

Do you use one of the most powerful management tools?

Providing recognition. Showing appreciation. Conveying thanks. Do we as managers do this often enough? Probably not.

One of the most powerful management tools is also the most under-utilized management tools: **SHOWING EMPLOYEE APPRECIATION.**

Having worked with thousands of managers over the years in workshops and coaching, I have learned there are three common assumptions in this area.

Assumption #1: Too frequently we assume that people are motivated only by money, job security and promotions. While we should never minimize the importance of those factors on employee morale and retention, the key questions to ask yourself are:

- Even though they are powerful factors - how much control do I really have over wages, job security and promotional opportunities anyway? *(Probably not much in the scheme of things.)*
- How long-lasting is the motivational impact of those factors on a day-to-day basis? *(Even though there is initial impact - the "warm fuzzy feeling" probably wears off pretty quickly.)*

Assumption #2: Too frequently we assume employees already know we appreciate what they do. They get a paycheck, don't they? Be careful to avoid the trap of assuming it's enough. People need to receive recognition in ways beyond the impersonal paycheck. You might be surprised to learn how many employees are starving for a little positive feedback about their work.

Assumption #3: Too frequently we assume that providing recognition is an expensive and time-consuming task. Not so! It is often the little things that have the most impact. Here are eight easy, inexpensive ways to get started:

- Send an Email identifying a specific act or result
- Write a quick word of thanks on a post-it note
- Give inexpensive gift certificates for accomplishments: coffee, car wash, frozen yogurt, etc.
- Give a favorite food item: bagel, pizza, candy bar, soft drink, etc.
- Write a hand-written card or thank you note
- Share credit for an accomplishment - highlight individual contributions to a group effort
- Ask for an opinion or input
- Take someone with you on your coffee break to chat about their contribution

Are you using this powerful tool often enough? Challenge yourself to regularly let people know that you appreciate what they do. Find ways to help employees see that their work makes a difference. You'll be amazed at the results.