

Janice Williamson und Edwin Lemke

Learning Appreciation in Business



A Practical Guide to Appreciative Communication

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A Practical Guide
to Appreciative Communication in the Workplace
with Self-Coaching Tips for Managers

Books on Demand

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PREFACE

We believe that appreciation is closely linked to respect, well-being and ultimately, to success. In our many years experience in training, coaching and leading people in international organizations, we have witnessed countless examples of the positive effects of appreciation in action.

Appreciative communication is actually much more than a leadership tool for managers - appreciation plays a key role in all of our day-to-day relationships with family and friends. An atmosphere of respect and appreciation creates a feeling of well-being, not only in the person receiving appreciation, but equally in the person giving it - a solid foundation for positive relationships.

When the atmosphere in an organization is characterized by mutual respect and appreciation, people no longer need to feel frustrated and deliver substandard results; nor do they waste valuable time letting off steam by voicing their resentment towards superiors and circumstances...let alone damage their organization by spreading the word on social media platforms.

Appreciation in our everyday professional life entails discovering, accentuating and encouraging positive qualities, which in turn has an uplifting effect on both the appreciator and the person being appreciated. The result is enhanced self-confidence and mutual trust, a sense of understanding and being understood, a willingness to learn on both sides. Employees learn to trust both their managers and themselves, have more energy to invest in their work and are able to perform their tasks with confidence.

In such an environment, people evolve from ineffectiveness and inefficiency through effectiveness and efficiency towards excellence and the exceptional – towards mastery in their strengths, towards success and vitality. All of this is invaluable for the success of an organization.

Integrity and a sense of self-worth are vital attributes for today's managers: Leaders can best inspire in others what they embody themselves. In today's society, there is a growing awareness of the value of each individual and of collaboration with others; these values will play an increasing role in future society.

Incidentally - in our experience, these observations are consistent in countries all over the world. The significance of appreciation appears to be truly global. Take a moment, perhaps, to reflect on the role that appreciation plays in *your* part of the world, in comparison to other countries, both European and non-European...

THE EFFECTS OF APPRECIATION

For any organization, people are a crucial success factor because, at the end of the day, business is about relationships.

Business owners are wise to retain their most valuable assets not by compensation alone, but by appreciation – through recognition and attention. We know that employees often leave companies to seek alternative employment, not due to a lack of compensation, but to a lack of appreciation. Supervisors and managers can prevent this drain on a company's resources by creating a working environment in which employees feel that their voice is heard, their contribution is valued, and that they are appreciated. The

result is a direct and unmistakable impact on a business's profitability. Today's clever entrepreneurs know that the best and cheapest way to enhance productivity involves appreciation. On top, appreciation leads to more positive behaviour; appreciation encourages appreciation.

We firmly believe that people need to feel appreciated in their job in order to enjoy their work, give their best, and remain healthy and productive in the long term.

A DEFINITION

We understand appreciation as a basic human need and a form of benevolent interaction with others. Appreciation finds its expression in our behaviour and communication in particular.

Appreciation means perceiving and valuing a person with all his skills, needs and achievements, discovering and awakening the positive in him – benevolently perceiving a person's uniqueness and displaying gratitude for the value he contributes.

And appreciation is becoming an increasingly decisive factor for future business success, as value creation in today's organizations is increasingly dependent on employees' willingness to give their best.

This is clearly reflected by the increasing use of the method of Appreciative Inquiry in modern organizational development. Appreciative inquiry focuses on the positive, on what is working well, the conviction being that people and systems develop in the direction in which their attention is focused.

Only that which we value becomes valuable.