into negativity, people can learn to think and act in ways that foster their own happiness and well-being.

Other research supports the theory that gratitude is a skill you can cultivate. For example, subjects in one study were able to channel their gratefulness just by journaling about their blessings each day. It worked because it focused the brain. The brain, in turn, reinforced that focus with powerful biochemical feedback: dopamine. This closed loop is the foundation for a “virtuous cycle” of gratitude.

Furthermore, that virtuous cycle spreads to others. Studies show that the **benefits of gratitude** extend to both the giver and the receiver. And like kindness, **gratitude is contagious**.

WHAT’S YOUR GRATITUDE PROFILE?

Curious to know where you fit on the gratitude spectrum? It’s easy to find out with these resources:

- Start by completing the **Personal Gratitude Quiz** published by the Greater Good Science Center.
- Download the six-item **Gratitude Questionnaire** developed by Emmons and colleagues.
- Complete the **Gratitude, Resentment and Appreciation Test (GRAT)**, an assessment developed primarily by researcher Phil Watkins to measure individual propensity toward gratitude by examining relevant traits.
- Or to determine your organization’s gratitude profile, complete the online **Grateful Organizations Quiz** at Greater Good Magazine.

Now that you’re familiar with the science of gratitude and its impact on organizations, let’s look at how you can cultivate a culture of gratitude at your company.

HOW TO CREATE A CULTURE OF GRATITUDE

“Treating employees benevolently shouldn’t be viewed as an added cost that cuts into profits, but as a powerful energizer that can grow the enterprise into something far greater than one leader could envision.”

Howard Schultz
Former CEO
Starbucks

DEVELOPING A FRAMEWORK FOR SUCCESS

Nearly **9 out of 10 employers offer planned recognition** of some sort. Solutions range from informal gestures of appreciation to formal, highly structured programs. And awards include everything from simple verbal acknowledgements and thank you notes, to monetary and tangible gifts -- even elaborate vacation packages.

Results vary, of course, because recognition programs are not created equal. But wherever you find a vibrant, productive work environment, you can bet that appreciation is never far from the surface.

So what exactly does it take to create an environment where gratitude flourishes? Above all, it’s essential to treat recognition as more than just a quick-fix incentive program. Strategies that align authentic appreciation with cultural values are likely to see lasting results.

What else do the most successful gratitude initiatives have in common? One popular blueprint for effective recognition programs is Jim Brintnall’s **“SSMART” model** – which is shorthand for *Sincere, Simple, Meaningful, Adaptable, Relevant and Timely*.

We’ve seen expanded variations on this theme from **academics, HR experts** and organizations like **SHRM** and **Great Place to Work Institute**, as well as from leaders of gratitude-first companies like **Virgin Group** and **Lucid Software**. Here are some of the most popular practices these sources recommend:



WORKPLACE GRATITUDE PROGRAM GUIDELINES

1. **Start at the top.** Senior management must commit to the process. Executives must be willing to communicate about why gratitude matters, and actively demonstrate how it works by modeling it in their own behavior. Their examples and encouragement make or break adoption.
2. **Train managers in best practices.** Surprisingly, only **13% of companies offer recognition-related managerial education** – even though 42% say their programs are strategic. Since managers are integral to successful recognition, even a small effort to bring managers onboard can dramatically improve program impact.
3. **Tie recognition to core values and goals.** This is essential. You are not just reinforcing desired behavior, you're bringing meaning and purpose to the practice of workplace gratitude. Alignment means that every act of appreciation naturally strengthens your organization's mission and unique DNA.
4. **Solicit employee input.** By involving employees in program development, you gain useful insights that can help make recognition efforts more meaningful from the outset. Plus, you're likely to win advocates even before the first "thank you" is delivered.
5. **Put fairness and transparency front-and-center.** The quickest way to demotivate people is to let bias influence your program. If some employees feel excluded, or if recognition seems to be based on subjective opinions, you could do more harm than good. Establish objective criteria and be clear and open about these standards.
6. **Incorporate peer-to-peer acknowledgment.** Why let senior leaders have all the gratitude fun? By encouraging colleagues to recognize each other, appreciation spreads more rapidly to all corners of your company.
7. **Commit to the process.** At its best, recognition is an ongoing endeavor that complements the norms, business rhythms and other cultural characteristics that make your organization special. Acknowledge gratitude's role as a supporting player, and prepare to celebrate progress over time.
8. **Set realistic expectations.** Lasting change doesn't happen overnight. Prepare for the long-haul with a flexible roadmap. For example, you might begin with a narrowly defined scope. This gives you a chance to achieve early "wins" and evaluate outcomes. Then you can adjust and expand, incrementally.
9. **Establish simple metrics.** Make it easy for managers and peers to recognize excellence and document their actions. Be sure to capture data in a consistent format, so your reports can track, analyze and compare results from across the organization, over time.
10. **Stay open to input.** Remember that everyone has a stake in making this cultural shift a success. So build flexibility into your strategy, seek feedback early and often, and be prepared to adapt.

