

MOTIVATING EMPLOYEES

Compliments and kind words go a long way



From the moment we understood our first spoken word, we've craved kind words and compliments. Words have impact – they can carry encouragement and approval, motivating us to improve our performance, whether we're taking our first steps or trying out for the Olympic team.

Recognition and motivation go hand in hand. We all need positive reinforcement for who we are and what we're doing. Recognition powerfully influences our self-esteem, and self-esteem influences our performance. When we feel good about ourselves, it affects what we do and how well we do it.

Too often, the only time employees get any feedback at all is when they've made a mistake. What we need is to feel that our contributions are noticed and recognized. Well-deserved praise, whether vocal or by email or in a hand-written note, strengthens our resolve to perform well and increases our loyalty to the company.

It also reduces employee turnover, which in turn reduces the high costs of hiring and training. When you recognize, appreciate, and motivate your employees, they will stay with you.

To motivate your employees, it's critical to recognize them and their achievements. Try these four steps:

1. Be specific. If you say, "You did a great job last week," that isn't going to cut it. It's meaningless. Tell the employee exactly what he/she did that impressed you. Did they deliver the report on time

without errors? Did they go out of their way and deliver more than you asked for?

2. Be timely. Recognition delayed is recognition denied. To have the greatest impact, it's critical that you compliment the employee immediately. If you wait a week, the employee will likely spend the time sulking over your lack of praise and appreciation.

3. Be genuine. Create a personal connection with each employee. Call them by name, and be enthusiastic about what they, and you, are saying. Anything you say to an employee will have greater impact if you say it in front of the other employees.

4. Be sincere. You must be sincere in what you say. Add power to your words with a smile and a handshake. If you come across as insincere, whatever you say will lose its luster.

Instead of always being on the lookout for what your employees are doing wrong, remember to look for what they're doing right. You might be surprised at how productive and loyal they'll be when you recognize and praise them.

Most companies over-estimate money as a motivator. Money will get people through the door to work for you, but it won't keep them. If you want to give an employee a raise, you must get approval from your superiors. But recognition costs you and your company nothing – even though it motivates the employees to stay with you and do the best job possible.

If you can make recognition and praise a part of your everyday routine, you'll create an environment of loyal employees who are ready and willing to go to bat for the team and work to improve everyone's performance.

Visit www.customer-service.com for more information on John Tschohl and the Service Quality Institute.

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John Tschohl is the founder and president of Service Quality Institute, a global leader in customer service. He is considered one of the world's foremost authorities on all aspects of customer service, and is the author of several books. His monthly strategic newsletter is available online at no cost at www.customer-service.com, and he can be reached on Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter.

