

ELEVATING GRATITUDE: CELEBRATION, RECOGNITION AND APPRECIATION

"Appreciation can make a day, even change a life. Your willingness to put it into words is all that is necessary."

--Margaret Cousins

What

- **Appreciation:** written or verbal praise for an individual's or groups' attributes and character.
- **Recognition:** written or verbal praise for specific actions, behaviors, or results.
- **Celebration:** to honor something by festivities or other deviation from routine.

Why

- **Retain your top talent:** Lack of recognition and engagement is driving 44% of employees to switch jobs (Achievers)
- **Lack of recognition can lead to greater dissatisfaction than compensation:** When employees feel unappreciated, they are more likely to quit than an employee who is dissatisfied with their comp (MIT).
- **What gets recognized and rewarded gets repeated:** Gratitude can positively reinforce desired behaviors and actions.
- **Mutually beneficial:** 88% of people say that expressing gratitude to colleagues makes them feel happier and more fulfilled (Gallup).

"Recognition is the art of actively looking for efforts large or small, that make a difference every day." --Mary Davis

How do we elevate our gratefulness?

The Compliments to Criticism Ratio

- Your employees need a ratio of 3 or more compliments to every 1 criticism (3:1). – (Jack Zenger and Joseph Folkman – The Harvard Business Review)
- A ratio of 1:1 (or even 2:1) will leave a negative feeling among employees (Barbara Fredrickson).
- Teams that operate in an environment where the compliment to criticism ratio is 3:1 are proven to be successful teams (Dr. Bryan Sexton).
- Your employees remember negativity louder and longer than they remember positivity.
- The 3:1 ratio is challenging in healthcare where we are trained to look at “what is wrong” with a situation or a patient; we then start applying this view toward our employees.

“The negative screams at you. The positive only whispers.”

--Barbara Fredrickson

How are Celebration, Recognition and Appreciation Tactics Implemented?

High Performance Work Practices:

- Thank You Notes to Home (for both recognition and appreciation)
- Employee-to-Employee Recognition (or Omni-directional Recognition)
- Chief Party Officer, Team Celebrations
- Increase Frequency – Be intentional in looking for things to celebrate, recognize, appreciate; Change the definition of what is worthy to celebrate, recognize, appreciate; “know thyself” and “know others”

Elevate to GREAT your Thank You Note Routine:

- Mail it to the home address. Create a system to make this easy for leaders.
- Don't leave out opportunities to recognize providers with a thank you note to home.
- Develop thank you stationery that is available like other forms needed in the organization. This can provide a cost savings.

- **Keep It SIMPLE**

- **Sincere:** The note does not need to be “mushy,” but it must be real!
- **Include behavior you are recognizing (and want repeated!).** Be specific.
 - What did you observe, notice, learn about?
 - What was the impact?
 - What standard or goal is it in keeping with?
- **Mention others in a positive light (“manage them up”)** when you can.
- **Personalize your style and hand write the thank you note.**
- **Leave some white space;** you do not need to fill up the whole card.
- **Envelope the process into your daily or weekly routine.** Keep your ears open for recognition opportunities – look for the positive all around you.

Activity

Who is that employee you appreciate the most? Who are you glad to see every time they walk through the door? Write them a thank you note using the recommended **SIMPLE** format.

Peer – to – Peer Recognition – Recognition Toolkits

To make employee recognition fun, convenient and easy, a well-stocked Recognition Toolkit can be very helpful. The idea is for leaders to recognize staff often. Recognition doesn't have to be elaborate or expensive (and can be done in compliance!) – it must be heartfelt and sincere.

Some ideas for a Recognition Toolkit include:

- 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)

Peer – to – Peer Recognition – Cheers for Peers Program

Create an organization-wide recognition process for employees to recognize other employees. An employee-populated Employee Experience Team can develop, roll out, and provide ongoing coordination for this program.

The objective is to make the recognition program easy and readily available for employees to recognize someone. Often this is a variation of a thank you note that is provided to the employee or placed on public display.

