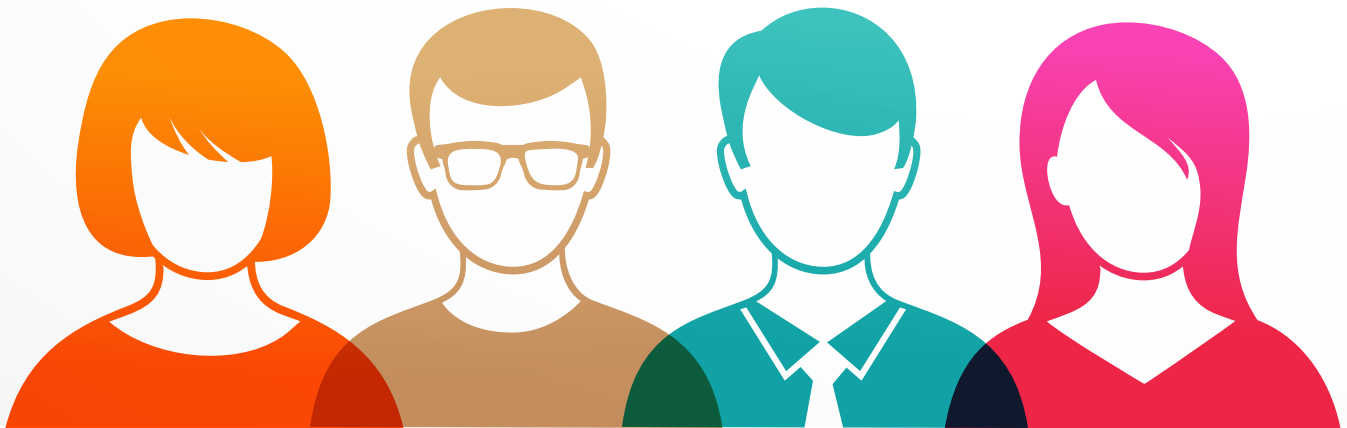




# TRANSFORM YOUR WORKPLACE WITH GRATITUDE

*A publication by gThankYou! Employee Gifts*

*The Secret to Recruiting and Retaining a Superior Workforce,  
Increasing Profits and Having More Fun!*



# WORKPLACE GRATITUDE

*What if you could flip a switch that would allow your employees to be 31% more productive and 37% better at sales? Or push a button that brought you 3.9 times the earnings per share growth rate compared to your competitors? The power source exists, and it's already within your grasp. You just have to turn it on.*

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**“THANK YOU.”** We're taught that simple phrase from the time we learn to talk. Maybe that's why we tend to dismiss it as a perfunctory gesture, unworthy of much thought or attention. Yet what if we told you that gratitude

# WHAT IS GRATITUDE?

“Gratitude ... can measurably change people’s lives.”

- Robert A. Emmons, Ph.D.,  
professor of psychology

could be so powerful that it can bring significant positive change to your employees, your revenues and to you? It absolutely can, and it’s one of the simplest things you can do to propel your business.

“Gratitude is literally one of the few things that can measurably change people’s lives,” according to **Professor Robert A. Emmons**, who has extensively studied the power of gratitude. In a workplace setting, an environment of gratitude can make the difference between profit and loss, honesty and theft, and productivity and a less-than-desirable work ethic. How can something as simple as saying “thank you” increase your bottom line and help your employees - and you - become happier human beings? That’s what this book is about. Gratitude should be part of a company culture, and life. For true success, it needs to be expressed in both words and actions.

## THE DEFINITION OF GRATITUDE

In Latin, *gratia* means favor and *gratus* means pleasing. All words derived from these roots, including the word “gratitude,” have to do with kindness and generosity. These are spiritual principles we learn early. They are embedded in major religions and philosophical teachings across the world. The moral implications of gratitude are well documented.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines **gratitude** as “the

quality or condition of being thankful; the appreciation of an inclination to return kindness.” Think of that in terms of management. Do you, your supervisors and personnel managers seek the positive in what your employees do? Or do they point out what’s wrong and reprimand or penalize mistakes and mental lapses? This is not an “attitude of gratitude” or an “inclination to return kindness” – nor is it efficient or productive, in practical terms.

## RESENTMENT VS. GRATITUDE

The environment this type of “negative” management creates is one of resentment and fear. It’s not conducive to long-term success.

# *Gratitude should be part of a company culture, and life. For true success, it needs to be expressed in both words and actions.*

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Here is an example:

*An employee named Mary has a son who is having problems at school. Knowing that she needs to speak with a teacher, she tells her supervisor that she'll be late Monday morning, possibly by a few hours. The supervisor agrees to give her until 10:00am, but when she shows up at 11:00am, he docks her pay and files an incident report with HR, then demands that she work late to make up the time.*

*This is an example of negative management. The message sent to Mary is one that instills fear in her, not motivation to work harder. Chances are, even though she'll work additional hours that day, she will not be as productive as she would be with a positive attitude. Feeling resentful, her productivity may decline. She is also more likely to look for another job.*

## **HERE'S ANOTHER WAY TO HANDLE IT:**

*Mary asks for time Monday morning to deal with a problem her son is having at school. The supervisor asks how much time she needs, estimates it might take a little longer, and then inquires as to her flexibility to work some extra hours to make up the time, giving her multiple options. When Mary agrees, he thanks her for her understanding and wishes her good luck with her son.*

Instead of resentment, Mary now feels gratitude toward her employer. It's a reciprocal response that was brought about by an expression of gratitude from her supervisor. This is how a culture is created. In business, just as in physics, there is always an equal reaction to any action. In this case that reaction was positive. In the first example it was negative.

Can you see where gratitude makes a difference? When talking about creating a new culture of gratitude, some might ask, "Why should we care?" Instilling fear and administering penalties when a job isn't done well is an ancient and outdated business model. Studies show that companies with appreciation programs are more productive - and we can prove it. For multiple examples, please read on.

