



AGAINST THE

CURRENT

stand out in a sea of leaders

RECOGNITION & APPRECIATION

recognition & appreciation

Most managers support the notion that recognizing and appreciating others is important. We realize that recognition and appreciation can improve productivity, engagement, retention, and even customer satisfaction. But we often underestimate the impact of our words and actions on others in the workplace.

Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it

- william arthur ward

O.C. Tanner studied recognition in a white paper entitled: [Performance: Accelerated](#). This 10-year, 200,000-person study confirmed the connection between recognition, appreciation and business results. Perhaps more importantly, it revealed a disconnect between the perception and reality of appreciation at work.

While more than half of managers believe they do a good job of appreciating their teams, only 17% of employees agree. 65% of North Americans report that they weren't recognized even once last year, and 79% of employees who quit their jobs claim that a lack of appreciation was a major reason for leaving.

More than 80% of organizations have a formal recognition program. Why, then, do so many employees feel unappreciated? Because recognition and appreciation are not synonymous. If you really want to create a culture of engagement, loyalty, and high performance on your team, it's important to understand the distinction.

Is there a difference between recognition and appreciation? Harvard Business Review says, "Yes." [Recognition](#), they say, "is about giving positive feedback based on results or performance."

[Appreciation](#), on the other hand, "is about acknowledging a person's inherent value." Brené Brown expands this definition, adding that "appreciation is about making others feel seen, valued and heard."

Though the majority of companies have a formal recognition program, recognition is often focused on performance and "above and beyond" results. Most employees are fortunate to receive this type of formal recognition once or twice a year.

To enhance employee engagement, managers must reach beyond recognition and create memorable moments - more frequent, genuine, and meaningful appreciation that makes employees feel seen, valued, and heard ... throughout the year.

we've got to reach beyond recognition and create memorable moments.

reach beyond recognition

DON'T STOP AT RECOGNIZING RESULTS!

Make employees feel seen, valued, and heard by celebrating values, behaviors, personal milestones and ideas, in addition to performance.

RECOGNIZE PERFORMANCE

this might look like ...

- Meeting or exceeding a goal
- Completing a project
- Improving a process
- Delivering a project milestone

What other performance milestones might you recognize?

Record your ideas below.

APPRECIATE VALUES AND BEHAVIORS

this might look like ...

- Role modeling company values
- Helping a coworker
- Sharing knowledge
- Acting as an ally to a colleague

What other values or behaviors might you recognize?

Record your ideas below.

CELEBRATE PERSONAL MILESTONES

this might look like ...

- New role or promotion
- Service anniversary
- Certification
- Birthday
- Wedding
- Baby

What other personal milestones might you recognize?

Record your ideas below.

ENCOURAGE CRITICAL THINKING

this might look like ...

- Asking for ideas, opinions, and advice
- Facilitating a team debate
- Involving others in decision-making
- Asking an employee to teach you something
- Rewarding those who have the courage to speak up or challenge the status quo

What else can you do to encourage critical thinking?

Record your ideas below.



check out pages 4-5 for more tips to encourage critical thinking

**In simple terms, recognition is about what people do;
appreciation is about who they are.**

encourage critical thinking

Critical thinking tends to be the appreciation category managers leverage the least. A 2021 UKG survey found that two out of three (63%) employees feel their voice has been ignored in some way by their manager or employer.

But we've found strong evidence that giving employees a voice and encouraging critical thinking creates a competitive advantage!

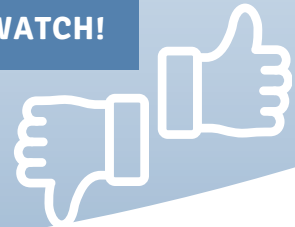
According to a 2021 study by the Workforce Institute, 74% of people feel more engaged at work when they feel their voice is heard.

Organizations that give employees a voice are:

- 3.6X more likely to innovate effectively
- 8.5X more likely to retain customers
- 12X more likely to retain employees

As Margaret Heffernan discusses in her "Dare to Disagree" TEDTalk, great leaders allow - and even encourage - those around them to disagree.

[CLICK HERE TO WATCH!](#)



TED
Ideas worth spreading

my notes

Use the space below to record key takeaways from the "Dare to Disagree" TED Talk. What resonated or changed your thinking?



quick tips:
generate debate

GENERATE MORE DISCUSSION AND DEBATE IN YOUR TEAM MEETINGS WITH THESE QUESTIONS AND PHRASES



“This meeting is intended to be an open dialog and debate. Please dare to disagree. It will help us find the best answer.”



“What would you decide if you were in my shoes?”



“If you had to change 1 thing about this decision, what would that be?”



“What’s the greatest risk with this plan? What’s the greatest opportunity?”



