

Title:

Your Degree In Recognition Skills

Word Count:

500

Summary:

Of course, we all majored in recognition skills at high school. Being positive comes as second nature to everybody and we never focus too much on faults. Unfortunately there the fairy tale must end. Complaining, it seems, is a much more developed skill than praising and many people find it difficult to be only positive. It is as if they can't help themselves adding a crushing blow. Like Carolyn Burnham (Annette Bening) in "American Beauty" when she praises her daughter Jane (...)

Keywords:

employee, recognition, employee recognition, motivation, employee motivation, rewards, staff rewards

Article Body:

Of course, we all majored in recognition skills at high school. Being positive comes as second nature to everybody and we never focus too much on faults. Unfortunately there the fairy tale must end. Complaining, it seems, is a much more developed skill than praising and many people find it difficult to be only positive. It is as if they can't help themselves adding a crushing blow. Like Carolyn Burnham (Annette Bening) in "American Beauty" when she praises her daughter Jane (Thora Birch) for her cheerleading performance, she says, "I was watching you very closely, and you didn't screw up once."

Language

It is often said that, in communication, we get the response we deserve. Bear this in mind when you next ask for an additional task to be undertaken. Listen to the words that you use. Do you apologize, saying:

"I'm really sorry that I have to drop this on you"

Do you antagonize, saying:

"Whether you like it or not you'll have to do this by 5pm."

Do you empathize, saying:

"I know this is a pain, but it really needs to be done."

Do you sympathize, saying:

"Poor you! This extra work probably means overtime."

...or do you enthuse, by saying:

"Hey, you're just the person who can help me! I need this urgent job to be done today, and I was thinking you'd be the best person to get it out accurately and on time."

No prizes for guessing which approach gets a more energetic response. Enthusiasm breeds enthusiasm and if you can embed a few pieces of recognition in your request without sounding sarcastic you'll stand a better chance of getting a motivated performance.

When you are actually praising someone, try to tell them how you feel. "It made me proud that I work for the same company when I saw you handling that complex customer problem", means so much more than, "Good job, keep it up." "I wish I had your comic timing. Your ability to make people laugh and feel motivated to get on with the toughest and most unpleasant of jobs leaves me in awe." says more than "I'm impressed, carry on, dude!"

Also make an attempt to acknowledge that you really did understand that the behavior was appropriate; "I was especially impressed when you offered to call them to update them on progress at the end of the day. That's a great standard to work to"

Managers can develop a crippling disability when they use language variously known as "verbal diarrhea", "let me tell you what you mean" and "that's not the way I'd do it". As people climb the management ladder there is a tendency for them to lose the listening skill and to gain an add-on to their verbosity skills. This is not surprising as they are probably expected to talk for most of the day; however when it comes to gathering information to promote informal recognition, keeping your ears open and your mouth shut is an essential skill.