

THE POWER OF EMPLOYEE APPRECIATION IN TEAMBUILDING

by Sara Wilson

Recognizing and thanking employees is one of the keys of teambuilding.

When executives and managers I coach ask about improving teambuilding or organizational culture, I always discuss the POWER of appreciation. Teams that work well together are found more frequently in organizations where appreciation is both vertical and horizontal (appreciation is expressed between leader-board-staff, and also between staff members).

If you think you are too busy to take time to thank employees or that employees don't need to be appreciated because "it's their job, they are supposed to do it," consider these data points:

- In a study by Adam Grant of the Wharton School, employees who were explicitly thanked for their work by a manager, or even a distant supervisor, were found to be 50% more productive afterwards. Take note leaders! ([Gratitude, the Gift that Keeps on Giving](#))
- In positive psychology research, gratitude is strongly and consistently associated with greater happiness. Gratitude helps people feel more positive emotions, relish good experiences, improve their health, deal with adversity, and build strong relationships. ([In Praise of Gratitude](#))
- Gratitude also benefits the giver! The act of giving recognition can be an even more transformative experience than the act of receiving it. Dr. Robert Emmons, professor of psychology at University of California, Davis, characterizes gratitude as “the ultimate touchpoint of human existence ... and the ultimate performance-enhancing substance.” ([The Business Impact of Gratitude](#))

Now that you have a few science-informed facts, let's talk about the fun of appreciation. I actually get kind of giddy thinking about these ideas for showing appreciation.

- Merci! Gracias! Grazie! Thank You! A heartfelt thank you is always appreciated.
- Gift Cards. 80% of Millennials say prepaid gift cards are their favorite monetary reward
- Time off. Close the "office" the afternoon of March 5th.
- Employee of the Month program

Or how about giving your staff silly, fun creative "littles" and hokey notes:

- Tootsie Roll Thanks for rolling with the punches
- Bubble gum Thanks for enlarging our success
- Goldfish crackers Thanks for swimming upstream
- Mars / Milky Way You make a world of difference

On the surface, appreciation benefits employee engagement, motivation and retention. Deep down, it can help in teambuilding and foster a positive company culture.