



Five Languages of Appreciation in the Workplace

RECOGNATION[®]

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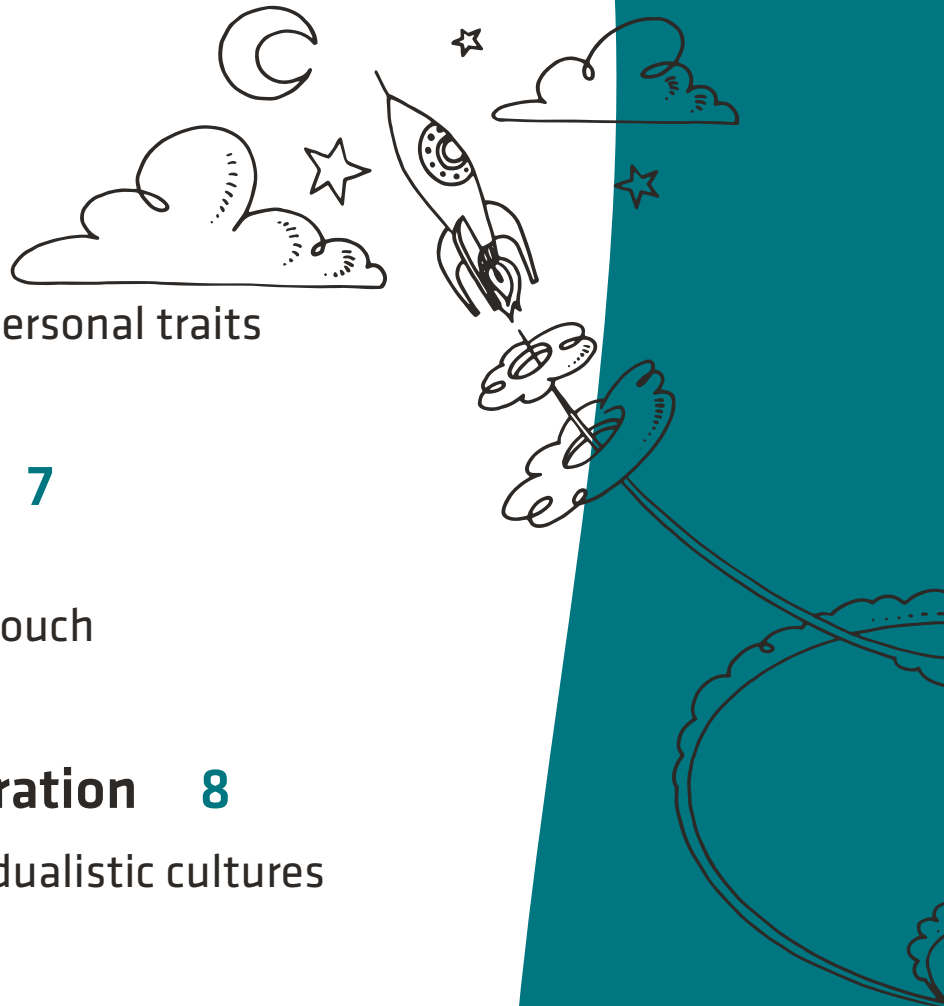
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A man with dreadlocks is sitting at a desk, looking down at a laptop. He is petting a white dog that is lying on the floor. The scene is set in a room with a potted plant on the left and framed pictures on the wall. The entire image has a teal overlay.

The Inspiration

A brief overview of The 5 Love Languages, which originally inspired the languages of appreciation in the workplace.

The 5 Love Languages®

In the 1990s, marriage counselor Gary Chapman wrote a book suggesting five different languages of communicating and feeling most loved. They are:

Words of Affirmation

Verbal expressions of love and appreciation

Quality Time

Giving another person your undivided attention

Physical Touch

Connection through appropriate physical touch

Acts of Service

Selfless, thoughtful acts that make life easier

Receiving Gifts

Tangible tokens of love and thoughtfulness



The Languages

A deep dive into five different ways to show appreciation for others at work, with concrete examples.