# THE SCIENCE BEHIND GRATITUDE

**“If every grateful action were suddenly eliminated, society would break apart.”**

**- Georg Simmel,  
20th century sociologist**

*“In an experimental comparison, those who kept gratitude journals on a weekly basis exercised more regularly, reported fewer physical symptoms, felt better about their lives as a whole, and were more optimistic about the upcoming week compared to those who recorded hassles or neutral life events.” (Emmons & McCullough, 2003)*

It simply makes sense that a happy employee will be more empowered than one who feels like he is getting whipped to pull a heavy wagon. But it's more than common sense. There's science behind gratitude, and real measurable effects that result in healthier employees who will work harder for your business.

**Georg Simmel**, a prominent early 20th century sociologist, believed that “If every grateful action were suddenly eliminated, society would break apart.” There are thousands of examples of survivors of catastrophes assisting others. These are the actions that bond communities. Imagine what this world would be like if we all had an “every man for himself” attitude.

*The swift, unexpected destruction in Moore, Oklahoma during a powerful tornado in May 2013 resonated with many people. One of them was Troy Albert, principal at Henryville High School in Indiana. “You saw those people who were walking, looking for their loved ones, or their pets,” he said. “They looked very dazed and confused and I remember those feelings, those exact same feelings.” His hometown, Henryville, had been struck the year before by a similar event. He did not hesitate to make the nearly*

*800-mile journey to Moore with his wife and son with much-needed supplies and thousands of dollars in gift cards from the residents of Henryville. “It was just really important for us to be able to pay it forward, because so many people had helped Henryville,” said Troy’s wife, Karen.*

It seems gratitude puts fuel in the psychic tank, so to speak. The Albert family was motivated by gratitude to repay the kindness it received. Clearly, it was gratitude - rather than indebtedness - that prompted the family to travel to Moore. Indebtedness is a negative feeling of owing a debt or favor. Gratitude is a positive feeling that results in a desire to “pay it forward” - and, once it's paid forward, the positive feeling is enhanced. Simmel called gratitude “the moral memory of mankind.” He believed gratitude serves a scientific purpose, for assistance in

“If you want to sleep more soundly, count blessings, not sheep”

- Dr. Robert A. Emmons

perpetuation of our species by helping in times of trouble. But that’s only a partial scientific explanation of gratitude.

### GRATITUDE STIMULATES THE BRAIN & BODY

Gratitude simply *feels good*, doesn’t it? There’s a scientific reason for that. When we feel gratitude, we activate a region of our brain known as the *nucleus accumbens*. That area of our brain then releases the neurotransmitter **dopamine**, which makes us feel good. It also makes us happier and healthier.

That’s right - there are real health benefits associated with gratitude, as quantified by scientists at the Greater Good Science Center at the University of California, Berkeley.

**Dr. Robert A. Emmons** is considered one of the world’s leading scientific experts on gratitude. He and his colleagues at Berkeley studied more than a thousand people from ages 8 to 80. When they asked a group to keep gratitude journals for three weeks, writing down the things for which they were grateful, an amazing thing happened. The group that kept gratitude journals experienced physical, psychological and social benefits. As reported by **Greater Good, the Science of a Meaningful Life**, the benefits were as follows:

### PHYSICAL

- A stronger immune system.
- Fewer perceived aches and pains.
- Lower blood pressure.
- A willingness to exercise more.
- Sleeping longer and feel more refreshed upon waking.

### PSYCHOLOGICAL

- Higher levels of positive emotions.
- Feeling more alert and alive.
- Experiencing more joy and pleasure.
- Feeling more optimistic and happy.

### SOCIAL

- Acting in ways consistent with being more helpful, generous and compassionate.
- Being more forgiving.
- Acting more outgoing.
- Feeling less lonely and isolated.

Further studies reinforced these results. The scientists examined a group of polio survivors and people with neuromuscular problems. Those who kept a gratitude journal were happier and more optimistic than the control group. They also fell asleep more quickly and slept more soundly. “If you want to sleep more soundly, count blessings, not sheep,” noted Dr. Emmons.

# Anyone can experience the benefits of gratitude.

## SCIENCE SHOWS US THAT GRATITUDE CAN BE TAUGHT

Anyone can experience the benefits of gratitude. You don't have to have a special propensity for it. That's according to **Professor Martin E. P. Seligman** of the University of Pennsylvania, founder of the Positive Psychology movement. Seligman believes that while it's easy to lapse into negativity, people can be taught to think more positively. Through his studies, he learned that optimists generally live healthier, more successful lives.

Science shows us that gratitude is a skill you can cultivate. The people in the scientific studies were able to channel their thoughts toward gratitude just by journaling their blessings each day. It worked because it focused the brain. The brain in turn reinforced that focus by offering a powerful and valuable reward: dopamine. This virtuous cycle creates a continuous cycle of gratitude.

Where do you fall along the gratitude spectrum? You can easily find out. The Greater Good Science Center at the University of California, Berkeley has developed a **gratitude quiz**. Or you can download the six-item **Gratitude Questionnaire** developed by Emmons, McCullough, and their colleague Jo-Ann Tsang. Also interesting and useful: the **Gratitude, Resentment and Appreciation Test (GRAT)**, developed by researcher Phil Watkins. It was designed to



Gratitude Quiz from The Greater Good Science Center

measure an individual's propensity toward gratitude by examining the traits a grateful person would exhibit.

Now that you know the science of gratitude, it's time to explore the effect of it in the workplace—and how you can use it to help employees at all levels, along with your revenue and bottom line.





# WORKPLACE GRATITUDE MAKES GOOD BUSINESS 'CENTS'

*“Americans are less likely to say ‘thanks’ on the job than anywhere else, which hurts productivity and happiness. That needs to change.”*

*- Jeremy Adam Smith,  
U.S. journalist*

**WE SAY ‘THANK YOU’ IN RESTAURANTS**, at the supermarket, in church and synagogue, and even at home – or should, at least. Why don’t we say ‘thank you’ at our jobs?

Reported Jeremy Adam Smith in May 2013, “According to a survey of 2,000 Americans released earlier this year by the John Templeton Foundation, people are less likely to feel or express gratitude at work than anywhere else. And they’re not thankful for their current jobs, ranking them dead last in a list of things they’re grateful for.”

