



# Showing people how much they are valued



THE INSTITUTE OF  
**LEADERSHIP**  
& MANAGEMENT

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**This advice is an output from the Institute's 2019 research report 'New Year – is it time for a new job?'. The research revealed that many workers feel underappreciated and have more to offer in their current roles. 29% told us their managers don't seem to value the contribution they make. This dissatisfaction is one of the reasons they look for new jobs causing businesses to lose talent which, they have not only invested in, but it is also costly to replace. <sup>1</sup>**

**We asked leaders and managers around the UK for some practical advice on how to show their employees how much they are valued. These guidelines are based on their collective experience and wisdom.**

1. The Institute of Leadership & Management (2019). "New year – is it time for a new job?" [www.institutelm.com/resourceLibrary/NewYearNewJob.html](http://www.institutelm.com/resourceLibrary/NewYearNewJob.html)

DEMONSTRATE VALUE TO EMPLOYEES

## NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF SAYING THANK YOU

A report on employee engagement by TINYpulse (2014) shows that 70 per cent of employees credit their colleagues for creating an engaging environment, as opposed to perks and amenities.<sup>1</sup>

Lack of recognition can contribute to high turnover. “Employees want to work for an organisation that not only values their work but that shows them appreciation” and showing gratitude for a job well done improves the feeling of being recognised. Saying “Thank you” can go a long way toward improving employees’ perceptions of the workplace but acknowledging why you’re grateful can have an even more powerful impact. Saying “Thank you for working on the weekend,” for example, recognises the action of the individual, but adding, “You really helped us meet this tight deadline,” is even more powerful because it highlights the reason the action was important and reinforces the positive behaviours you want to encourage in the organisation.<sup>2</sup>

Saying “Thank you” needs to be specific and authentic, but remember that not everyone likes to be thanked in public; a simple email, sharing a cup of coffee, or a word in private to show your appreciation may be all that is required to inspire the people around you.

1. TINYpulse (2014). “Employee Engagement and Organizational Culture Report”  
[www.tinypulse.com/2014-employee-engagement-organizational-culture-report](http://www.tinypulse.com/2014-employee-engagement-organizational-culture-report)

2. Evans, L. (2015). “Why Saying ‘Thank You’ Is More Important Than Giving Employees a Raise”  
[www.entrepreneur.com/article/249933](http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/249933)

## NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF SAYING THANK YOU



“Never miss an opportunity to say ‘thank you for the great work’”



“Publicly and properly thank them for their efforts”

## DEMONSTRATE VALUE TO EMPLOYEES

### LISTEN TO WHAT YOUR PEOPLE WANT

Positive interactions impact on employee satisfaction and retention. Employees are valuable assets for the organisation, they act as sensors detecting both issues and opportunities. If people are afraid of being criticised by others, they will keep their ideas and observations to themselves.

It is important to make time to connect and actively listen to their needs. Active listening means really hearing the words they are saying and listening for clues about what that person is actually telling you in the way they are saying those words. It involves observing their body language and noticing if it confirms their words, or contradicts them, or adds to the information they are giving you.

Create a safe space where all voices can be listened to and let your people know that you are open to feedback. Provide everyone with a turn to speak up, develop awareness of others' culture and body language, and embrace vulnerability to experiment. By doing so, you create psychological safety, 'a team climate characterised by interpersonal trust and mutual respect in which people are comfortable being themselves' as described by Edmondson (1999).<sup>1</sup>

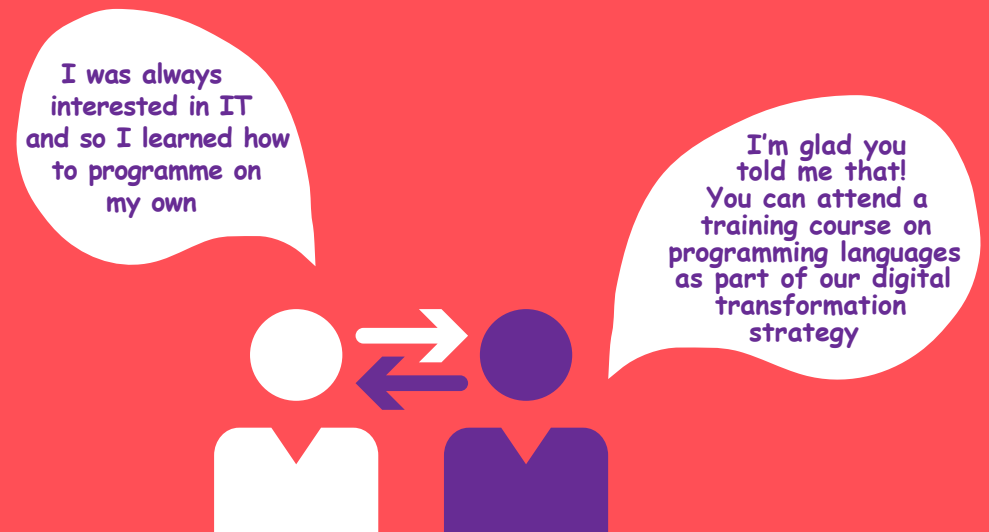
Psychological Safety does not mean removing risks or accountability—it's about creating a safe space for experimentation.

