

# “APPRECIATION CAN IMPROVE EMPLOYEE MOTIVATION, PERFORMANCE”



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Our work days are moving so rapidly that many important values and practices that can impact employee motivation and productivity are getting left behind. Competitive necessity has forced our expectations to be higher, and that is good. But when we take excellent performance or service for granted, we are missing an opportunity to reinforce that desirable behavior, and to create a new kind of worker loyalty.

While most employees value receiving recognition, it can have an especially powerful impact on those who make lesser wages and who are vulnerable to high turnover, such as the retail, service, and not-for-profit industries. Many employees share that even when there are less-than-desirable aspects of their job or company, they will tend to stay longer if they feel that they are making a difference, and that they are appreciated for the job that they do.

We don't necessarily have to be someone's immediate supervisor or manager to have this influence. Other employees and managers in an organization can have a positive impact as well. Noticing and acknowledging a job well done can be offered by anyone – another leader in the organization, a peer, or even a customer. Excellent organizations and their leaders take the time to notice and acknowledge the positive efforts and contributions of their employees at all levels. Doing this becomes ingrained in their culture, reflecting the core values of the organization.

For instance, a local salon has a reputation for hiring particularly talented stylists. The business also has a stable core staff, with a lower than average employee turnover rate. This success can be attributed to the business owner, who models business excellence by noticing and giving positive feedback, and by promoting a culture of acknowledgement among the team. It can often be observed that when one stylist has finished with a customer, one or more of her co-workers will offer positive comments. This not only makes the stylist feel appreciated for her work, but the customer is made to feel special as well.

While it is more convenient and perhaps more natural for some people to focus only on deficiencies, good performance or service should never be taken for granted. Those who insist, “that's what they get paid for...” to justify their discomfort or personal style, are missing the mark. Yes, we are all paid to do a good job, but there is more to it. While people have to earn a living to provide for their needs, research continues to show us that what really motivates employees is doing a good job or making a difference, and having that be noticed, valued and appreciated. Those who insist that this is not necessary will suffer the consequences with lower productivity and unnecessary turnover.

Try this challenge: make a conscious effort to notice not only the problems, but the contributions and accomplishments which are being especially well done. Then take a moment to tell the person(s) that you noticed and appreciate their good work. This may be uncomfortable at first for some who are not used to integrating this into their management style. Continue to practice this noticing and acknowledging process for the next thirty days, and watch how it starts to make a difference in your department or organization.