There are a couple of points we can extrapolate from these findings. First, Americans most likely think their paycheck is their ‘thank you’ and nothing else is required. Also, unless they have a high paying job, workers likely don’t think it’s anything special. Why would I be grateful for a job that doesn’t stretch far enough to pay the bills, much less cover the nice extras? We understand. But that’s all the more reason to express our gratitude. The lens by which we view life actually affects our success. (More on that later.)

## **GRATITUDE AT WORK: MORE SMILES AND PROFITS**

For now, let’s focus on our current culture of gratitude in the workplace. If you ask employees, they’ll tell you that they feel happier and motivated when hearing the words, “thank you,” or receiving a similar acknowledgement of gratitude. But only 10% say they act on the impulse to

express gratitude on the job. By stifling that urge, they’re unconsciously creating a negative, or at best neutral, environment rather than a positive one.

It gets even more complicated. Not only don’t U.S. workers realize gratitude could have a positive effect in the workplace, but that same study revealed that 35% of workers thought that expressing gratitude might have a negative effect. They thought it might portray them as “weak” and cause their coworkers to take advantage of them.

But expressing appreciation is not a weakness. Think of how you feel when someone compliments you on a job well done. It might just prompt you to work harder and longer on the next one.

*Brad’s first day in the mailroom was hectic. There were sorting procedures*



***Not only don't U.S. workers realize gratitude could have a positive effect in the workplace, but that same study revealed that 35% of workers thought that expressing gratitude might have a negative effect.***

*to learn, and the expected timetable for deliveries. Because he was new to the job, Brad also had the added stress of learning staff names and office locations. He wanted to make a good first impression, and so spent his lunch hour studying the employee directory. But that didn't prevent his first slip-up—delivering a secretary's package to the CEO. "It's Burnett not Brunet," said his manager. "Pay attention next time."*

### **CONSIDER INSTEAD IF BRAD'S MANAGER HAD HAD THIS REACTION:**

*"You'll get to know the staff soon enough if you work as hard as you did today. I appreciate you taking time on your lunch break to look over the employee directory."*

Would this response cause Brad to take advantage of his manager in the future? Most likely, it would have the opposite effect, prompting him to work even harder. That's because the response is empathetic; the manager has put himself into Brad's shoes. It also shows the manager noticed Brad's diligence and personal commitment to the job. Importantly, the expression of gratitude is authentic. It accurately depicts the situation, without giving Brad too much, or too little, credit.

Gratitude must be authentic in order to be effective. Imagine if you got credit for winning a big client when your team did the bulk of the work. You'd likely dismiss

the gratitude with a feeling of guilt that you were taking full credit.

If you haven't yet been convinced that (authentic) gratitude belongs in the workplace, read on. We have some thought-provoking numbers to share with you.

### **GRATITUDE'S MEASURABLE EFFECT ON THE BOTTOM LINE**

Social scientists have long studied gratitude in the workplace. The link between employee recognition, appreciation, engagement, retention and business success is well documented. Study after study reveals gratitude's astounding effect. Here are highlights of just some of the recent findings.

#### **GRATITUDE IMPROVES EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE.**

**A 2012 SHRM/Globeforce semi-annual survey** found that employee recognition delivers a clear return on investment (ROI) against key HR metrics including employee productivity and employee engagement. Companies with strategic recognition programs report that employees feel less frustrated and more enabled. As a result, they are more effective at achieving organizational objectives.

When employees are encouraged to both give and receive formal recognition, there's another benefit, too.



*Globoforce reports that 55% of respondents said they'd leave their current jobs to work for a company that recognized its employees.*

The environment of gratitude spills over to the customer side, increasing customer satisfaction and retention as well.

A little bit of gratitude goes a long way, as shown by this **Forbes research project in 2012**. The study found that employers who regularly thank employees substantially outperform those that don't.

### **GRATITUDE IMPROVES EMPLOYEE RETENTION.**

In the SHRM study mentioned above, Companies with employee recognition programs experienced a 22% lower turnover rate versus organizations without one. In another study by Bersin & Associates, "Companies with recognition programs that were highly effective at improving employee engagement have 31% lower voluntary turnover than their peers with ineffective recognition programs." In addition, gratitude seems to be an effective recruiting tool. **Globoforce** reports that 55% of respondents said they'd leave their current jobs to work for a company that recognized its employees.

That's good news because, as you know, employee turnover is expensive. The average cost of replacing an employee amounts to 20% of that person's annual salary. That includes recruiting, training and even lost work time while the position is vacant. At one to two percent

of payroll, gratitude is a relatively low cost way to keep employees at your business.

### **GRATITUDE IMPROVES TEAMWORK.**

Psychologists Adam Grant and Francesca Gino studied gratitude in a series of **four experiments**. While gratitude infused people with a strong sense of self-worth, it also caused employees to trust each other more. They also were more willing to help each other. If teamwork is important to your business, this is reason enough to express gratitude.

**GRATITUDE INCREASES HAPPINESS.** That makes us more resilient, and resistant to stress and illness. Greater Good Science Center Science Director Emiliana Simon-Thomas **analyzed data** from interactive gratitude journals. She found that the act of expressing gratitude in journals significantly increased people's happiness. Just two weeks of daily entries also boosted other qualities associated with wellbeing. For example, the group reported fewer headaches, stomachaches, coughs or sore throats, less congestion and less stress.

Shawn Achor would not be surprised to hear that. In his TED Talk, "**The Happy Secret to Better Work**," Achor explains that the lens through which we view life determines our happiness, and our level of happiness determines our success. He believes our brain in positive

## *Cultivating a culture of workplace gratitude is a process that needs to start at the top and work its way through the ranks of your employees.*

mode performs significantly better than when we're negative or even neutral. That release of dopamine turns on learning centers in our brains that allow us to be 31% more productive (and 37% better at sales). He calls it the "happiness advantage," and credits gratitude as part of that formula.

Researchers Julia K. Boehm and Sonja Lyubomirsky agree. Their 2008 study published in the Journal of Career Assessment used three different types of scientific studies to determine the relationship between happiness and career success. They determined that happiness precedes career success and that positive emotions lead to improved workplace outcomes.