- 1 Start at the top
- 2 Train managers
- 3 Tie to core values and goals
- 4 Solicit employee input
- 5 Be fair and transparent
- 6 Include per-to-peer options
- 7 Commit to the process
- 8 Set realistic expectations
- 9 Establish simple metrics
- 10 Stay open to input

WHY THE BASICS MATTER

Both formal and informal recognition play a vital role in business success by helping organizations attract and retain top performers. But when genuine concern and appreciation are missing from the recognition equation, it can seriously undermine any positive effect, as these three examples illustrate:



SNAPSHOT – GIVING EMPLOYEES A VOICE

WITHOUT GRATITUDE

When the new Employee of the Month program was announced, workers got excited. Each winner would have a private lunch with the boss at a high-end restaurant and month-long use of a designated parking spot near the front entrance. But because the boss traveled so much, it soon became difficult to keep up the pace. Instead, winners received gift cards to a chain restaurant. Soon the office jokes started... “I’m going out to lunch – without the boss.”

WITH GRATITUDE

When the boss announced the Employee of the Month program, she told employees she wanted rewards to be meaningful. She recommended several possibilities and asked for additional ideas. The following week in a secret ballot, they chose their preferred reward – a half-day off on the Friday of their choice. The roll-out was a hit because employees felt heard and valued.



SNAPSHOT – NEW KID IN TOWN

WITHOUT GRATITUDE

Liam was a charter employee at XYZ Company. He had worked for nearly 10 years to earn an extra week of vacation for his loyalty. That’s why he was upset when his coworker, Ellen, won time off for stellar customer service as part of XYZ’s new employee appreciation program. It didn’t help that Ellen was a new hire, and Liam had trained her.

WITH GRATITUDE

Liam would have appreciated being acknowledged for training the new star performer and being asked to select a suitable award for her. That’s why gratitude and inclusion are integral to employee recognition. A simple “thank you” goes a long way in acknowledging everyone who plays a role in your company’s success. In this case, Liam’s manager should want him to take pride in celebrating Ellen’s performance



SNAPSHOT – FREEBIES FOR ALL

WITHOUT GRATITUDE

Mia loved staff meetings at X Corp. Everyone did. To build enthusiasm, managers acted like cheerleaders and randomly tossed logo merchandise at attendees. They also gave out coupons for free coffee, donuts and other treats. No wonder these meetings were popular! Some employees even arrived early to claim coveted seats in the “freebie zone.”

WITH GRATITUDE

If the goal was to guarantee staff meeting attendance, X Corp’s management team has done its job. But shouldn’t rewards be tied to meaningful business behavior? Save the flood of coupons and merchandise for another time – perhaps when you ask a project team to come in early or stay late to meet an important deadline.

PUTTING CONCEPTS INTO PRACTICE

How can you avoid missteps when integrating appreciation into your organization’s daily workflow? It’s not always easy, but it doesn’t have to be overly complex, either. Something as simple as a sincere, well-timed thank you letter can put you on the right track.

Exactly what techniques leave the strongest impression? For useful advice, read on...



WHEN TO CELEBRATE GRATITUDE

“Everyone wants to be appreciated. So if you appreciate someone, don’t keep it a secret.”

*Mary Kay Ash
Founder
Mary Kay Cosmetics*

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE GIVE

While working with veterans at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in the 1980s, Dr. Jordan Grafman discovered that **when people give to charity**, it activates the part of the brain that controls food cravings. What does that mean for employee appreciation?

It proves that gratitude is natural. **Generosity resides in all of us**. It simply needs an opportunity to surface and flourish. People who share appreciation with others experience a feeling of contentment (which fuels satisfaction, happiness and goodwill). And that benefit extends to everyone who praises your company’s employees – managers, peers and even customers.

APPRECIATION AS A WORK HABIT


Celebrating everyday success means praising employee actions or traits that help make your business profitable. In other words, you don’t necessarily need to highlight a specific accomplishment. You may want to showcase an important characteristic, such as attention to detail or the ability to listen. These behaviors legitimately contribute to success.

“When you **recognize the contributions of others**, you reinforce the kind of behavior you want to see,” says organizational development expert, Geil Browning. “People who feel their efforts are noticed, and their work makes a difference, are more likely to go the extra mile in the future.”

