

Report on **Business**

Bring thanks to a thankless culture

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The scenario

Work has been relentless - more so since the economic crisis began. Every day, we get asked to do more and are being stretched beyond capacity. Despite working tirelessly, none of us feel we have been thanked or acknowledged for our extra efforts. Any tips for how to survive work in a thankless culture?

The advice

Appreciation and recognition are powerful engagement drivers. They can fuel optimism and resilience, especially during tough economic times, when people are under so much stress. It is unfortunate that your organizational culture isn't fostering a spirit of appreciation, but don't give up. There are things you can do on your own and with others to build a more appreciative [work environment](#).

Appreciation ambassadors

Rather than relying on or waiting for the whole company to adopt a culture of appreciation, foster it within your own team and/or those you interact with regularly. Identify like-minded colleagues and start a conversation that asks, "How can we work together to create a culture of respect and appreciation?"

Here are some ideas to get you started:

Positive generates positive

Researchers from Harvard University and the University of California, San Diego, found that happy people attract other happy people. So if your team models positive, affirming behaviour, it will attract positive behaviour in others. Positive behaviour can be as basic as smiling more, choosing to express the optimistic side of things and, generally, being a pleasant person to work with.

Tap the power of thank you

A thank-you goes a long way. People feel more valued and appreciated when acknowledged. Take appropriate opportunities to notice and thank people for their contribution. It can be as simple as, "Thanks for getting this done on time in a particularly busy week."

Recognize people, not tasks

Saying, "Thanks, Nadera - you were very resourceful and creative in producing this exceptional report" will go a lot further than simply saying "Great report." The former acknowledges people, who they are and their character strengths, not just the isolated task completed.

Avoid the rush frenzy

The frenzy of work and life often results in a culture of rush. No sooner do we complete one achievement than we're off to climb another mountain or put out the next fire. This can give a sense of devaluing the accomplishment. Take the time to recognize milestones and completion of significant tasks. This sense of accomplishment will energize people to take on the next milestone.

Celebrate success

Successes come in all shapes and sizes. Find ways to celebrate different occasions to keep the team energized. Perhaps it's pizza for the team that contributed to a successful [new business](#) pitch; or a cake for completing a major milestone in a complex project; or a card to an individual who found a way to do something better, faster and cheaper.

There are many small ways to make a big difference in the lives of hard-working employees. The key is to meaningfully pause, note and acknowledge.

Spread the word

Why keep the impressive efforts and successes of others a secret? Many people find it rewarding to be acknowledged publicly among their colleagues.

You need not wait for formal awards. Send an e-mail to a group, team or the whole company highlighting someone's achievement. Or acknowledge it in a meeting. This will powerfully amplify a sense of appreciation and reputation gain for the person being recognized.

Acknowledge yourself

Don't forget to give yourself the appropriate pat on the back from time to time to keep your own resilience and energy up. Large or small, the differences you make count.

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