### **GRATITUDE INCREASES YOUR BOTTOM LINE.**

It makes sense. When you have employees who are more engaged and productive, willing to work together toward mutual goals—employees who are loyal to your company and even take less time off for illness, it will show positively in your bottom line. Showing appreciation for your customers, similarly, will keep them coming back for future purchases and/or services—further growing your profitability.

### **HOW TO CREATE A CULTURE OF GRATITUDE**

Cultivating a culture of workplace gratitude is a process that needs to start at the top and work its way through

the ranks of your employees. In other words, gratitude won't be sustained in a workforce that habitually has avoided it—unless the boss sets the example and continues to do so.

*When the Employee of the Month program was first announced, workers got excited. The winning staff member would get the closest parking spot for a month, and one lunch out with the boss. But with the boss traveling so much, and tied up in so many meetings, it became a difficult program to sustain. So the chosen employee got a gift card to a local restaurant instead. It soon became the office joke, as in "I'm going out to lunch without the boss."*

So how do you create an authentic, strategic gratitude program that works for your company? You make it realistic. One set of guidelines to consider is from SHRM/Globoforce. These groups offer the following components of successful strategic gratitude programs:

- It is tied to your core values and goals.
- It can be measured, recorded and analyzed.
- It is universal, consistent and centralized for easy reporting.

We'll add one more component. Get feedback from your employees to see how it's working. Then, adjust as necessary.



# HERE ARE SOME IDEAS TO GET YOU STARTED!

## INITIATE A 'THANK YOU' NOTE PROGRAM.

Ask employees to write notes to acknowledge a job well done. Encourage them to write notes to customers thanking them for their business. Remember to start from the top; the first notes should come from the boss. And while these notes could be emails, think of the additional effect they'd have if they were handwritten.

HR TIP

*Print a set of company 'thank you' cards and display them prominently in high-traffic areas. Encourage employees to post their cards on a company bulletin board.*

## LOOK FOR OPPORTUNITIES TO CELEBRATE ACHIEVEMENTS.

Many businesses get their employees together to celebrate birthdays. But face it; a birthday isn't an achievement. Develop a list of achievements tied to the company's goals, and then thank the people who helped the company reach them. This could be as simple as recognition at a staff meeting or a more extensive celebration or bonus.

HR TIP

*Remember to thank the people who don't usually get thanked, e.g. your janitorial or support staff. Recognizing their contribution to the company's success can earn you a lifetime of loyalty*

## IMPLEMENT A PEER-TO-PEER RECOGNITION PROGRAM.

The boss isn't the only one who should be expressing gratitude. Make sure that your employees have ample opportunity to recognize their peers. Implement a formal recognition program with clear instructions on how to recognize staff members. Encourage participation with great rewards. Ask your employees for ideas.

HR TIP

*Rewards don't have to be expensive. Getting to leave the office early is a much-appreciated perk.*

## ASK FOR COMPLIMENTS INSTEAD OF COMPLAINTS.

The outcome may not have been on target. But you can still appreciate the intent behind the gesture. Initiate a program where employees deliver a compliment at every staff meeting.

HR TIP

*Model the behavior outside meetings until it becomes part of the company culture.*

## INVEST IN EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT.

Employees feel valued when the company provides opportunities for growth and development. Say 'thank you' for your hard work and interest in X, Y, Z, with a chance to learn more.

HR TIP

*Consider a mentoring program where employees mentor each other in different areas.*

## INVOLVE YOUR EMPLOYEES IN DECISION MAKING AND PROBLEM-SOLVING.

Not only will they provide their unique perspectives, this gives you the perfect opportunity to say thanks for helping.

HR TIP

*It may seem obvious, but what better time to involve employees than in decision making on the employee appreciation program?*

## KEEP THE LINES OF COMMUNICATION OPEN.

Let employees know to come and see you if they don't feel appreciated. Create the kind of place where dialogue about gratitude is possible.

HR TIP

*Open the dialogue by 'checking in' with employees at all levels to get their reaction to the gratitude programs.*



# THE POWER OF THE 'THANK YOU' NOTE

*“The deepest principle in human nature is the craving to be appreciated.”*

*- William James, American philosopher and psychologist*

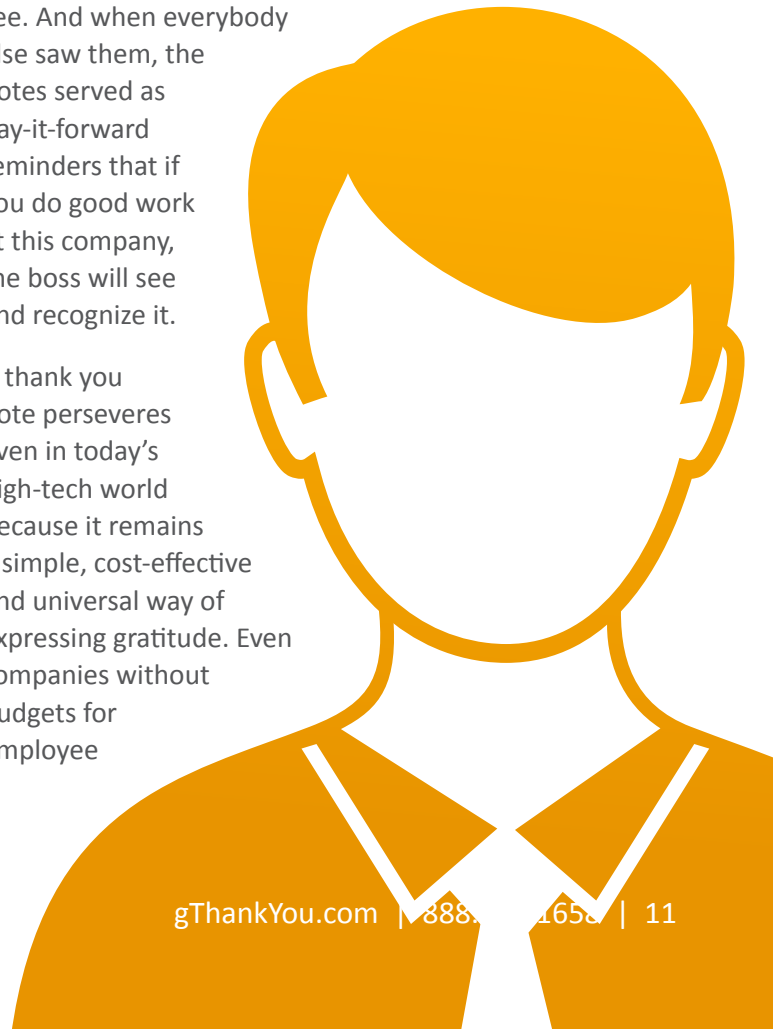
Putting gratitude in writing is powerful. It shows that you care enough to take the time to say thank you. And in this era of email and social media, a handwritten thank you is even more of a standout. Consider the experience at Campbell's Soup Company.

