

A WEEK IN *Learning*

Appreciation: More Than a Buzzword

Lara Tardo, Lead Learning and Development Consultant

“Everyone wants to be appreciated. So if you appreciate someone, don’t keep it a secret.”

– Mary Kay Ash

As I celebrate my six-year anniversary with Goodwill, I reflect back on how much receiving appreciation, and feeling valued, throughout the years has affected me. When I first started here, I really didn’t have a solid grip on what thrift retail entailed. I began my learning through “deep dive” shadowing in stores, observing classes – the whole nine yards! I really wanted to make an impact right away. During my learning process, I was tasked with creating training materials for the retail store managers. My leader at the time was there for me through every step, showing her appreciation and believing that I could make a difference. With her encouragement and support, I was able to effectively complete the training documents, along with a structured path for continued learning. I truly felt like I had the foundation I needed to succeed and grow.

How often do you feel valued or appreciated? If you don’t, how does that affect your work? According to a BambooHR study on workplace deal breakers, “82% of employees don’t think they’re recognized for their work as often as they deserve.” If team members feel like their work is not being recognized, they may take it as a “deal breaker” and choose to leave. Today, there are so many choices of where team members can work, so showing appreciation becomes more important than ever. This means we need to make a continuous effort to build each other up. We should strive to make this part of our regular routine, not just when morale is low or just at a certain time of the year. Remember, actions speak louder than words – make sure they match what you say.

Some easy ways to demonstrate appreciation at work are:

- Send YouEarnedIt points (YEI) – we all receive points that we can give out to other team members
- Be precise with your ‘thank you’. Those two words hold more meaning if you expand on them
- Surprise a team member with their favorite treat, such as a candy bar or coffee



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- Open up opportunities for your team members to take on new challenges, or ask them for their expertise on something you are working on
- Recognize team members for their accomplishments in front of others.

These simple demonstrations can go a long way in changing our relationships and interactions with others. Some benefits to showing appreciation, for both the giver and the receiver, include:

- A better overall well-being
- Stronger relationships
- Effective collaboration on the team
- Improvement of job satisfaction and productivity
- A better feeling of trust between team members
- Increased retention and loyalty

These details may seem too small to make an impact on someone, *but they aren't*. In fact, they are the complete opposite. Making sure team members feel valued is a critical component to any job. So, my challenge for you is to think of how you can make someone feel appreciated today. Even the smallest display of appreciation is worth the effort.

“Treat employees like they make a difference and they will.”

– Jim Goodnight, CEO SAS

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