

Title:

Does Recognition Get You In A State?

Word Count:

500

Summary:

Like most managers, Brian Reynolds believed that his team had its strengths and its weaknesses. When asked in an employee satisfaction survey "Do you recognize good performance in your team?" he answered with a resounding "Of course I do!" However the following question stumped him. "How frequently do you make a point of recognizing good performance face-to-face?" His answer had to be "Never". "Surely they already know they are performing well? What would be the point of me a...

Keywords:

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Article Body:

Like most managers, Brian Reynolds believed that his team had its strengths and its weaknesses. When asked in an employee satisfaction survey "Do you recognize good performance in your team?" he answered with a resounding "Of course I do!" However the following question stumped him. "How frequently do you make a point of recognizing good performance face-to-face?" His answer had to be "Never". "Surely they already know they are performing well? What would be the point of me adding my comments?"

Recognition and reward for role-model performance and behavior is, perhaps, one of the most motivational acts that anyone can do for another human being and it is worth spending a little time to analyze the mechanism that converts recognition into the self esteem, high morale and motivation that results.

In everyday life we describe people who are fretting or upset as being in a "state". Although, in psychological terms, this is a very true statement, being emotionally troubled is only one of a vast array of "states" that we transition through as we live our lives. The "state" of motivation is the condition that all employers want their people to be in all day long. In this "state" they will be hard working, productive, efficient and will display only appropriate behaviors to those around them.

In reality people are only human; they have a limited amount of stamina,

patience, capability and competence. They may only be capable of a limited daily amount of excellent performance.

To guarantee that someone will adopt the correct "state", it is a simple matter of attaching or "anchoring" that state to a good feeling. Somewhere deep in the psyche there is a storage vessel that holds the memory of all of these "states" and their associated feelings. When a set of circumstances come together in our lives we step into what we feel is an appropriate "state" and that brings feelings that have been filed away with it. This explains why some people "see red" when they are confronted by disagreement. This "state" is their only response to differences of opinion.

Compare the person who "sees red" with a skilled negotiator. The negotiator has spent a great deal of time training herself to be able to access a complete encyclopedia of "states" to deal with different situations. She may have to be calm, enthusiastic, skeptical, humorous, poker-faced or downright angry at the push of a button.

The principle of using recognition as an anchor for appropriate behavior works in the same way. A good example is the "Employee of the week" board in fast food restaurants. It may seem trite to the rest of the world but for those guys, having your picture up there in a frame provides reinforcement that the way they worked was good and they will be encouraged to repeat that set of behaviors because they have been publicly recognized.

Brian Reynolds has not yet discovered the importance of his role in life as an anchor to motivate his team.