*Doug Conant was named President and CEO of Campbell's Soup in 2001, at a time when the company was considered “a beleaguered old brand.” He found the corporate headquarters in Camden, N.J. resembled a prison; it was surrounded by barbed wire. He also noted that employees did not seem actively engaged, a fact he confirmed when he brought in Gallup Research for an employee survey. Taking down the barbed wire was easy. Engaging the employees took a little more thought.*

*Conant began to acknowledge employee achievements through personal handwritten thank you notes. He wrote about 20 a day, congratulating employees on promotions or noting specific contributions they made to the business. The impact was powerful. Employees saw that the CEO cared enough to send the notes, and the notes generated excitement among the staff. In a way, it was like opening a present because you knew something good was inside. By the time Conant retired as CEO, he had sent more than 30,000 thank you notes. You read that correctly—30 thousand! Needless to say, Conant achieved his goal of employee engagement.*

Why did the thank you notes make such a difference? First, they acknowledged efforts and accomplishments on a deeper level than would a personal word of thanks (which of course would still very much be appreciated!). The notes communicated that an employee's effort was important; otherwise why would the boss take time out of his busy schedule to write? The notes also provided a lasting memory of appreciation. Chances are some of those employees displayed their notes proudly on their desks, perpetual reminders of that acknowledgement for them and everyone else to see. And when everybody else saw them, the notes served as pay-it-forward reminders that if you do good work at this company, the boss will see and recognize it.

A thank you note perseveres even in today's high-tech world because it remains a simple, cost-effective and universal way of expressing gratitude. Even companies without budgets for employee



## *A thank you note perseveres even in today's high-tech world because it remains a simple, cost-effective and universal way of expressing gratitude.*

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appreciation can afford to implement a thank you note program. All you need is the stationery and the will and time to write the note. (That's assuming you already have management buy-in, because no gratitude program will succeed without it.) And, as you saw with Campbell's Soup, thank you notes can be the foundation of building a culture of appreciation that translates to employee loyalty, increased productivity and lower turnover.

*Chris Patterson, CEO of Interchanges in Jacksonville, Florida, gets to know his employees' families. When he asks employees to work extra hours, he doesn't just thank them for going above and beyond. He sends a handwritten note, and sometimes a gift, to the employee's spouse or significant other, thanking him or her for being supportive. This acknowledges that working longer hours doesn't just affect the employee. You can imagine how powerful a response this type of communication can generate. As a result, there's not much employee turnover at Interchanges.*

### **HOW TO WRITE A WORKPLACE THANK YOU NOTE**

Not all thank you notes are created equal. The most effective expressions of gratitude are personalized, meaning that the notes are specific to your employee's accomplishments, personality and traits. For example: "You did a great job today!" (*Okay—but do you even know what I did?*) "You really nailed the Connolly presentation

with your enthusiastic delivery." (*Much better.*)

Before we go into the attributes of an effective thank you note, let's review the approach. Here's a basic outline you can follow until you develop your own style.

- Thank the person by name.
- Say what the person did that you appreciate.
- Include how the behavior added value for the company.
- Write the person's name again, and close with the fact you personally value the effort being recognized.

As you can see, a thank you note doesn't have to be lengthy. But it does have to be meaningful. So what makes a great, meaningful thank you? The most successful notes have these characteristics in common.

**BE SPECIFIC.** Take the time to explain exactly why you are grateful. "Thanks, Sue, for spending the extra time with Dan to explain to him the intricacies of the new spreadsheet formulas. I know the time and attention that you provided helped the company meet a demanding customer deadline." The writer could have simply said, "Thanks for your help." But the impact wouldn't have been the same.

**BE SINCERE.** The best notes are genuine expressions of gratitude. If you weren't grateful that Sue took time away from her projects to help Dan, then don't thank her. Find



another reason to express gratitude. In other words, make sure that what you're writing is true and truly helped the company. Employees will know if it's not. Empty gestures provoke empty responses.

**BE TIMELY.** Getting a note that thanks you for an action the same day conveys enthusiasm. Getting that same note weeks, or even months later, does not. If you're praising a specific incident, send your note within 24 hours to be most effective. If you're expressing gratitude for a general characteristic, such as a staff member's patient manner, you have more leeway.

**SHOW GRATITUDE EVERY DAY, AND NOT JUST ON SPECIAL OCCASIONS.** It's common to get cards on holidays, birthdays or even Boss's Day or Secretary's Day. But the thank you notes that celebrate everyday successes are the ones that promote a culture of gratitude.

### PRAISING EMPLOYEE STRENGTHS

Part of celebrating everyday successes is praising the traits of your employees that help make your business profitable. In other words, it doesn't necessarily have to be an action or accomplishment that you are highlighting. It could be your line manager's attention to detail or your secretary's ability to listen. These are behaviors that contribute to success.

"When you recognize the contributions of others, you reinforce the kind of behavior you want to see," according to Geil Browning, Ph.D., founder of Emergenetics International. "People who feel their efforts are noticed, and their work makes a difference, are more likely to go the extra mile in the future."

Thank you notes are your opportunity to praise your employees' strengths and personalities. It is your choice to highlight and praise the behaviors that you want to encourage at work.

