RECOGNIZING AND APPRECIATING EMPLOYEES

BEST PRACTICES FOR PEOPLE MANAGERS

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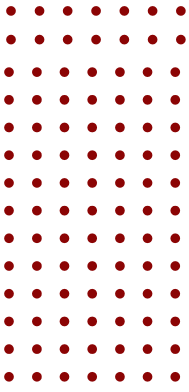
WELCOME!

Recent Cornell University survey results indicate, "lack of recognition for my work" is one of the top three factors contributing to an employee's dissatisfaction.

Cornell recognizes the correlation between a positive employee experience and retention. Within this booklet are resources to support people managers in creating a culture where employees know their work is valued. Designed to provide you with best practices, please use these tools to help guide you through recognizing and appreciating employees in a personalized and meaningful way.

Review actions you can immediately start which will help with building a culture of appreciation within the work Team. Bring your own leadership style!

The second section provides guidance on how you can understand what is most meaningful to each individual employee to recognize them in a way they feel most valued.

CHECK IT OUT!

Cornell provides many tools managers can use to **formally** recognize employees, including the **Appreciation Recognition Portal**, which can be found on the Working at Cornell web pages.

Section 1: Creating a Culture of Recognition and Appreciation

The following are some steps managers can take with their Teams to help create a strong culture of appreciation and recognition. These are developed in response to feedback employees have shared in employee experience surveys, as well as, best practice research.
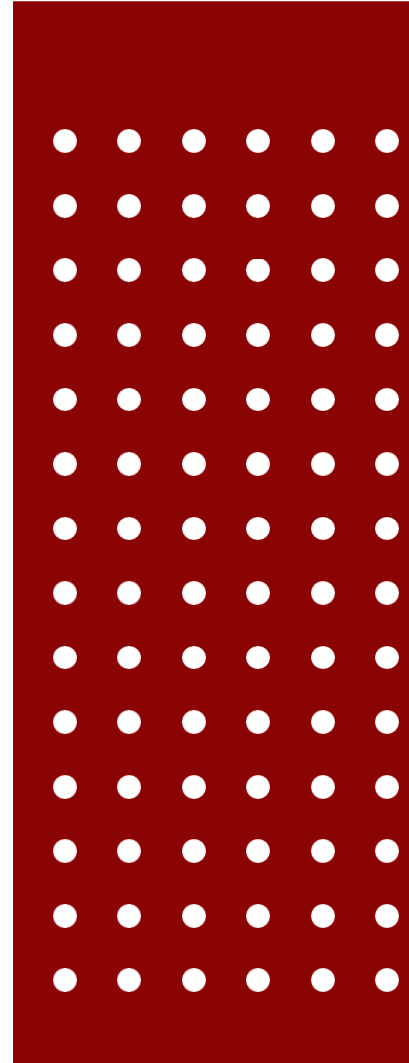
- Include recognition and/or appreciation during your regular individual and team meetings. Put 15 minutes on calendar (recurring) to take action! Write down Team member success or progress on specific projects in action to intentionally call out.
- Make sure everyone on your team receives recognition regardless of band level, function, or work location (onsite vs. remote).
- Share Cornell Culture of Appreciation & Recognition and Employee Events and encourage staff to tap in and attend.
- Encourage team members to recognize each other.
- Consider unique strengths and skills of each member of your team and acknowledge these as you assign them work (e.g., I put you on the project team because they will really benefit from your great analytical skills).
- Be transparent when able to. Regularly ask employees what they think and involve them in the decision-making process whenever you can.
- Really listen and seriously consider what your employees are saying. Let them know you're hearing them (e.g., I was thinking about what you said during our meeting …). Say "thank you" and share specific details (e.g., "I want to thank you for furthering the ABC project. This project is going to help our students feel more valued.").
- Brag about your staff - especially to your peers and leadership.
- Create your own recognition program specific to your department, team, and goals. This can be low-no cost and can be fun/humorous (e.g., "Golden Banana Award").
- When asking an employee to take on extra work, acknowledge you are adding to their plate, ask them if there is anything you can do to support them, thank them, and discuss the possibility of a financial reward with your HR Rep, if appropriate.
- Recognize everyone who contributed to any degree when it comes to team wins. e.g. The data analyst who always provides timely and reliable reports to further projects.
- Personalize recognition based on individual preferences (see Section 2).
- Be consistent, persistent and follow through!

Section 2: Individualizing Recognition

It is important to understand how each of your employees want to be recognized and what will resonate most with them. This may be very different from employee to employee, for example, some may feel embarrassed or uncomfortable with public recognition, whereas others may really enjoy it. The following resources will help you to understand what is most meaningful for each of your employees.

How do I find out ways my staff like to be recognized?

