

Title:

Recognition By The Happy Wanderer

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497

Summary:

Quin Jerome is Sales Director with a clothing company. He is a talented talker and entertains major clients on a regular basis. One summer he was deputizing while the CEO was on vacation and found an entry in his planner that just said "11.00 - 12.00 Wander". The CEO's PA clarified that it meant walking the production floor to talk with the machinists. "But I don't know what to say to them!" said the gifted raconteur.

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Article Body:

Quin Jerome is Sales Director with a clothing company. He is a talented talker and entertains major clients on a regular basis. One summer he was deputizing while the CEO was on vacation and found an entry in his planner that just said "11.00 - 12.00 Wander". The CEO's PA clarified that it meant walking the production floor to talk with the machinists. "But I don't know what to say to them!" said the gifted raconteur.

Curiosity is the real key to uncovering performance that deserves recognition. Managing by wandering about (MBWA) is a technique first recognized in the 1980's by quality guru Tom Peters. He found that some successful organizations got that way by encouraging managers to get away from behind their desks on a regular basis. With the emphasis on wandering, which is a slow process of following your nose, you will find yourself being drawn towards areas of the business you might not otherwise visit.

You may find yourself speaking to people who are hidden away from the light of day and by asking the who, what, where, when, why and how you'll discover things about your own business that would never have been revealed to you otherwise. It's not that your managers are hiding anything; they just want to let you know what they think is important and they edit out what they consider to be trivia.

Unfortunately one man's trivia is another man's hero's journey and these examples represent the acorns that you will want to nourish. How can well focused behavior be copied by others in the company if it is not captured, highlighted and praised?

MBWA is in itself a form of recognition. If the senior woman or man can spend some of their valuable time talking to employees and asking their opinions, the employees must have value. This feeling can be reinforced by asking your people for their opinion about management decisions, company policy and rumors. Keep an open mind about their answers, understand their perspective and calm their uncertainties.

Simple questions can open up enormous opportunities. "What one thing could I do to help you with your job?" will always get a cheeky answer about swapping salaries but is usually followed up with the really simple stuff like: "We need better lighting", or, "We need an electric fan in the summer", or, "Can I replace the missing wheel on my chair?"; none of which will break the bank but all of which will improve their work experience.

Asking "What and who makes a difference to the performance of your department?" will start to reveal some of the activities that should be emulated throughout the business. People will be named who are seen as role-models in their approach to their work and to their colleagues. Remember that work is not all about hard graft. A good proportion of work is a social experience which should be as good humored and pleasant as possible to bring out the best qualities of your employees.