## Here are 10 suggestions for what to write, excerpted directly from Dr. Browning and her brain-related research

- 1 The "gift of gab" is a work asset for gregarious people. You might write: "I celebrate how you share your enthusiasm," or "Thanks for keeping the lines of communication open."
- 2 For quieter people, you could say: "I prize your well-considered solutions," or "I appreciate your respectful attitude toward everyone."
- 3 For assertive people, try: "Thank you for keeping the momentum going," or "I appreciate your decisive action."
- 4 More easygoing people who want everyone to get along might appreciate: "Thank you for helping to keep the peace," or "I appreciate your amiability more than you know."
- 5 To flexible, change-seeking workers who don't get flustered easily you might write: "I recognize your easy resilience" or "Thanks for how you handled [difficult client]."
- 6 To focused staffers with strong opinions, try: "I depend on your support," or "I honor you for your convictions."
- 7 Analytical thinkers might value: "I appreciate your penetrating questions," or "I respect the depth of your knowledge."
- 8 For detail-oriented people, consider: "Thank you for transferring all that data perfectly," or "You always meet your deadlines—impressive!"
- 9 Social thinkers want to please you, so you could write: "I'm so grateful for your team building skills," or "I couldn't have done it without you."
- 10 Conceptual workers who want to feel unique might value: "Your solution to the XYZ problem was stunning," or "I treasure your creative long-term views."



# CELEBRATE GRATITUDE!

*“We often take for granted  
the very things that most  
deserve our gratitude.”*  
- Cynthia Ozick, American writer

Nearly 9 out of 10 companies offer an employee recognition program. These range from informal to formal and include everything from saying thank you to giving plaques, gifts or even vacation packages.

These programs play an important role in business success by helping attract and retain high-performing employees, report Teresa A. Daniel, J.D. and Gary S. Metcalf, Ph.D. in SHRM’s white paper, “The Fundamentals of Employee Recognition.” The researchers outlined the elements of an effective employee recognition program:

- Management commitment.
- Link to bottom-line results.
- Recognized value of awards to employees.
- Fairness/equity in distribution of awards.
- Simplicity of the program.
- Continuous evaluation/improvement.

At gThankYou, we believe there’s another important component, and that is management training. A February 2013 Worldatwork report revealed that less than 15% of organizations provide any training on employee recognition for managers. Yet these are the individuals who most likely are running your recognition program.

From management training to management commitment, a lack of any of these components could seriously undermine the positive effects of your recognition program. Consider the following examples.

*Liam was a day one employee at Company X. He had worked years to earn the right to an extra week of vacation. So perhaps that was why he was disconcerted that a co-worker won time off as part of the company’s new employee appreciation program. It didn’t help to know that she was a new hire, and that Liam had been the one to train her.*

Liam may have felt differently had he been thanked for training the new hire. That’s where gratitude becomes an important part of an employee recognition program. A simple ‘thank you’ goes a long way in acknowledging everyone who played a role in a company’s success. In addition, perhaps the reward was too great for the achievement in this example. A lunch certificate may have ruffled

**According to Gallup research, companies with world-class engagement have 3.9 times the earnings per share growth rate compared with those in the same industry with lower engagement.**

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fewer of Liam's feathers. It takes a lot longer to work for a vacation day than a free lunch.

*Mia loved staff meetings at Company Y. To build enthusiasm, the managers acted as cheerleaders, and tossed out company merchandise at random to the employees around the table. They also gave out coupons for free coffee, donuts and other treats. It's no wonder that no one missed a staff meeting. Some people even arrived early for coveted spots.*

If Company Y's intent is to boost attendance at staff meetings, they've done their job. But it seems as if they're being pretty random with their gifts. Save the free coffee coupon for another time, perhaps when you ask a department to come in early or stay late.

As we've mentioned before, gratitude has to be strategic to work for a business. Strategic recognition translates to measurable culture change, and it works at all levels of the company, according to authors Eric Mosely and Derek Irvine of *Winning with a Culture of Recognition*. Employees are rewarded and celebrated for doing great work. This teaches the connection between their daily tasks and company strategies. Managers are more effective because they know which behaviors embody the company values.

Importantly, a strategic program leads to employee engagement, and **engaged employees are one of today's most powerful competitive advantages**, reported Mosely and Irvine.

According to Gallup research, companies with world-class engagement have 3.9 times the earnings per share growth rate compared with those in the same industry with lower engagement.

## WHEN CAN YOU SAY THANK YOU?

Gratitude is good for the bottom line. And there are many opportunities to say thank you to your employees and to your customers. You'll notice that once you get into the habit of doing so, the gratitude moments will come naturally. Here are some ideas to start you off.

## SAY THANK YOU TO EMPLOYEES...

- When an employee comes in early, stays late, works additional hours at home or over the weekend.
- When a project comes in on time or ahead of schedule.
- When a project comes in on budget or under budget.
- When an employee helps another.

*Remember that a more expensive gift doesn't necessarily communicate more value. Your delivery and sincere thanks do that.*

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- When employees work together as a team.
- To celebrate a promotion.
- To highlight an employee's enthusiasm.
- For an idea that saves the company money.
- When an employee has demonstrated loyalty with time served to the company.
- For employees who offer a smile and a cheerful attitude.

### SAY THANK YOU WHEN CUSTOMERS...

- Make a substantial purchase.
- Make any purchase.
- Recommend your business to another consumer.
- Talk about you positively in social media.
- Have feedback for you, positive or negative.
- Reach annual anniversaries with your company.

In short, reward any behaviors that you want to continue with your expression of gratitude.

### THE ROLE OF GIFTS

In the 1980s, **Dr. Jordan Grafman**, while working with returning veterans at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., began to see evidence that the **subgenual area**, the same part of the brain that controls cravings for food, came alive when his subjects gave to charity. But what does that have to do with giving employee thank you gifts? It proves that gratitude is not

something that needs to be forced. It's present in all of us and simply needs to be discovered and allowed to flourish. Once located and applied, it gives the gift giver a feeling of contentment (leading to satisfaction, happiness, feelings of goodwill). That's the benefit to you – the employer.

