



## **Do You Even Know Me?**

**Some common thoughts and tips from employees to their bosses**

**By Roy Saunderson**

**E**ach time I meet with and interview employees or conduct a survey in an organization I hear a common thread of concerns. So on behalf of those who feel unheard and unrecognized, let me share with all of us some of the repeated requests employees have told me to tell managers..

### **Please remember my name and use it whenever you can.**

Managers today are left with few layers, if any, between themselves and their everyday workers. This has created increased demands and workloads on managers as well as employees.

One complaint I often hear from employees is a manager can walk by and not even acknowledge them. They have told me, "Sometimes it seems like they don't even know my name."

Dale Carnegie, in his classic book, "How To Win Friends and Influence People" taught how a person's name is music to their ears. So let them hear it.

Take time to write down their given as well as their preferred names of those you work with. Find out the names of individuals you frequently cross paths with and those who provide services to you and your department. Get to know them.

With name known all it takes is to use it by tagging it to the greetings and comments exchanged between each other.

Each person's name is special to them, so make it more so by using it with general acknowledgments and by giving the person specific recognition.

Unlike some of the grocery store products of today there are no "no-name" employees!

### **Find out what I like and show me that you know.**

If you like detective TV shows and "who-dunnit" books, you'll know how important it is to find clues that can help solve the crime.

Those involved in customer service often create customer profiles to know their likes and dislikes in order to serve them better. A little detective work can help solve the loyalty challenge.

A similar strategy can pay off dividends by finding out what your employees like.

This occasionally means directly asking employees for their likes and dislikes. An even better way is to personally observe and listen for the giveaways that come freely

***"So don't just know... go do something with what you know".***

from the individual themselves or from co-workers on a day-to-day basis.

To complete your insights you can directly ask fellow workers and even family members for ideas if deemed to be appropriate.

I recently heard how one bank manager had made note of the favorite soda drink of each of his customer service reps. On one busy day when stress was high and customers seemed endless, this thoughtful manager purchased and then placed their preferred soda on each CSR's counter and simply smiled at them. The reaction was priceless and you can imagine the employees' felt truly appreciated.

So don't just know... go do something with what you know.

### **Ask how I like to be recognized and demonstrate your knowledge.**

Some companies can give the mandate from on high, "go forth and recognize" without considering the individual perceptions around being recognized.

The best advice I can tell you and learned from others on the frontlines is to simply ask employees how they would like to be recognized.

You should be well aware that some people do better with public recognition than others. Some are either petrified or just plain embarrassed. Each employee is on their own level of comfort and this should be respected.

An organization once called me up frantic to know how to deal with an unusual dilemma of an employee who did not wish to receive a major performance award. Furthermore, being a very shy person they

did not even want the award and their name to be publicized which would generate unwelcome attention. What could they do?

This might seem an extreme reaction to some of us. Yet, respecting the wishes of the employee, I simply advised my contact to go back and ask them if they would accept a letter stating how they merited the award and have a copy placed in their employee file. The employee agreed to this method of acknowledgement.

How important it is to simply ask!

### **Notice what I do well and tell me.**

There is a lot of good work that goes on day and night in our offices, production plants and workplaces around the world.

The research continues to show that too many employees go unappreciated for the contributions they are making on the job.

True, not everyone is out there looking for the pat on the back or seeking verbally expressed praise. But many are.

Here we all have to take time out and do the walk about and observe people in action. Or we look at performance output measures and can see what others are doing. And then there are the faithful many who just keep plugging away doing excellent work with nothing super, above and beyond to report, and they too need to be acknowledged.

So a golden rule of recognition is if you see something good tell them it was good. In fact tell them specifically what it was you saw, why you thought it was good and how what they have done is making a difference to you, the customer and to the company.

Remember your employees want you to know them and praise them. So one more time now and this time with feeling!

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