1. Razzetti G. (2018). "How to Create a Feedback Friendly Culture Five ways to ignite open dialogue" <https://blog.liberationist.org/how-to-create-a-feedback-friendly-culture-64518149c746>

### LISTEN TO WHAT YOUR PEOPLE WANT



"Be interested not interesting"



"Have a genuine two-way conversation and understand each other's drivers"

## INVOLVE THEM IN DESIGNING THE FUTURE

Old style “command and control” structures are no longer fit for purpose. As a leader in a climate of constant innovation your approach needs to build empowered people. Keep your team informed of changes and developments within the organisation, involve them in goal setting, problem solving, and decision making. Listen to their ideas and suggestions and delegate work to your team members.

By delegating work, a leader is expressing confidence in and acknowledgement of the ability of an individual or team to complete work to the required standard within the required timeframe and for team members to make their own decisions and choices for this to be achieved successfully.

Adopt the leadership style of facilitation and help build a clear vision, ask good questions, listen well, mediate and support focus. Say ‘we’ instead of ‘I’, ‘together’ instead of ‘alone’ and be ready to take responsibility for your team.<sup>1</sup>

*‘Create an environment that welcomes and reacts to feedback from every level of the organization. People can’t share your vision if they believe it’s completely inflexible or isn’t honest with itself about what needs to change.’ William Craig (2019)<sup>2</sup>*

## INVOLVE THEM IN DESIGNING THE FUTURE



“Ask your staff regularly for their input, feedback and ideas, for both the organisation and their own professional development and act upon it”



“Involve them in every level from the mundane to the strategic”



“Ask for their ideas, share yours and talk leading to shared agreement”



“Allow your staff a safe environment to make mistakes”

1. The Institute of Leadership & Management (2018). “Spotlight on Delegation” Member access only - [www.institutelm.com/learning/leadership-framework/ownership/empowering/spotlight-on-delegation.html](http://www.institutelm.com/learning/leadership-framework/ownership/empowering/spotlight-on-delegation.html)

2. Craig, W. (2019). “How To Create A Shared Vision In Your Organization” [www.forbes.com/sites/williamcraig/2019/08/27/how-to-create-a-shared-vision-in-your-organization/#156c08bb6a91](http://www.forbes.com/sites/williamcraig/2019/08/27/how-to-create-a-shared-vision-in-your-organization/#156c08bb6a91)

## STEP INTO THEIR WORLD

Leaders have a lot of responsibilities, and it is easy to get caught up in your own work, without paying much attention to your team but one of the best ways to show your employees you appreciate them is making the time to connect with them. They will feel valued and respected if you take time to find out how they are doing, what they really enjoy doing, what they find boring - including their lives outside work.<sup>1</sup>

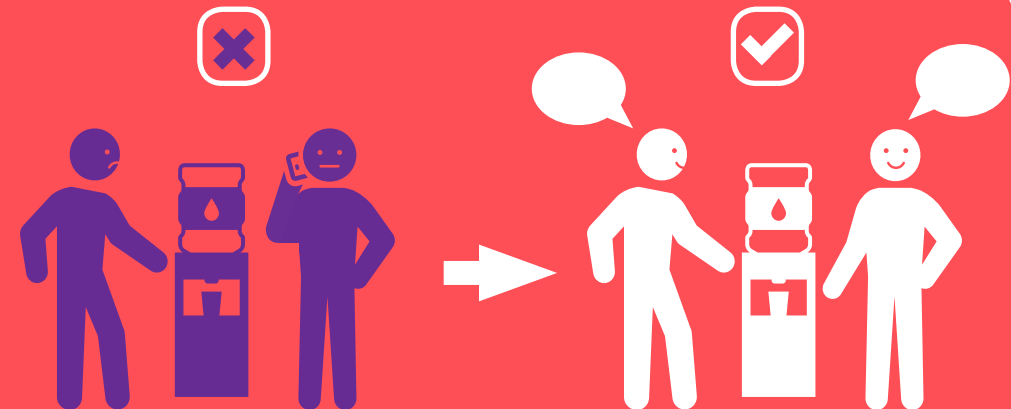
Leading virtual or distributed teams presents different challenges as it is perhaps less easy to 'step into their world'. Remember that it can be isolating working virtually, and that you should still be in regular contact with virtual team members to show that they are appreciated. Provide opportunities for team members to engage with each other, not just through you, schedule regular meetings to share ideas and exchange information, and take time to acknowledge team member accomplishments. Use video rather than voice where possible, and ensure your connections with virtual team members are as personal as they are with office-based teams.