Perhaps that’s one reason why **digital feedback platforms** are becoming so popular in the workplace. Many mobile-friendly tools now make it easy to share on-the-spot feedback that keeps employees motivated and business momentum on-track.

These digital solutions are a surprisingly affordable way to fit





“You can ask a team to accomplish a mission, but you can’t order excellence. It comes down to engagement, recognition and leadership.”

*Mike Abrashoff
Commander
SS Benfold*

appreciation into the natural flow of work. And when used consistently, they can be highly effective. For example, Aberdeen Group found that top-performing companies are 2x more likely to use social tools to support and recognize employee efforts. They also found that where social recognition tools are used, **revenue-per-employee is 5.2 times higher than at other companies.**

FINDING TIME TO RECOGNIZE GOOD WORK

Gratitude is always a smart way to improve your bottom line. Even on a shoestring budget, there are endless opportunities to thank employees for their efforts and contributions.

However, to be effective, workplace gratitude must be sincere, authentic and ideally, heartfelt. At first it may feel forced. But once you establish a habit of praising good work, expressing gratitude will start to feel comfortable.

Look for milestones and moments that could benefit morale as well as your business. For starters, try some of these ideas:

WHEN TO SAY “THANKS”

- When an employee goes above and beyond to help a colleague or customer
- When teams complete a project on time or ahead of schedule
- To acknowledge an innovative idea that saves money
- When employees work together to solve a serious business problem
- When a project is completed under budget
- To thank someone who helps onboard new colleagues
- When an employee comes in early, stays late or works over the weekend to meet a deadline
- To celebrate a promotion
- When an employee demonstrates loyalty
- To validate someone with a consistently cheerful “can do” attitude

Want best-practice tips on how to select gifts that express workplace gratitude? Download our **“Ultimate Guide to Employee Gift Giving.”**

HOW TO MAKE EVERY “THANK YOU” COUNT

“Nothing is more effective than sincere, accurate praise, and nothing is more lame than a cookie-cutter compliment.”

*Bill Walsh
Legendary Football Coach*

BEST PRACTICES FOR PRAISING OTHERS

Putting gratitude in writing is powerful. It shows that you care enough to take the time to say thank you. And in this era of email and social media, a handwritten note is especially memorable. Thank you notes are your opportunity to praise employees’ unique and valuable strengths. It’s your choice to highlight and praise the behaviors you want to encourage at work.

Just how memorable can a simple “thank you” note can be? This legendary leadership story illustrates:



SNAPSHOT – REAL-WORLD LESSONS FROM CAMPBELL SOUP COMPANY

Doug Conant became President and CEO of Campbell’s in 2001, at a time when the company was considered “a beleaguered old brand.” Surrounded by barbed wire, the New Jersey headquarters looked more like a prison than a workplace. Even worse, employees seemed disengaged – a fact that Gallup soon confirmed in an employee survey. Removing the barbed wire was easy. Engaging employees took more care.

Conant decided to acknowledge employee achievements through handwritten thank you notes. He wrote about 20 messages a day, nodding to promotions or specific business contributions. The impact was powerful. When employees saw that the CEO cared enough to send personal notes, excitement rippled throughout the company. Recipients felt it was like opening a present because they knew a pleasant surprise was inside.

By the time Conant retired, he had sent more than 30,000 thank you notes. That’s right – 30,000! And along the way, he achieved his goal of employee engagement.

Why did these thank you notes make such a tremendous difference? First, they acknowledged people on a deeper level than a verbal thank you. Personalized written communication signals that an employee’s effort is important. Otherwise, why would the boss bother?

The notes also provided lasting proof of appreciation. No doubt, recipients proudly displayed their notes on their desks as a reminder for all to see. And this reminded everyone that good work is recognized at the highest levels of the organization.

Even in the digital age, the humble thank you note lives on. Why? Because it is such a simple, cost-effective and powerful way to express gratitude. Even if you have no budget to implement a formal appreciation program, you can afford thank you notes. All you need is some stationery and the will to write an authentic message. Who knows? As Doug Conant demonstrated, one humble letter can spark a far-reaching recognition strategy – and an enviable culture of appreciation.

Do you think this approach works only for big corporations with big budgets? Think again.



SNAPSHOT – REAL-WORLD LESSONS FROM INTERCHANGES

Chris Patterson is CEO of Interchanges, a fast-growing digital marketing agency in Jacksonville, Florida. Chris makes it a priority to know his employees' families.

