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How to Build Buy-In By Saying 'Thank You'

Three steps to prioritizing and showcasing gratitude as a team grows.

Gideon Kimbrell Published 1:00 pm EST, Tuesday, January 7, 2020



“Please” and “thank you” are among the first phrases we learn as children. As adults in a fast-paced world, those words are easy to forget. That’s especially true in business, where making goals often is prioritized more than making connections. Don’t think like this.

People need a leader who supports and appreciates them. Leaders won’t grow their companies without realizing how to show gratitude. Recognition and support from leadership are two of today’s most important factors for retention, according to Deloitte’s [Talent 2020 survey](#). Though it sounds simple, it’s not. Leading with

gratitude requires mindfulness and attention. It's an intentional experience, not a passive one.

The Older You Are The Less Narcissistic You Are



Self-absorbed people often remain narcissistic over their lifespan than naturally empathetic people, according to William J. Chopik Ph.D., an assistant professor at Michigan State University.

At my company, I make a conscious effort to thank my team daily for their efforts, and I'm specific about highlighting exactly what they did to make me thankful. A mere, "Thanks for all you do" won't suffice. To give a team member a better sense of appreciation, I might say, "Thank you for delivering that presentation deck before the deadline. It will help us secure this client." Showing how they're contributing to the bigger picture is key.

Related: 3 Reasons You Should Adopt An Attitude of Gratitude

Leaders who adopt a mindset of gratitude might be taken aback by the results. We've seen quite a few benefits from consciously and proactively prioritizing appreciation for our people. For one, there's less stress in the office when people feel valued. By fostering an environment of connectivity and belonging, people are less on edge -- even when they know they might miss a deadline. It makes for a close-knit, happy place to be.

The team is more productive as a whole, and folks don't hesitate to work outside normal hours -- often without being asked -- because they know how much we

appreciate those contributions. Team members have higher levels of confidence and self-esteem, which has led to the launch of new and innovative projects. The best part about those projects has been the willingness of team members to learn new skills and work in new areas as they feel more confident in their abilities. The gratitude leads to gratification.

With that, we've seen how team members are more open to discussing problems and suggesting solutions when issues arise. Previously, they would keep those problems to themselves for fear of discipline. But because we build trust through signs of gratitude, team members feel more confident about admitting when something has gone wrong and finding answers to fix it.

To cultivate a team that's motivated to do good work, develop a gratitude mindset by following these three steps.

1. Praise more than the best performers.

Everyone deserves a little praise, whether it's the sales rep who just closed a big deal or the secretary who keeps things in order as the company gets off the ground. Be sure to let everyone know that their contributions, no matter how big or small, are appreciated as the business starts to scale. At my company, I go around the office regularly and celebrate the things my people are doing well. I might pull a team member aside and thank them for assisting a colleague with an issue, or I might simply let a person know that an idea that didn't make it into the end product was still a great brainstorming contribution.

On every team, there will be those who are more skilled than others. Don't give them all the praise -- this might make one person happy, but it could upset the group. Everyone on your team deserves recognition and praise regularly, not just after milestone goals are met: **Three-quarters of workers** in the United States, United Kingdom and Australia say engagement and morale would improve in their companies if leaders simply thanked them for their efforts, a survey from Reward Gateway found. According to another study by Appirio, **60 percent of workers** reported valuing appreciation more than promotions or bonuses. Let that be a lesson that showing gratitude can have a major impact.

2. Create opportunities to give back.

Lending a hand to the less fortunate is a surefire shortcut to instilling gratitude in just about anyone. Around the holidays, we try to round up team members to volunteer at soup kitchens and homeless shelters. Not only does it make us thankful for all that we have, but it also provides a service to those in need. But you don't have to wait until a special occasion to make an impact on the community you serve. Charity runs, for example, are great for both building camaraderie with a new group and supporting a cause. Similar events such as donating blood can also help create feelings of gratitude while recognizing ways you can help others.

Corporations such as **Google and Facebook** have donated hundreds of millions of dollars to charitable causes, but your donations don't need to be as extravagant. A little can go a long way toward showing your employees, your customers and the communities you serve that your company cares about more than the bottom line. Being proactive about giving back also shows you have good intentions, bringing in more cause-oriented customers and helping your company grow.

3. Appreciate more than your people.

As a business leader, it's easy to turn the focus toward developing products and other pursuits that turn a profit. That is, after all, the key to staying in the game. But it shouldn't be the only priority. Letting customers know that they're not taken for granted is crucial to maintaining a healthy business. **Nearly two-thirds** of clients who don't re-up with a small business partner say they leave because they don't feel valued, according to a survey by the U.S. Small Business Administration. That should be a sobering wake-up call to leaders that it takes more than a focus on profits to keep a company afloat.

I've found that small gestures can fortify relationships in a big way. I send my clients birthday and holiday cards to let them know I care about more than just making a sale. Take the time to tell your customers that you enjoy being on this journey with them. The same applies to mentors, investors, board members, and suppliers. Even a nice email from time to time lets your clients know that you value their time and support, and view them as more than walking, talking dollar signs.

Related: [Why Gratitude Is Your Key To Customer Growth And Retention](#)

As your company grows, don't forget the people who helped get your organization where you want it to be. Building a company takes time and energy, and the best way

to keep things on course is to let your helpers know their contributions to the end goal are valued.

Thank you for reading this article.

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