

## Why thank you matters more than money

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How do you feel when someone says thank you? Whether it be for our efforts, or achievements, most people appreciate being told they are appreciated. Assuming sincerity in its delivery, a simple 'thank you' can go a long way to making people feel valued and respected. According to Aon Hewitt's 2012 Trends in [Global Employee Engagement report](#), 90% of employees agree recognition is a key driver of their engagement.

Now contemplate the extent to which being paid a bonus make you feel appreciated. While of course most of us feel good about being given more money, in the absence of sincere gratitude from our employer, a bonus is unlikely to have any real impact on neither our spirit or performance.

There is of course some truth in the influence targets and bonuses can have on performance, particularly in roles focused on sales and capital raising. However, consider how unlikely someone is to perform at their best if despite being highly paid they feel undervalued. All too often I meet high income earners who are unhappy at work, because no one takes the time to say thank you.

Research consistently shows that when people believe their salary is fair, relative to what they can earn in a similar role elsewhere, non-financial rewards are far more effective, when it comes to building long-term employee engagement. [Gallop research](#), spanning 4 million employees worldwide, reveals an undeniable link between recognition and organisational performance. *"Recognition not only boosts individual employee engagement, but it also has been found to increase productivity and loyalty to the company, leading to higher retention."*

It's common for people to complain of rarely receiving the thanks they feel they deserve. All too often I observe leaders falling into [the trap of being busy](#) and as a consequence limiting their focus on what needs fixing. While tackling under performance matters, leaders are wise to look also for opportunities to thank people and let high performers know they are truly valued.

Reflect for a moment on how often you say thank you to the people you lead, or the colleagues you work with. If you do so thank you, how well are you delivering the messages you want people to hear? Among the most important steps anyone can take to optimise the positive impact of the thanks we give, include these.

## Get on with it.

Waiting for any length of time to thank someone dilutes the strength and impact of your message. Consider for a moment how much more likely you are to be energised by thanks received soon after you have done something well; as opposed to some time down the track, when your memory of the experience is beginning to fade.

Giving thanks as soon as the opportunity presents allows people to not only be energised but also learn from the things that go well. The more someone can remember about the efforts they are being thanked for, the more likely they are to cement positive learnings from the experience.

## Be present.

Have you ever wondered if someone truly meant the thanks they offered, because they lacked **attentiveness in the moment**? While a passing comment delivered while focused on other priorities may be better than nothing, its unlikely to have optimal impact. Create the time and space needed to sincerely connect with the individual you are thanking. Pay full attention to them, even for just a moment, and they're more likely to feel sincerity in your message.

## Make things personal.

**Tailoring your approach to each individual you work with** is essential. Take the time to understand people and how to best communicate thanks to them. While some people for example may enjoy being thanked publically, others consider that a punishment and would prefer a more discreet approach.

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