When staff members must work extra hours, he doesn't just thank them for going above and beyond. He also sends spouses a handwritten note, and sometimes a gift, thanking them for their support.

You can imagine how powerful this type of communication is. The CEO recognizes that employees have families who matter! Not surprisingly, staff turnover is very low.

HOW TO WRITE A WORKPLACE THANK YOU NOTE

What's makes a great thank you note so special? The most effective expressions of gratitude are personalized. In other words, the message is tailored to the recipient's specific accomplishments and context.

EXAMPLE

"You did a great job today!"

(Okay. But do you even know what I did?)

"You really nailed the Connolly presentation with your enthusiastic delivery."

(Much better, but there's room for improvement.)

Until you develop your own style, try this basic outline:

- Thank the recipient by name
- Identify the actions you appreciate
- Indicate how their behavior added value for your organization
- Close by repeating the recipient's name, and emphasizing that you personally appreciate the effort

Clearly, a thank you note doesn't have to be lengthy. But it does need to be meaningful. So what makes a truly meaningful thank you?

The most successful messages share these characteristics:

TIPS FOR HIGH-IMPACT THANK YOU NOTES

1. BE SPECIFIC.

Take the time to explain exactly why you are grateful. It's not enough to say, "Thanks for your help." Instead, try this: "Thanks, Sue, for spending extra time with Dan to explain details of the new spreadsheet formulas. I know the time and attention you provided helped the company meet a demanding customer deadline."

2. BE SINCERE.

The best notes are genuine expressions of gratitude. If you aren't grateful that Sue took time away from her projects to help Dan, then don't thank her for it. Find another reason to express appreciation. In other words, make sure what you write is true and their actions truly helped the company. If not, the recipient will know, and you'll lose their trust.

3. BE TIMELY.

Timing is everything. Receiving an immediate note conveys enthusiasm. Receiving the same note weeks or months later does not. If you're praising a specific action, send your note as soon as possible – ideally within 24 hours. If you're expressing gratitude for a general characteristic, such as an individual's persistence or a team's collaborative spirit, you have more leeway.

4. SHOW GRATITUDE EVERYDAY, NOT JUST ON SPECIAL OCCASIONS.

It's common to receive cards on holidays, birthdays or other special days like Boss's Day. But thank you notes that celebrate daily successes are not expected and are often valued the most. This promotes a legitimate culture of gratitude.

Want an even richer source of ideas for daily appreciation? Check out the annual **"Day-to-Day Employee Celebration Calendar"** from gThankYou. Best of all, you can download it now for free and get started right away!

TIPS FOR HIGH-IMPACT THANK YOU NOTES

1 Be Specific

2 Be Sincere

3 Be Timely

4 Show Gratitude Daily



GRATITUDE IN ACTION: CASE BRIEFS

“When employees are happy, they are your very best ambassadors.”

*James Sinegal
Co-Founder
Costco*

7 EXAMPLES OF EXCELLENCE

Want real-world proof that gratitude creates lasting value? The following collection of case briefs showcases organizations that understand the power of employee appreciation. We invite you to use these stories as inspiration to move your own programs to the next level.

Is your company already seeing success through gratitude? Tell us your story and we may feature you in an upcoming blog post! Contact us at info@gthankyou.com.

- **OHIO LIVING** – Raising the Quality of Healthcare by Caring for Staff
- **JET BLUE** – Flying High with Peer-to-Peer Recognition
- **E.ON** – Shining a Light on Employee “Buzz”
- **BELFOR** – Building a Gratitude Culture, One Thank You at a Time
- **WEGMANS** – Engaging Employees, Year After Year
- **TAYLOR FARMS** – Celebrating Employees In The Field
- **BRIMMER & HEELTAP** – Making a Meaningful “Family Meal”

OHIO LIVING

RAISING THE QUALITY OF HEALTHCARE BY CARING FOR STAFF

With 3000 employees, **Ohio Living** is one of the nation's largest nonprofit providers of senior home health care, community living and hospice services. Originally, the organization viewed employee recognition as a way to reduce turnover in a competitive market. Then research revealed a strategic gap. Above all, employees wanted appreciation for their work, but managers placed appreciation eighth on their list of priorities. To close this gap, Ohio Living reinvented its workforce strategies to **focus on employee appreciation**.

HIGHLIGHTS

After analyzing top performers, Ohio Living tied employee ratings 100% to core values – care, customer service, integrity, innovation, financial stewardship and leadership. And because managers are key to employee success, they receive two days of intensive leadership onboarding and training, with a full day devoted to appreciation, recognition and organizational culture. Frontline workers actually run these sessions, so everyone becomes more invested in best practices.