Words of Praise



Our first language was inspired by – you guessed it – words of affirmation. Praise is one of the best (and simplest) forms of positive feedback! It often lets people know when they are doing something right. Words of praise can be verbal or written and given one-on-one or in front of others. Get to know your employees' preferences.

Accomplishments

Organizations exist to accomplish a mission so it makes sense to praise contributions and achievements. Recognizing specific tasks or behaviors encourages employees to keep repeating them. Highlight the big wins, but don't forget to also recognize daily efforts. After all, **69%** of employees say they would work harder if they felt their efforts were better recognized.

Personal Traits

Look beyond performance to the positive personality and character traits of others. Character focuses on our inner nature (perseverance, patience, kindness) while personality is the way we approach life (optimistic, neat, intuitive). Traits aren't as easily observable as accomplishments, but they are far more important to your company in the long run.





Personal Connection

Building personal connections with others at work signals you care. Strive to know your colleagues outside of just work. Ask about their personal lives and genuinely listen. Quality time comes in handy here - Spend one on one time with others so you can give your focused attention. Weekly one on one meetings are a great opportunity for this. You can also lean into team bonding and working in teams in general. Frequently interacting with co-workers while working toward one mission can sustain connections and make people feel very appreciated.



Note: Physical touch can build connections in the workplace, whether it's a high five, firm handshake, or even a hug. However, it is important to keep in mind some people are uncomfortable with physical touch in work settings. Observe the behavior of colleagues to determine if they might feel uplifted by appropriate touch.

Mentorship & Collaboration



Like acts of service, mentorship and collaboration are ways of showing you care rather than saying it. Experienced employees can mentor and teach those that are younger or newer. As a manager, share knowledge with and guide your direct reports.

It's also great to use knowledge to collaborate with peers. You don't have to be in a leadership position above someone else to impact them. Just be sure to ask if help is wanted before jumping in. Oftentimes people want to learn from those around them. And helping others grow is a strong way to express appreciation.

Note: Many work settings have an individualistic culture. People have clear roles and are responsible for completing their own tasks. Break down cultures of individual progress and work together to help each team member succeed.



Awards



An award is typically a tangible form of employee appreciation used to thank an individual for their contribution or accomplishment. They can be accompanied by certificates, trophies, kits, monetary rewards, etc. Awards can often be split into two categories: Milestones and nominations.

Milestones

The most common milestones celebrated at organizations are service anniversaries. They provide yearly opportunities to thank employees for their loyalty and years of hard work. Elevate big career milestones (every 5 years) with a larger gift and/or a celebration if possible. Not a single service anniversary should ever go unnoticed.

Nominations

Whether they are big or small, nomination-based awards also highlight daily efforts and dedication. If your company has a nomination program, you can recognize an employee that is living out a core value. They will feel seen, and this helps further instill those values into your culture. Bigger awards that are given out once a year are also a chance for front line employees and managers to nominate others and express gratitude.

Pleasant Surprises



Surprises can bring a lot of joy. Sometimes the unexpected gifts or treats are the most exciting and thoughtful. They don't have to be elaborate or expensive. The possibilities are endless when it comes to creating a pleasant surprise at work.

- **A favorite snack left on their desk**
- **Treats for the whole team on Friday**
- **An afternoon of team activities**
- **Updated office equipment**
- **eCards or GIFs**
- **A free team lunch**
- **An extra day of PTO**
- **Bonuses around the holidays**
- **Random gift based on interests**
- **Custom company swag**

A light blue illustration of a pushpin pinned to a piece of paper. The paper has the text "Thanks for your help!" written on it.

Thanks
for your
help!

Whenever you can, try to throw in a handwritten note. Detail why you appreciate the person/team or what you are specifically thanking them for.

What's Next?

We help organizations create a program within their budget that has a holistic approach to recognition. We've got everything from formal service awards to a digital platform.

We love enabling organizations to shine a light on all the moments that matter. Let's partner together!



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