“Let’s spend 10 minutes playing devil’s advocate on this topic.”

create memorable moments

DID YOU KNOW...

68% of employees feel that the recognition they receive is an empty gesture, because it's unspecific, impersonal, or untimely. To maximize the impact of your efforts and create memorable moments, make sure that your recognition and appreciation are **specific**, **personalized**, and **timely**.

make appreciation meaningful with these do & don't tips

MAKE IT SPECIFIC

- ✗ Don't make generic and broad statements, like...
- ✗ "Thanks for all you do."
- ✗ "Thanks for your leadership."
- ✗ "You're the best!"
- ✗ "You're a rockstar!"
- ✓ Treat recognition as positive feedback.
- ✓ Articulate what you observed, when you observed it and why it matters.
- ✓ "Your inquisitive approach helped us think beyond the obvious and find a creative solution. Thanks for asking the tough questions in today's meeting!"

MAKE IT PERSONAL

- ✗ Don't send recognition without a follow-up interaction.
- ✗ Don't send only blanket thanks for team efforts.
- ✗ Don't limit yourself to one type of recognition or appreciation.
- ✓ Accompany every recognition or appreciation gesture with a memorable personal interaction.
- ✓ Acknowledge team success along with each team member's individual contributions.
- ✓ Customize recognition and appreciation to the recipient's [Primary Language of Appreciation](#).

MAKE IT TIMELY

- ✗ Don't wait to recognize someone.
- ✗ Don't "save up" recognition or appreciation for year-end awards.
- ✓ Offer appreciation in the moment.
- ✓ Acknowledge and reinforce performance, behaviors, personal milestones and critical thinking ... as they happen.

*make it
personal*



NOT ALL APPRECIATION IS CREATED EQUALLY!

The Golden Rule encourages us to treat others the way we like to be treated? It's nice, but not when it comes to appreciation.

We believe in the Platinum Rule ... treat others the way THEY like to be treated. Appreciation is most meaningful when you offer it in the recipient's Language of Appreciation. Check out the list below for a variety of appreciation ideas for each language.



WORDS OF AFFIRMATION

- Send a Greeting of Gratitude to an individual or team (details on page 10)
- Call someone after a meeting with specific positive feedback
- Copy a manager/next level manager on a recognition email
- Offer reassurance after a challenging day



ACTS OF SERVICE

- Remind someone to take a break when they've been working hard
- Bring or deliver dinner to home when someone had a tough week
- Offer to cover a call or task for someone who's been working long hours
- Pick up a coffee for someone when you run out to get yourself one
- Support flexible hours to help juggle family commitments



QUALITY TIME

- Offer to brainstorm with an employee who is facing a challenge
- Coordinate travel plans with a team member
- Spend time getting to know a team member's interests and passions
- Gather your team for lunch or happy hour to celebrate a group success
- Host a team building event (face-to-face or virtual - page 8 for ideas)



GIFTS

- Buy a book related to an team member's interests
- Give a certificate to a favorite restaurant or store
- Send the employee to a training or conference
- Host a party to celebrate a life event (new home, baby, wedding, certification, etc.)
- Give tickets to an event aligned with personal interests (ball game, concert, etc.)



click here to discover your language of appreciation



quick tips: virtual team events

TEAM BUILDING IS CERTAINLY MORE CHALLENGING IN TODAY'S HYBRID WORLD ... BUT IT'S NOT IMPOSSIBLE! HERE ARE A FEW OF OUR FAVORITE VIRTUAL EVENT OPTIONS.

- Arrange a virtual pizza party with [Pizza Time](#)
- Host a skill-building event with [SkillPop](#)
- Hold a team cooking event with [FoodLaLa](#)
- Have some fun with [The Comedian Company](#)
- Compete in a virtual scavenger hunt with [Watson Adventures](#)
- Explore more virtual team events with [Weve](#)



reflection

HOW WOULD YOU RATE the level of specificity, personalization, and timeliness of the recognition and appreciation you give?

Where will you focus your efforts to ensure that you are creating memorable moments?



my appreciation plan:

Create your appreciation plan in the worksheet below. For each team member, brainstorm 1–2 smaller weekly gestures and 1 larger monthly gesture to make them feel seen, valued and heard. Remember to reach beyond recognition and appreciate values, behaviors, personal milestones and critical thinking. Make it specific, timely and tailored to each person’s language of appreciation. And don’t forget to create opportunities for periodic team appreciation!

NAME:

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- ★ _____

NAME:

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NAME:

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- ★ _____

TEAM APPRECIATION

- _____
- _____
- _____

GREETINGS OF

gratitude®

*don't struggle to find
the perfect words ...
we wrote them for you!*

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Our curated catalog of specific, sincere
and ready-to-send messages makes it easy
to celebrate others in the moments that
matter. Even when you're on-the-go.

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