RESULTS

This approach has had a significant impact on employees and patients, alike. For example, high-recognition units see higher employee satisfaction (75% vs 62%) and lower turnover (39% vs 62%). These locations also see higher patient satisfaction (93% vs 87%), fewer patient falls (12% vs 24%), fewer emergency department visits and fewer hospital readmissions.



JET BLUE

FLYING HIGH WITH PEER-TO-PEER RECOGNITION

Research shows that customer satisfaction increases at companies with **peer-to-peer recognition programs**. That's exactly what happened at **Jet Blue**, which has had the highest customer satisfaction among low-cost airlines for 11 years, according to J.D. Power. This success is partially due to the company's social recognition program, where employees acknowledge coworkers for everyday contributions and exemplary achievements. Recipients earn points that they can redeem immediately or save for countless rewards.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Acknowledgements are shared on a corporate newsfeed, so others learn about valued behaviors and amplify the recognition.
- Awards are submitted by peers, so they feel more like organic expressions of gratitude than performance reviews.
- Recipients choose their own rewards, so they're more relevant and meaningful.

RESULTS

This program has moved the meter for employees as well as customers. For example, each 10% increase in recognized employees led to a 3% increase in staff retention and a 2% increase in engagement. The retention results are important because the cost of replacing an employee can be significant – between 20%-150% of a salary, on average. The engagement data is also important because engaged crew members are 3x more likely to “wow” customers and 2x more likely to earn more customer compliments.



E.ON

SHINING A LIGHT ON EMPLOYEE “BUZZ”

Over the years, renewable energy services company **E.ON** has faced its fair share of negative press about **poor customer service**. That’s one reason why they created an **appreciation program called “Buzz”** to motivate employees. This cost-effective system makes it easy for colleagues and customers to deliver “thank you” messages and cards to any individual or team that deserves praise.

HIGHLIGHTS

Since its launch in 2013, Buzz has attracted strong involvement from all levels of the organization. Now someone at E.ON receives “buzz” every two minutes, on average, and managers consider it an essential employee engagement and performance management tool. Internal communications consultant Deborah Spence says, “Buzz has created an informal culture of recognition that applauds examples of good practice or customer service valued by all who matter – not just from our senior managers, but our employees and customers, as well.”

RESULTS

In the program’s first two years, 76% of employees received “buzz.” In that same timeframe, the number of employees who felt valued and recognized increased from 39% to 52%. Other employee engagement metrics also improved by as much as 18%. So it’s no surprise that the program is credited with helping E.ON earn the top score among leading energy providers in the **USwitch customer service survey** for the past 5 years.



BELFOR

BUILDING A GRATITUDE CULTURE, ONE “THANK YOU” AT A TIME

Each year, **Sheldon Yellen**, CEO of billion-dollar property restoration company **Belfor**, sends a birthday card to each of his employees. That’s right. He personally writes nearly 8000 birthday greetings every year. He’s been doing this for more than 30 years, and **he doesn’t intend to stop**. Why?

HIGHLIGHTS

Yellen started the practice when he was hired in 1985, because he thought the personal touch could inspire people to communicate more openly. “And it worked,” he says. To stay ahead of the curve, Yellen often travels with a stack of cards, so he can finish several dozen whenever he has free time on a flight. Usually he’ll mention a shared experience or a conversation he’s had with an employee, so the message has more meaning. He also writes thank you notes to acknowledge “random acts of kindness” performed in the field.

RESULTS

Yellen says the effort has led to a more compassionate, gracious workplace, because it makes people feel appreciated. “It’s woven into our company culture,” he says. The experience has taught him that gratitude yields continuing returns, and “it doesn’t have to cost a thing.” Recently for Yellen’s birthday, employees returned the favor when everyone in the company wrote him a personalized card as a token of their appreciation.



WEGMANS

ENGAGING EMPLOYEES YEAR AFTER YEAR

Why would Fortune Magazine feature a regional grocery chain on its list of “100 Best Companies to Work For” -- not just once, but for 20 years in a row? At **Wegmans**, the secret is in genuinely caring for employees.

HIGHLIGHTS

Extensive healthcare coverage and wellness programs are hallmarks of this family-friendly work environment. So is flexible scheduling – a rarity in the retail industry. The freedom to work around a child’s school events or a parent’s doctor appointments means peace of mind and more focus on the job.

Employee development is also a priority. Each year Wegmans awards \$5 million in college scholarships and provides special job-related training. For example, butchers travel to Colorado and South America to learn about beef, and deli managers visit Wisconsin and Europe to learn about cheese.