1. Daskal, L. (2017). "9 Easy Ways to Show Your Employees You Value Them"  
[www.inc.com/lolly-daskal/9-easy-ways-to-show-your-employees-you-value-them.html](http://www.inc.com/lolly-daskal/9-easy-ways-to-show-your-employees-you-value-them.html)

## STEP INTO THEIR WORLD



"We are all busy and time poor but people feel valued and supported if leaders make time"



"Have regular conversations with them, take an interest in their lives, ask for their suggestions, ask what they care about and help them to meet their goals"

## ALWAYS GIVE CREDIT FOR WORK OR IDEAS

As a leader, you need to make sure you are crediting your employees for their hard work. It may sound like an obvious, easy task, but it's not one you should discount. Acknowledge and recognise the contributions from your employees, show you have received their suggestions even if you don't implement them.

Identify the quiet performers even if they are not worried about getting credit, you need to make sure they are recognised. But, also, the self-promoters – there may be enough credit for everyone but it quickly loses meaning when everyone gets it.

Pay attention to the employees who take time to recognise their colleagues' contributions. These types of people are the ones helping you spread the right type of culture through your office.<sup>1</sup>

*'If a leader sets a goal to recognize others for their accomplishments, and looks for opportunities to make others look good, their own effectiveness will improve. Your motto should be, "Don't take credit for anything—give it all away."' Joseph Folkman (2017)<sup>2</sup>*

1. Yakowicz, W. (2014). "How to Give Proper Credit to Your Employees"

[www.inc.com/will-yakowicz/how-to-give-proper-credit-to-your-employees.html](http://www.inc.com/will-yakowicz/how-to-give-proper-credit-to-your-employees.html)

2. Folkman, J. (2017). "It's All About Me! What Happens When A Leader Takes All The Credit?"

[www.forbes.com/sites/joefolkman/2017/11/10/its-all-about-me-what-happens-when-a-leader-takes-all-the-credit/#ebc9139312e6](http://www.forbes.com/sites/joefolkman/2017/11/10/its-all-about-me-what-happens-when-a-leader-takes-all-the-credit/#ebc9139312e6)

## ALWAYS GIVE CREDIT FOR WORK OR IDEAS



**"Acknowledge and recognise the contributions individuals make in a way that meets each person's needs"**



**"Celebrate their success"**



**"Never take credit for someone else's work or ideas. Always credit the source and praise where appropriate"**

## DEMONSTRATE VALUE TO EMPLOYEES

### DO WHAT YOU SAY YOU WILL

Recent research by The Institute (2017) showed that authentic leaders are admired and emulated but highlighted the distance between the recognition of the importance of an environment of trust and backing that up with everyday actions. Favouritism and the pursuit of personal agendas are very poorly regarded, emphasising how closely leaders are observed by those around them and how inauthentic behaviours cannot be hidden.<sup>1</sup>

Walking the talk is at the heart of authentic leadership, leaders must walk the talk and lead by example in their daily work. This cultivates trust, communicates clear values which underpin actions and the guidance given by a leader to others ensures the words are consistent with actions.

Leaders who live and breathe authentic values can't help but communicate differently. Behaving authentically means showing it and communicating too.<sup>2</sup>

### DO WHAT YOU SAY YOU WILL



**"Be open and honest. Be authentic and stay true to your values"**



**"Ask for and listen to feedback and act on it"**

1. The Institute of Leadership & Management (2017). "The Five Dimensions of Leadership: Authenticity" [www.InstituteLM.com/resourceLibrary/Authenticity.html](http://www.InstituteLM.com/resourceLibrary/Authenticity.html)

2. The Institute of Leadership & Management (2018). "Spotlight on Walking the Talk" Member access only - [www.institutelm.com/learning/leadership-framework/authenticity/integrity/spotlight-on-walking-the-talk.html](http://www.institutelm.com/learning/leadership-framework/authenticity/integrity/spotlight-on-walking-the-talk.html)





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Published by the Institute of Leadership & Management May 2018 © Institute of Leadership & Management

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