Solution

What...

Simple, sincere and impactful program(s) for quickly and easily showing gratefulness and extending praise.

Appreciation - praising an individual's or groups' attributes and character

Recognition - complimenting specific actions, behaviors, or results

Why...

Supports a workplace culture in which people feel seen, heard, and appreciated for who they are and the work that they do. When gratitude is shown more often by more people … and in ways that are more specific, sincere, heartfelt, well-timed and personalized …. gratefulness is elevated in the workplace culture.

Researchers have found that gratitude carries with it many health and psychological benefits, for the giver **AND** the receiver. Research has also shown that gratitude impacts engagement and connection in a profoundly positive way. Gratitude is a proven and powerful force in building resilience and buffers against the stress that employees are experiencing and helps to foster teamwork and positive work relationships.

To be affirmed, validated, and appreciated are basic human needs that can be met through giving and receiving gratitude.
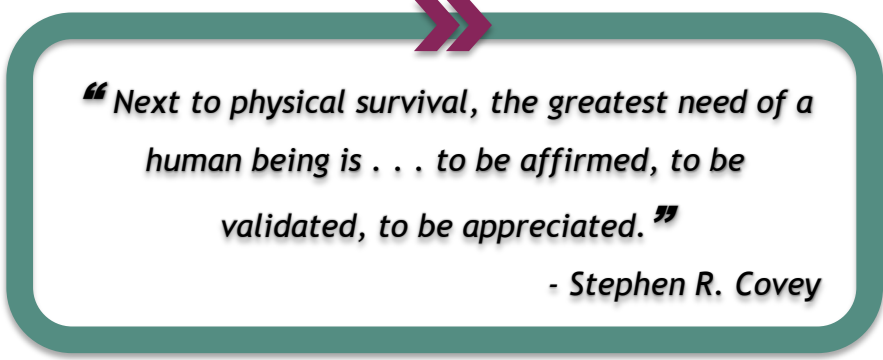
Feeling acknowledged improves physical and emotional well-being, is energizing and morale-building, and can reduce staff turnover.

What gets recognized or rewarded gets repeated, therefore, gratefulness can positively reinforce desired behaviors and actions.

When gratefulness is overlooked or lacking, it can lead to low morale and reduced effort. Studies report that nearly 80% of people who quit their jobs cite a lack of appreciation as one of the key reasons for leaving.

> " *Next to physical survival, the greatest need of a human being is . . . to be affirmed, to be validated, to be appreciated.* "
>
> *- Stephen R. Covey*

How...

Create an organization-wide program for employees to recognize other employees (or, design and promote it to be "omni-directional" – meaning that everyone can use it to recognize anyone, for instance a physician recognizing a employee, an employee recognizing a leader, etc.).

An employee-populated Employee Experience Team is a recommended group to develop, roll out, and provide ongoing coordination and promotion for this program.

The objective is to make the program(s) easy and readily available for people to recognize someone. Often programs are a variation of a "thank you note" or "recognition tool kit."

Some pointers for a "thank you note" type recognition program:

▶ Make the process quick and simple. For instance, notes/forms that are simple to fill out and readily available for re-stocking and reprinting.

▶ When you attach monetary value, it can complicate the program a bit. The purpose of instant recognition is to express gratitude and say thank you. Monetary value is a nice gesture, but not necessary and may bring out some misuse or attach burdensome rules.

▶ There are more and more social media platforms for recognition or applications for use on mobile technology as well (e.g., Bonusly). We recommend that the Employee Experience Team create a cost free, or minimal cost solution first until the "buzz" is created and all can see the benefit of gratitude in your work environment.

Some pointers for a "recognition tool kit" type program:

▶ Determine how many toolkits are needed based to support easy access for employees, leaders, etc.

▶ Determine what to put in the toolkits, such as

  ▪ Scratch off lottery cards (…with a note that says: "We are lucky to have you on our team. Thanks for…").

  ▪ Candy such as Kudos, Lifesavers, Mr. Goodbar, Starburst.

  ▪ Blank certificates for Team Player, Complaint Resolution, Going the Extra Mile, Morale Booster, Living Our Values, Coworker Support, Good Humor, Star Performer and many more.

  ▪ Pre-printed stickers (to wear on a uniform), pre-printed post-it notes and/or magnets (for a locker or computer).

  ▪ Trinkets with your organization's logo and thanks (e.g. stress balls, stars, badges)

▶ To keep the Toolkits in action, create a process for replenishing supplies when they run out (….and allocated funds for recognition/celebration/morale).

▶ To keep the Toolkit fresh and fun, have an annual process to create new ideas for new contents for the Toolkits for the coming year.

Promote high quality and quantity of use

► Keep the program(s) "top-of-mind!" Campaign tactics can be very useful for this.

► Ask for leader support to use the program(s) and promote the use of them by their employees

► Educate/inform on what to recognize and praise. Don't limit the use of the program for only "above and beyond" behaviors and actions. Increase the opportunities for recognition by expanding the definition of what is worthy of recognition to include:

   ▪ Making attempts to improve a behavior or performance (they may not be at standard, or above and beyond yet, but recognize when there is noticeable improvement)

   ▪ Making attempts to implement a change (they may not be completely competent or consistent yet, but recognize that it is noticed that they are trying and working toward that)

> " *What gets recognized, gets repeated.* "