RESULTS

This commitment to employee knowledge and well-being is paying off, not just in workplace excellence awards, but also in **phenomenal customer satisfaction**. For example, since 2006, Consumer Reports has named Wegmans the **most beloved grocery store** in the nation. Not surprisingly, revenues have also grown year after year, and the company continues to open new stores.



TAYLOR FARMS

CELEBRATING EMPLOYEES IN THE FIELD

Taylor Farms of California is not just another 10,000-employee commercial grower of fresh packaged produce products. Like other modern agricultural businesses, it relies on innovative methods and equipment to reinvent the way farming is practiced. But at its core, it is still a family business that depends on people to bring its bold vision to life. That's why Taylor Farms recently hosted a **special appreciation event** for crews in the field.

HIGHLIGHTS

In conjunction with Yuma Fresh Vegetable Association and **Labor of Love**, members of the Taylor Farms team surprised nearly 30 produce pickers by personally delivering coffee, breakfast, handwritten thank-you notes, \$25 gift cards and raffle prizes.

RESULTS

Experts say employee appreciation is best expressed in person by company leaders, and has more impact when it is tied to unexpected positive events. "We don't have employees, we have family members, and we pride ourselves on taking care of one another," explained Christina Barnard, Taylor Farms Director of Marketing. "Because family culture is our foundation, it is essential that we show appreciation and support team members across the company."



BRIMMER & HEELTAP

MAKING A MEANINGFUL “FAMILY MEAL”

How can small companies with limited resources express genuine appreciation for employees? Seattle-based bistro-pub **Brimmer & Heeltap** addresses that challenge in a delicious way with a special menu item known as **Our Family Meal**. Described as “eat what we eat, price and preparation change daily,” this late-night feast is served from 10 p.m. to closing.

HIGHLIGHTS

Our Family Meal is an interesting twist on the industry standard practice of serving employees a meal before or after a shift. However, as Chef Mike Whisenhunt explained, it shouldn’t be random leftovers because both customers and employees deserve quality cuisine. “I’ve come from many a restaurant with little to no family meal, or it’s been disgraceful. How can I expect our cooks to make great food when they’re not eating it?” he said.

RESULTS

This concept is a compelling way for kitchen and dining room staff to connect, relax, share stories, build camaraderie and demonstrate gratitude at the end of a long day. It also adds value to low-wage jobs. As Whisenhunt noted, “I want to take care of my team as best I can. Everyone is worth so much more than I can give them financially.”



THIS SPACE IS RESERVED FOR YOU!

What’s your workplace gratitude story? Tell us and we may feature you in an upcoming blog post! Just send us a brief description at info@gthankyou.com.

Or, if you’re still looking for ways to apply gratitude in your workplace, check the next section for ideas about how to get started!

HOW TO GET STARTED

“If we win the hearts and minds of employees, we’re going to have better business success.”

*Mary T. Barra
Chairman and CEO
General Motors*

GOING FORWARD WITH GRATITUDE

Now you know the tremendous positive change that appreciation can bring to you, to employees and to your bottom line. You’ve explored the science of gratitude at work, and learned how to incorporate it into your company culture.

Are you ready to flip the switch that will help your employees be happier and more productive, better at sales and customer service, and more invested in your business success? Go ahead. Turn on the power of gratitude and watch the results. We know it will change your world for the better!

Here are specific ideas to move your efforts in the right direction...

8 PROVEN APPRECIATION TACTICS FROM GREAT WORKPLACES

INVOLVE OTHERS IN A THANK YOU NOTE TRADITION

Invite employees to share their appreciation of others in writing. Ask them to send notes to colleagues or bosses who have helped them, or to customers they enjoy serving. Remember to start at the top. Leaders should send the first notes, so they can model the behavior they desire from middle managers. These messages can be sent via email, but imagine the added impact if they’re written and delivered by hand!

IDEA

Print a set of branded “thank you” cards and stock them in high-traffic areas. Encourage employees to post them on a company “gratitude board” for all to see.

CREATE SPECIAL OPPORTUNITIES TO CELEBRATE ACHIEVEMENTS

Many businesses gather employees to honor birthdays. But we all know a birthday isn’t an achievement. Develop a list of feats that have advanced your company’s agenda, then take time to thank each of the people behind those efforts. This can include elaborate awards, but it can also be as simple as sharing heartfelt shout-outs at your next staff meeting.

IDEA

How about an impromptu “thank you shower” for a deserving employee? Fill a bucket with colorful notes from your team and “shower” the unsuspecting recipient!

