



Gratitude: Giving Thanks Now and Throughout the Year

This time of year can often evoke feelings of gratitude and appreciation, and at the National Leadership Consortium, we feel it too! We are tremendously thankful for the opportunities that we have had to work with so many wonderful leaders since 2006 and look forward to the continued opportunity to impact leaders, organizations, and systems in years to come. But as an organization focused on leadership development, we would be remiss not to recognize that this time of year should not be the only time we and others express gratitude. Research by the Greater Good Science Center at UC Berkeley shows that gratitude can lead to strengthened relationships, more prosocial, generous, and kind behaviors, and can improve work climates. Despite this, research shows that gratitude, recognition, and praise are often not part of organizational culture. In one Gallup study, *only one in three workers in the U.S. strongly agreed that they received recognition or praise for doing good work in the past seven days*. If recognition and appreciation are such significant facilitators of employee engagement, this research is troubling.

Giving meaningful thanks, not just this time of year but throughout the year, is good for you. It improves wellbeing, reduces stress, builds resilience, and can make you more patient. Gratitude has also been shown to help increase organizational and individual performance. As we look to 2024, here are some ways you can promote gratitude in your teams and organization throughout the year.

November 22, 2023

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To learn more about gratitude at work, visit these links:
[Giving Thanks at Work](#)
[Ways to Show Gratitude](#)
[Gratitude at Work](#)
[Cultivate Gratitude](#)

Share Meaningfully: Recognition is a great step towards gratitude, but it does not always achieve the same thing. Recognition is a way to acknowledge accomplishments whereas gratitude is about the whole person and what they bring to their role or to your team and organization. Gratitude should not be a one-size-fits-all approach but should be constructed with the unique attributes, skills, and strengths that each person brings in mind. Be genuine in your thanks.

Be Consistent: Although gratitude can come most naturally this time of year, creating a culture of gratitude requires it to be shared frequently and freely. Set an example of this to your team and others by expressing gratitude often. Perhaps you build in a time of gratitude to team meetings or create a space for others to share gratitude such as a 'gratitude wall' or webpage. Whatever way you set this up, be sure it does not fizzle out after the holiday season ends.

Be Specific: Nowadays, most emails we send and receive end with some sentiment of 'thank you'. This has caused it to lose some of its impact and a simple thank you is not always enough in the workplace. Be specific with what you are thankful for and how it impacted the team, organization, goals, etc.

Be Discriminate: Take time to understand the differences between people when you are sharing gratitude. Some appreciate public comment, while others might prefer intimate one-to-one meetings or a card or email to receive thanks. By recognizing and acting in accordance with people's preferences, the gratitude will have much more of an impact.