



Timely Information for Personal Success

Why is Employee Recognition so Difficult?

By Mike Jacquart

I recently ran across an article which stated that, “36% of employees say lack of recognition is the top reason they leave their job.” Employee recognition really *shouldn't* be that difficult, but that article, and many others like it, would indicate otherwise. I scratch my head over what *should be* a relatively simple business concept to embrace.

What is it that managers are so worried about? Are they afraid we will ask for a raise every time they pat us on the back? Many parents applaud the smallest of their kids' accomplishments on Facebook. So, does this mean there is no longer ANY need for recognition in adulthood?

Ah, that's Just Carl

I'm exaggerating a little, but evidently not all that much, according to the underlined statement above – a statistic that appeared in a December 2017 study from Achievers, an employee engagement company.

Some would quickly defend managers' reluctance to hand out compliments. *“Ah, that's just Carl. He's like that with everybody. You know he appreciates you.”*

Really? Having run into a lack of recognition myself in the workplace, I would beg to differ. Weeks would go by. Then months... Still more time would go by. Nothing about the good work I was doing. Was I? I was *pretty* confident I was doing good work, often above and beyond my job

description, and *knowing that* is gratifying to some degree. But still, most of us starve for someone to notice from time to time.

Finally, I “had to know” what my boss thought about the work I was doing, and I mentioned my concern to a co-worker, Bob. *“Well, you know ‘Jim’ (not real names) appreciates you. He's told me himself a number of times,”* Bob replied, obviously defending my boss. So, “Jim” told “Bob” I was doing a great job, but he couldn't tell me himself? What's up with that?

When Communication is Poor, People Expect the Worse

You may have heard the saying that when communication is poor in the workplace, people will expect the worse. You may be “pretty sure” you're doing a good job, but still... Frank showed up every

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Healthy Recipe: Harvest Salad

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 packages mixed salad greens (about 8 cups)
- 2 cups cut-up fresh vegetables (carrots, cucumbers, onions)
- 1 can (10-3/4 ounces) tomato soup
- 1/4 cup vegetable oil
- 1/4 cup red wine vinegar
- 1 tablespoon honey or sugar
- 1 package (0.7 oz) Italian salad dressing mix
- 2 cups croutons

NUTRITIONAL VALUE:

- Calories per serving: 188
- Carbohydrates: 21 g.
- Protein: 4 g.
- Sodium: 595 mg.
- Fat: 10 g. (1 g. saturated)
- Fiber: 2 g.

DIRECTIONS:

- 1 Place salad greens and vegetables into large bowl.
- 2 Beat the soup, oil, vinegar, honey (or sugar), and salad dressing mix in a bowl with a fork or whisk. Pour mixture over the salad mixture and toss to coat.
- 3 Arrange salad on a serving platter. Top with croutons. Serve salad with the remaining soup mixture.

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day and did his job. But he was laid off last month! What was up with that?

Or what about Marie? She was passed over for a promotion, and the next thing we knew she was transferred to another branch office. She LOVED working in town so she could go home on lunch hours. Why did they do that? Are they going to transfer me next, regardless of the job I'm doing? I really don't want to commute and might have to think about quitting even though I like my job.

Meanwhile the clock ticks. And ticks. But still nothing was ever said about Frank, partly because your company never has any meetings, nor about Marie. And you *still* aren't sure what Jim thinks about your job performance!

That's right managers. Clam up. Never say anything, and people will wonder what's up. They might even bolt for greener pastures if they're kept in the dark long enough.

"Bosses are busy," some will say. True.

"You should know you're doing a good job," others might add. Maybe, but so were Frank and Marie.

"You know times are tough, and they can't afford a raise right now," is another comment you might hear.

Maybe so. But in a day and age in which way too many staffs are too stretched for time, is it really THAT MUCH to hear it from your boss from time to time?

Summary

Excuses for a lack of recognition (or even communication in general) are usually just that. EXCUSES. "Busy"? Horse hockey! "They can't afford to give you a raise!" Another cop-out. A simple thank you is **free**, isn't it?

C'mon managers, wake up. Eliminate the guesswork. Be a straight shooter. Communicate. Tell employees what is going on. Or don't be surprised when more than one-third (36%) of YOUR employees leave. ■

Mike Jacquart is the editor and publisher of "Employee Assistance Report" who enjoys using his 30 years' experience at various sized companies (mainly in publishing) to share insights into various work cultures; some good, some bad, some in between. He may be reached at mjacquart@writeitrightllc.com.