IMPLEMENT PEER-TO-PEER RECOGNITION

The boss isn't the only one who should express gratitude. Make sure everyone in the organization has ample opportunity to praise others. Implement a formal recognition program with clear instructions on how to acknowledge colleagues. For even more buy-in, ask employees to recommend creative award ideas.

IDEA

Try a gratitude challenge! Rewarding employees for acknowledging peers can be a fun way to boost participation by adding friendly game logic into the mix.

HELP EMPLOYEES INVEST IN THEIR CONTINUED GROWTH

Learning opportunities energize employees. Try making this the cornerstone of your appreciation efforts. When you thank someone for a job well done, give them an option to expand their skills through formal training, mentoring or "stretch" assignments. Any investment in development will benefit employees and your organization, alike.

IDEA

Online platforms like LinkedIn Learning make it easy to reward employees with continuing education. Share a coupon and let people pick the courses they prefer.

SUPPORT EMPLOYEE WELLBEING

When you care about employee quality of life in all forms, those efforts pay-off in a big way – not just in fewer sick days and more productivity, but also in deeper employee engagement and loyalty. Encouraging healthy habits across your workforce means everyone wins!

IDEA

Integrate healthy reward options into your recognition plan. Active outings like laser tag, escape rooms and community service keep employees moving and motivated.

INVOLVE EMPLOYEES IN PROBLEM SOLVING

Invite employees to research, discuss, brainstorm and troubleshoot specific business challenges through informal or formal channels. This gives you an opportunity to consider fresh perspectives, while helping employees demonstrate deeper interest and ownership in your organization's success.

IDEA

Do you have an employee suggestion box? Take it to the next level by rewarding the most innovative ideas. Include employees in reviewing and recognizing others' ideas.

TURN UP THE VOLUME

The more you amplify appreciation, the stronger its impact will be – not just for recipients, but for all who see it. Think of the possibilities! Add a "shout out" loop to your intranet home page, linked to a simple digital entry form. Install a "WOW" board in your lobby, where recognition is visible to all and everyone can contribute. Or simply post smiling photos of every employee so the rest of the world can see the whole team at its best. Who won't celebrate that?

IDEA

Want to stretch the value of praise even further? Publish kudos on your website or in your company newsletter and watch employees beam with pride!

MAINTAIN OPEN LINES OF COMMUNICATION

Don't forget that engagement is at the heart of workplace gratitude. Continuously remind employees that they are welcome to approach you directly (or anonymously) if they don't feel appreciated, or if they think someone else's contributions aren't being acknowledged. Take responsibility for creating an environment where input and dialogue are valued, and others will follow.

IDEA

No time like the present to kickstart this process! Why not ask employees at all levels for input on what's working and what to improve about recognition?

WANT MORE IDEAS? Then you'll want our annual "Day-to-Day Employee Appreciation Calendar." [Download it now for free!](#)

WHERE TO LEARN MORE: HELPFUL RESOURCES

Want to delve deeper into workplace gratitude? Here are some great sources for further reading.

(NOTE: All links were active when we published this document.)

GRATITUDE TOOLS

ORGANIZATIONAL GRATITUDE ASSESSMENT

What is your organization's gratitude profile? Check this assessment, developed in conjunction with the Center for Positive Organizational Scholarship.

10 BEST TED TALKS ON BUILDING WORKPLACE GRATITUDE

A collection of compelling TEDx video presentations that will motivate you to raise your organization's gratitude game.

THE SCIENCE OF HAPPINESS AT WORK – ONLINE CERTIFICATION

A series of 3 online classes that teach professionals the what, why and how of workplace happiness:

- The Foundations of Happiness at Work
- Mindfulness and Resilience to Stress at Work
- Empathy and Emotional Intelligence in the Workplace.

PERSONAL GRATITUDE QUIZ

Are you truly grateful for the good things in your life? Answer these 20 questions by psychologists Mitchel Adler and Nancy Fagley, and you receive a personalized score and more information about how to integrate gratitude into your life.

GRATITUDE RESENTMENT APPRECIATION TEST (GRAT)

Here's another way to measure your individual level of gratitude. Developed primarily by researcher Phil Watkins, this assessment maps your profile by examining multiple gratitude-related traits.

THNX4 GRATITUDE JOURNAL

To develop a habit of expressing appreciation, try this mobile-friendly online gratitude journal, developed in conjunction with the Greater Good Science Center.

GRATITUDE WEBSITES

CENTER FOR POSITIVE ORGANIZATIONS

Managed by the University of Michigan's Ross School of Business, this site features insights to help leaders build high-performing organizations that bring out the best in people.

EMMONS LAB

Online home of the world's foremost expert on the science of gratitude Dr. Robert Emmons.