- Ask each employee about their recognition and appreciation preferences. They know themselves best!
- Schedule a 15-minute meeting with each employee (can be during your regular one-on-one) and share in advance your goals toward recognition (see Appendix A for suggestions)
- Select 3-5 open ended questions you would like to ask each employee (see Appendix B & Appendix C for ideas)
- Practice asking the questions before the meetings to increase your comfort level

How can I have a successful conversation?

- Start the conversation by thanking individuals for the work they do
- Listen without judgment
- Be flexible in your thinking (no automatic no's). This is a brainstorming, knowledge sharing conversation. Be curious and open minded.
- Avoid becoming defensive, you are seeking first to understand ·so you'll need to remove your ego from the conversation
- Use the Notes Template to record responses (Appendix D)
- Wrap up by summarizing what you heard during the conversation. Offer your availability if some items were difficult or follow up conversations are needed - that's OK!
- Follow through. Thank employee for honesty knowing this builds trust
- Immediately recognize with points in Appreciation Portal.

Note: Schedule conversations with new hires within the first 90 days of hire.

Appendix

Appendix A: Introducing the Recognition and Appreciation Conversation Concept – A Customizable Script

Dear X,

I wanted to take a moment to let you know how much I appreciate you and the work that you do for our team and Cornell. I want to make sure I am showing my appreciation by recognizing you and your contributions in a way that is meaningful to you. I'd like to learn how you want to be recognized and what I can do to help you feel valued and appreciated.

During the next few weeks, I'll be scheduling time with each of you to discuss what types of recognition you most appreciate, including the timing and format (public, private, written verbal, etc).

I'd also like to think about and discuss ways we, as a team, can meaningfully celebrate our successes together and recognize each other.

Note: *Sharing the concept of recognition and appreciation conversations during an all staff meeting where everyone will be hearing about it directly from you can be a good way to introduce the topic to your direct reports.*

Appendix B: Recognition Questions

Recognition Questions

Receiving Recognition

- What type of recognition is most meaningful to you? (e.g., verbal, written,)
- What can I do better with the recognition I give you?

Preferred Timing

- Am I giving you recognition in a timely manner?

Preferred Delivery

- Who do you most prefer to be recognized by? (e.g., manager, peers, leadership) Who specifically?
- What type of written recognition do you prefer best? (e.g., written note, email, text, social media, etc.)

Preferred Setting

- Would you prefer to be recognized privately or publicly?
- Is a strictly 1:1 experience the best way to recognize you?
- How do you feel about being recognized in front of your team members or department?
- How do you feel about being recognized in a large group or more formal recognition ceremony?

Retention

- How valued and appreciated do you feel based on the work you do and the contributions you make?
- Does the recognition you get from me, as your manager, and the university overall make you want to stay at Cornell?
- What can I do to improve the recognition you do or do not receive?

Appendix C: Appreciation Questions

Types of Appreciation: Questions by Category

Words of Affirmation*

Leveraging written or spoken language to celebrate an individual

- Have you received a verbal affirmation from a manager or colleague recently? If so, what did they say? How did you feel?
- Can you recall a time within the past few weeks when you verbally affirmed a coworker? If so, what did you say? How did they respond to your affirmation?
- What type of verbal affirmation impacts you the most? What types do you not prefer?

Quality Time *

Receiving someone's complete and focused attention

- How do you define quality time?
- On a scale of O–1O, how important is it for you to receive quality time with your manager? Your coworkers?
- What types of quality time do you enjoy? Does what you prefer depend upon whether it is with your supervisor or team members?

Acts of Service *

Performing small acts that can support, remove barriers, or bring happiness to someone

- How important to you are acts of service, on a scale of 1 to 1O?
- What is an act of service someone could do that would help make your work go more smoothly?
- When someone is helping you on a task, what is important to you about how they help you? What should they do (or not do)?

Tangible Gifts *

Sharing gifts that reflect your employees' or colleagues' interests, passions, and preferences

- On a scale of O–1O, how important to you is receiving gifts?
- If you said 7 or above, what kind of gifts do you most appreciate?
- What gifts have you received from coworkers or your supervisor in the past year? Which ones really "hit the mark" for you?
- What ideas do you have for new or different types of gifts that people in your workplace might enjoy?

Tangible Tokens

- What is your favorite food, drink, treat or snack?
- How do you like to spend your free time? (hobbies, interests, favorite things to do, etc..)
- Do you enjoy eating out? What is your favorite restaurant?

Work Related

- If you could have lunch with anyone at Cornell, who would it be and why?
- What types of professional development are you most interested in?
- What interesting projects or opportunities would you like to be involved in?
- How can I best support your career aspirations?

*Content adapted from Dr. Paul White's book, *5 Languages of Appreciation in the Workplace*

Appendix D: Notes Template (fillable)

Name: _____

Preferred Recognition	Likes	Dislikes

Notes: thoughts & recognition ideas