As you've learned in this book, gratitude in many forms is effective to motivate your employees. If you choose to initiate a gift-giving program, you would layer that as one component in a strategy that also included low or no cost options. In this way, you could build your gratitude program. Consider the following:

- Being greeted by name and with a smile – thank you note
- Getting a report in early – longer lunch
- Working the weekend to meet a deadline – afternoon off
- Staying after to train a new employee – gift-certificate
- Being part of the team with the highest earnings results – free turkey to enjoy with your family

Remember that a more expensive gift doesn't necessarily communicate more value. Your delivery and sincere thanks do that. So if you want to reward the team with the highest earnings results, make sure to personally hand them their turkey gift certificates. If you wanted to announce it at a staff meeting, and have the team bow for applause, even better. To learn best practice tips for successful employee gift giving, download our **"Ultimate Guide to Employee Gift Giving."**



# THE ART OF GRATITUDE: MINI CASE STUDIES

## GOING FORWARD WITH GRATITUDE

Now you know the significant positive change that gratitude can bring to your employees, your bottom line, and to you. You've explored the science of gratitude, and learned how to incorporate it into your company culture. You are ready to flip that switch that will allow your employees to be happier and more productive, better at sales and customer service, and more engaged in your business success. Turn on the power of gratitude and watch the results. You're going to be amazed!

The following case studies prove the value of gratitude. They show companies that are successfully harnessing the power of gratitude and, as a result, taking business to the next level. Use these case studies for inspiration for your own programs. Or if you'd like to share your success story, and have it featured in an upcoming blog, contact us at [info@gThankYou.com](mailto:info@gThankYou.com).

## ROCKS & REWARDS AT SAS

The software company SAS consistently ranks among the **Fortune 100 Best Companies to Work For**. Why? The company sets aside a budget for employee appreciation and no one, including janitorial staff, is left out. Among the recognition programs are: Early Bird and Night Owl appreciation, Long-Term Service Recognition, Worldwide Information Technology Collaboration Award, and Housekeeper of the Quarter.

Employees also can recognize coworkers through Starfish Shout Outs. They can post comments on the division's Sharepoint site, send a peer-to-peer message or email

## EMPLOYEE APPRECIATION

[GreatJob@sas.com](mailto:GreatJob@sas.com) to thank a colleague for his or her efforts.

In addition, each year SAS presents the CEO Award of Excellence to 25 employees, who are flown with their spouses to the main office in Cary, North Carolina. There, they are wined and dined for several days leading up to an awards ceremony, and even given a personal tour of CEO Jim Goodnight's **famous rock collection**. Goodnight is a strong proponent of recognition; he makes it a priority to be on hand to recognize these employees.

## 6 MILLION WAYS TO SAY THANK YOU AT INTUIT

The tax preparation software company Intuit knows how to energize its employees. It allocates \$6 million for employee performance awards—everything from serious and formal to simple and fun. As a result, about 85% of employees receive at least one of the 20,000 awards in a given year.

The options range from no-cost awards to a substantial investment. In a peer-to-peer recognition program, employees can send “Take a Bow” e-cards to their colleagues, for immediate feedback for a job well done. Managers can send online awards to employees, which allow them to choose between gift cards to suppliers

## EMPLOYEE APPRECIATION

such as Amazon.com or charitable donations in their name. Employees also may choose gifts to local stores, restaurants and entertainment. For high performers, Intuit even pays for an all-expense paid trip to the destination of the employee’s choice.

The company regularly connects with employees to make sure the program meets their needs. Staff surveys show that an average of 75% of employees feel their accomplishments are recognized. Ninety-three percent say the recognition program helps motivate them to better performance.

## THE SPIRIT OF FRED AT DISNEY

Walt Disney knew the importance of making people feel special, and that included his employees (known as cast members). As a result, Walt Disney World has more than 180 recognition programs. Perhaps one of its best known is the Spirit of FRED award, with FRED being an acronym for Friendly, Resourceful, Enthusiastic and Dependable. An hourly employee first introduced the award when he recognized those who coached and mentored him. The management and staff liked it so much that it’s an integral part of Disney culture. FRED recipients get a certificate

## EMPLOYEE APPRECIATION

mounted on a plaque. Lifetime Spirit of FRED award winners receive a bronze Mickey Mouse statuette.

Employees also can send WOW! Cards, brightly colored, trifold thank you notes, to fellow staff members for their help or kindness. And when they do something ‘above and beyond,’ management recognizes it. For example, in 2004, when crews were assigned to stay at the park to help guests and cast members during several hurricanes, Disney manufactured a special pin just for them. With Disney pins always in demand, it was a powerful tool!

## ZAPPOS CREATES A HAPPINESS EXPERIENCE

A leading online retailer, Zappos.com gives its team members complete freedom to do whatever is necessary to generate a personal connection with its customers. Employees have been known to make handmade cards for a customer’s dog that was undergoing surgery. They also have sent bouquets of flowers on different occasions.

Zappos evaluates customer service agents via a 100-point Happiness Experience Form. There are metrics, such as whether agents tried twice to make personal emotional connections, and whether they kept the rapport going.

## CUSTOMER APPRECIATION

Did they provide a ‘wow’ experience? Top performers are rewarded with paid hours off. Poor performers get additional training, rather than punishment.

The company also thanks its most loyal customers with a VIP program. The program gives customers free next business day shipping and puts them ahead of other customers in the calling queue if call volume is heavy. It is such a successful program that there’s a waiting list to join.

## NORDSTROM TO THE RESCUE!

Anna,

*Thank you so much for shopping with me for your great black dress. You looked amazing! Hope you found a shrug.\**

Best,  
Bethany

\*Shrug=short cardigan commonly worn with women's evening wear

If you want to find gratitude in action, look no further than Nordstrom, which encourages its employees to send thank you notes to customers as a matter of course. In fact, Nordstrom has built its brand identity on its exemplary customer service and appreciation, from its easygoing return policy to courtesies like having a store concierge call home to let your family know you'll be late.

## CUSTOMER APPRECIATION

Not only will you get a thank you note, you also may get a phone call when a coveted item arrives at the store. The relationships between customers and employees are so strong that it's not unusual for Nordstrom's clients to buy Valentines, Easter eggs or holiday presents for their favorite salespeople.