Some pointers for a great program:

- 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.
- Recognizing behaviors, actions and attitudes that are in keeping with the organization's values, performance standards, and/or standards of behavior are the primary focuses of the recognition efforts. Employee-to-Employee recognition is especially important when adopting standards of behavior and overall higher expectations for work performance.
- Peer-to-peer recognition programs can be developed, or expanded, to incorporate "omni-directional" recognition (meaning, employees, leaders, volunteers, providers, etc. can all give and receive recognition via the program).
- Make the process quick and simple. For instance, forms that are simple to fill out and readily available for re-stocking and reprinting.
- When you attach monetary value, it can reduce the impact. The purpose of instant recognition is to express gratitude and say thank you. Attaching a free meal, or a gift to this may lessen the impact and may also attach unnecessary rules. Monetary value is a nice gesture, but not necessary and may bring out some misuse.
- Watch and validate but don't micromanage. Do not make too many rules or over compliment "who is deserving" of recognition or appreciation. To expand gratefulness, we need to expand the definition of what is deserving of recognition and not limit it to "above and beyond.". Signs of improvement and giving something new a try are worthy of praise.

Celebrations

“Party for a PURPOSE” ... Celebrations are not just for events such as holidays or birthdays ... but for purposes such as making steps toward big projects or changes, making progress toward goals or improvement efforts ... as well as celebrating goals achieved, projects completed, or awards received.

When the cause for celebration is not meaningful and not clearly known, this can lead to apathy and a sense of superficialness around efforts to elevate gratefulness.

- Banner hung in departments in which a specific goal was met, or improvement is being made
- Celebrations communicated in employee newsletters, community publications, social media, public displays (e.g., billboards), at CEO-Employee forums or in other communications
- Invite patients, physicians and employees' family members to celebrate as well so that they can show their pride and appreciation
- Seek out your “Chief Party Officers” who can assist in creating these celebrations. Not everyone enjoys planning and hosting celebrations. However, you likely have an employee or two that would LOVE that role!
- A Celebration Cart - this is a pre-stocked cart with several party theme options that is “checked out” by individual departments/teams to provide quick and easy celebrations

Patient-to-Employee Recognition “The Grateful Patient”

Patients may be included in systems for employee recognition in several ways:

- If a thank you letter, or email or phone call is received from a patient, it can be circulated via the internal email system.
- Let patients know about how to nominate employees for applicable awards.
- Participate in a DAISY Foundation award for nursing staff.
- When patients mention an employee by name in a patient satisfaction survey – post it in the department, put the employee’s name in a prize drawing, or add a note in the employee’s personnel file.
- When rounding with patients, harvest recognition opportunities for employees and providers.
- Utilize your website, admission packets, waiting rooms and lobbies to promote and provide opportunities for patients and visitors to recognize employees, volunteers and providers.

Activity

Turn to a partner at your table, and reflect on the following questions:

1. Do you have a daily cadence of appreciation, recognition, or celebration?
2. Are you one of those people that appreciation is not automatic, and you struggle to see the positive in your day?
3. Do you feel that recognition could be given too much?

Final Thoughts

- Quick, in the moment recognition and words of affirmation and appreciation are vital to a leader's success. Develop the habit of SEEING positive work and behavior performance and stating what you see in the moment.

- Leaders often think they do not have time to "carry out a recognition program." It takes moments each day, and you cannot afford NOT to do this as a leader!

- You cannot afford NOT to recognize the power of appreciation as an organization either.

QR CODES/LINKS FOR RESOURCES:



[eLearning Course: CapstoneEDU – Elevating Gratefulness](#)

Leaders in Partner Organizations – contact your Initiative Champion

Leaders in Non-Partner Organizations – access more information on course details and pricing via the QR Code/Link



[Video: Why We Need Appreciation \(Not Just Recognition\) at Work \(Mike Robbins\)](#)

Reflection/Notes:

Large empty gray area for reflection and notes.