GREATER GOOD SCIENCE CENTER

Based at the University of California, Berkeley, The Greater Good Science Center sponsors groundbreaking scientific research into social and emotional well-being. The Center also helps people apply the research to their personal and professional lives.

INTERNATIONAL POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY ASSOCIATION

A community devoted to scientific study of what enables individuals and communities to thrive.

POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY CENTER

A website devoted to promoting research and education on the positive psychology, resilience and grit.

PSYCHOLOGY TODAY: GRATITUDE

This website explores multiple aspects of gratitude, appreciation, motivation and related human emotions and behaviors.

WORKPLACE GRATITUDE: "CELEBRATING WORK" BLOG

The gThankYou blog focusing on building better workplaces takes a deep dive into how to build gratitude in the workplace.

GRATITUDE BOOKS

EMOTIONAL SUCCESS

David DeSteno, Eamon Dolan, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2018

This pioneering psychologist reveals how three prosocial emotions -- gratitude, compassion and pride -- provide an accessible and powerful path to professional grit and greatness.

GIVE AND TAKE

Adam Grant, Wiley, 2014

Award-winning author and Wharton professor, Adam Grant, takes a groundbreaking look at why helping others is the key to success.

GRATEFUL LEADERSHIP

Judith W. Umlas, McGraw Hill, 2012

Advice and insights about how acknowledgement can help you have profound and dramatic impact on your relationships with your employees, customers and stakeholders.

HOW FULL IS YOUR BUCKET?

Tom Rath and Donald O. Clifton, Wiley, 2004

Organized around a simple "bucket" metaphor and grounded in 50 years of Gallup research, this #1 New York Times bestseller explains how to dramatically increase the positive moments in your work and in your life.

MAKE THEIR DAY! EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION THAT WORKS

Cindy Ventrice, Berrett-Koehler, 2009

What truly makes employees feel valued? This book lays out proven recognition tactics that will provide a genuine, lasting boost for your business.

PAYOFF: THE HIDDEN LOGIC THAT SHAPES OUR MOTIVATIONS

Dan Ariely, Simon & Schuster, 2016

Best-selling author Dan Ariely reveals fascinating new insights into motivation, demonstrating that this subject is much more complex than previously thought.

PRACTICING POSITIVE LEADERSHIP

Kim Cameron, Wiley, 2013

Tools and techniques for positive leaders who want to create extraordinary results.

THANKS! HOW PRACTICING GRATITUDE CAN MAKE YOU HAPPIER

Robert Emmons, Mariner Books, 2008

One of the world's foremost authorities on gratitude examines what it means to think and feel grateful, and invites readers to put gratitude into practice.

THE EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE ADVANTAGE

Jacob Morgan, Wiley, 2017

The subtitle of this book explains it all: How to win the war for talent by giving employees the workspaces they want, the tools they need and a culture they can celebrate.

THE HAPPINESS ADVANTAGE

Shawn Achor, Currency, 2010

Harvard lecturer and happiness researcher, Shawn Achor, rethinks the traditional model for success as he explores the seven key principles of positive psychology that fuel performance at work.

THE VIBRANT WORKPLACE

Paul White and Gary Chapman, Northfield Publishing, 2017

The author of *The 5 Languages of Appreciation in the Workplace* explains how to overcome obstacles when building a culture of appreciation.

WORK THAT WORKS

Geil Browning, Wiley, 2017

A guide to building better teams and an exceedingly positive workplace culture through a process of self-discovery and sharing.





“I love gThankYou because of the ease of ordering, quick turnaround and the very friendly help I receive. I also love that certificates are personalized, easy to distribute to employees and accepted almost everywhere.”

*HR Executive
U.S. Manufacturing Company*



ABOUT gTHANKYOU! CERTIFICATES OF GRATITUDE™

At gThankYou we believe appreciating employees is good for business!

gThankYou! Certificates of Gratitude make it easy for your organization to celebrate employees – with convenient, meaningful, affordable **food gift certificates** for popular items such as a Thanksgiving turkey, a Christmas Ham, special treats or anytime groceries. Perfect for holiday gifts and everyday appreciation.

Recipients can redeem gThankYou! Certificates at national grocery chain stores for any brand or preparation of the item specified.

PLUS you'll receive **FREE custom Thank You cards** with every purchase! Choose from dozens of design themes and add your personalized message. You can even include your logo or a manager's signature. And to be sure it looks just right, we'll send you a proof for approval.

LEARN MORE

Visit our website or **watch our video** and get to know gThankYou!

CONTACT US

Rick Kiley, Chief ThankYou! Officer

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