Employees are empowered to make decisions as if it's their own business, which helps to foster those relationships. So when a businessman runs in during his lunch hour and requests a tailored suit, Nordstrom's employees make it happen. Or when a customer needs a shirt ironed, it's all in the course of a workday. Coworkers who witness a colleague giving excellent customer service are encouraged to write up a description of what they saw and submit it to their manager. Employees are honored at monthly recognition meetings.

## GRASSHOPPER DELIVERS!

When Matt Ackerson wrote about Grasshopper in a blog post, he didn't think much more about it. But Grasshopper, a virtual phone system for entrepreneurs, did more than just take notice. The company sent him a handwritten thank you note, complete with freshly baked cookies. The note came from Jonathan Kay, the company's "Ambassador of Buzz."

"I felt appreciated," said Ackerson. He also felt like he wanted to reciprocate the feeling. So he wrote a **follow-up blog** that told the story about the 'thank you.' He also posted the note for everyone to see.

## CUSTOMER APPRECIATION

Grasshopper also has sent candy to a customer, who posted a picture and said his daughters were jealous. So the company sent more candy for his daughters. "When we show customer appreciation, customers show they appreciate us," said Emma Siemasko, the company's content marketing specialist. "One goal is targeting what makes each customer tick—we try to find unique things about our customers so that when we send them gifts, it's personal." The key, she says, is to be genuine.

# REFERENCES TO LEARN MORE

Looking to delve deeper into workplace gratitude? Here are some great sources for further reading. Note that, at the time of publication, all sources were active links.

## THE SCIENCE

### **GRATITUDE POWER**

Author and researcher Dr. Robert Emmons explores the science of gratitude through study, and affiliation with the Institute for Heart Inspired Living.

<http://gratitudepower.net/science.htm>

### **GREATER GOOD SCIENCE CENTER**

Based at the University of California, Berkeley, the Greater Good Science Center sponsors groundbreaking scientific research into social and emotional well-being. The Center also helps people apply the research to their personal and professional lives.

<http://greatergood.berkeley.edu>

### **PSYCHOLOGY TODAY: GRATITUDE**

This website delves into many of the aspects of gratitude and related emotions.

<http://www.psychologytoday.com/basics/gratitude>

### **THANKS! HOW THE NEW SCIENCE OF GRATITUDE CAN MAKE YOU HAPPIER**

Robert Emmons, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2007. This book examines what it means to think and feel gratefully, and invites readers to put it in practice.

### **THE SCIENCE OF HAPPINESS – AN EXPERIMENT IN GRATITUDE**

This short video shows how being grateful can increase your happiness.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oHv6vTKD6lg>

## GRATITUDE IN THE WORKPLACE

### **1501 WAYS TO REWARD EMPLOYEES**

Bob Nelson, Ph.D., Workman Publishing Company, 2012 (reprint)  
Zappos.com CEO Tony Hsieh is quoted as saying, “this book gives readers ideas on how to inspire their employees to deliver the best performance every day—for little or no cost.”

### **GRATEFUL LEADERSHIP: USING THE POWER OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT TO ENGAGE ALL YOUR PEOPLE AND ACHIEVE SUPERIOR RESULTS**

Judith W. Umlas, McGraw Hill, 2012

Showing appreciation and gratitude can have profound and dramatic changes in our intimate circle and beyond.

### **THE HAPPINESS ADVANTAGE: THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY THAT FUEL SUCCESS AND PERFORMANCE AT WORK**

Shawn Achor, Ebury Press, United Kingdom, 2011

Harvard lecturer Shawn Achor shares the key components that can give us the competitive edge at work.

### **THE NORDSTROM WAY: THE INSIDE STORY OF AMERICA'S #1 CUSTOMER SERVICE COMPANY**

Robert Spector and Patrick D. McCarthy, Wiley, 1996

They say that Nordstrom wrote the book on customer service. Here's your chance to get the inside scoop. This is an 'oldie but goodie,' and still relevant in building a customer appreciation program.

## JUST FOR FUN

### **GRATITUDE QUIZ**

Greater Good Science Center

[http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/quizzes/take\\_quiz/6/](http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/quizzes/take_quiz/6/)

### **HAPPYRAMBLES**

This site helps you create a secure and personal online gratitude journal.

<http://happyrambles.com>

### **TEST YOUR GRATITUDE LEVEL**

Whole Living

<http://www.wholeliving.com/135624/test-your-gratitude-level>

### **THANKFULFOR**

This free online gratitude journal allows you to record the good stuff in your life.

<http://thankfulfor.com>







## ABOUT gTHANKYOU! CERTIFICATES OF GRATITUDE

At **gThankYou!**, we believe celebrating employees and customers is good business. That’s why we provide company leaders with a variety of easy, meaningful and affordable ways to recognize and reward employees, customers and clients, holiday-time or anytime.

**gThankYou! Turkey Gift Certificates** and **Turkey Or Ham Gift Certificates** are two of America’s favorite employee gifts for the holidays and can be redeemed for any brand (Turkey or Turkey Or Ham), any preparation, at virtually any grocery store in the U.S.

All gThankYou! Certificates of Gratitude come with **free custom Enclosure Cards**, which include your choice of design, your message and your company logo (if you wish). Check out our **Thanksgiving** and **Winter Holiday** design catalogs – we have dozens of designs from which to select. And, nearly all orders ship the day they are received.

We also offer free cookbooks to download and share – the **Ultimate Thanksgiving Turkey Guide** and the **Holiday Ham Guide**. Both are perfect companions to go with your thoughtful gift of a gThankYou! Turkey, Ham or Grocery Gift Certificate.

To learn more about gThankYou! Certificates of Gratitude:

- Visit Our Website – [www.gThankYou.com](http://www.gThankYou.com).
- Watch Our **“About Us” Video** featuring Company Founder Rick Kiley.
- Download Our **Free Product Guide**.
- See Our Collection of **Free Enclosure Cards** available with all purchases.
- Follow **“Celebrating Work”** – Our Company Blog.
- Join the Conversation! [@gThankYou](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Google+](#).

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