

EFS SERVANT LEADERSHIP NEWSLETTER

“Our life is what our thoughts make it.” Marcus Aurelius

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TOPIC THIS ISSUE:

MASTERING THE ULTIMATE HABIT: RECOGNITION



WHAT WE ALL CRAVE

BY: GREGG LEDERMAN



Over the past 80 years, hundreds of studies of workforce engagement have shown the same result: If humans are more motivated at work, they will be more productive and profitable employees. Yet, decade after decade, businesses struggle to maximize the opportunity these findings present.

One of the most commonly cited studies is Gallup’s “State of the American Workforce,” with over 31 million respondents in its most recent version. The study is nothing short of alarming as it shows that about two-thirds of the American workforce is not engaged. Even more concerning, this figure has not changed in the last 18 years.

How can so many Americans still be disengaged at work? People are not getting nearly enough of what they **CRAVE!** When applied the right way, this answer will positively change your approach to leadership, your work environment, your customer experience, and—most important— the business results you want.

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The Ultimate Habit

For the last decade, I've pored over hundreds of studies, interviewed researchers, and even conducted a few studies of my own to understand what leads to happiness, more motivation, and increased productivity in the workplace. I've also worked with thousands of leaders from hundreds of organizations in a quest to improve employee engagement and make better places to work.

I've learned that employees CRAVE three things that can help them to become happier, more motivated contributors to their organization's success: **respect, purpose, and relationship.**

People want to feel respected for the work they do. They want to see how what they do has purpose, makes a difference, and is relevant to the organization. And employees want help building stronger connections with people, especially their immediate managers and supervisors.

When humans have these three cravings fulfilled, good things happen: employee engagement, the work culture, and customer experiences all improve. **Leaders who are most successful giving people what they CRAVE are able to master the Ultimate Habit, which is to strategically recognize employees.** The habit of employee recognition is the number one management skill for fueling the work environment with more of what people CRAVE.



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WE LOVE RECOGNITION, BUT WE ARE TERRIBLE AT IT



Whether we want to admit it or not, recognition plays a huge role in our everyday lives: in our happiness and our well being, both at work and in our personal relationships. Giving and receiving recognition fuels our **happiness and our productivity**. This makes

developing the Ultimate Habit of strategically recognizing employees one of the most effective and a affordable ways to provide people what they CRAVE: **greater understanding of the purpose, meaning, and importance of their work and respect for the effort they provide.**

When people get more of what they CRAVE, quite simply, they become more motivated and committed. But the problem is, we are terrible at recognition at work. We simply struggle to give it. And most of us don't even know it, which is helping to fuel the employee engagement crisis in America.

According to recent research, 70 percent of employees say they wish they received more recognition; 65 percent of Americans report they weren't recognized even once last year; and 79 percent of employees who quit their jobs cite lack of appreciation as a key reason for leaving. Moreover, 83 percent of leaders say they could do more to recognize others.

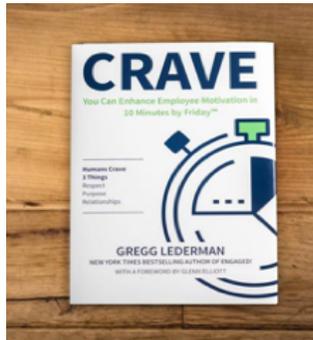
You as a leader have the power, with very little time investment, to accelerate business outcomes while also positively impacting the lives of people at work. You have the power to give people what they CRAVE by showing them they matter (respect) and what they do matters (purpose), and when you do this you will find it builds stronger relationships. But only if you learn to fuel the environment with more of what people CRAVE!



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10 MINUTES BY FRIDAY: THE ULTIMATE HABIT CHALLENGE



If you are like most people today, you feel overwhelmed with too much to do and too little time. I'll bet you create to-do lists, don't you? Leaders do this to stay focused and try to accomplish key objectives. And what happens once you get a few things checked o that list? What is waiting for you? That's right, a few more things to do. Sometimes you feel as though you'll never get caught up.

I call this the Raging River of Responsibility, and most leaders suffer from it. Like rapids coming down the river, your to-dos and high-priority tasks keep coming. You get a few done and more pop up. The Raging River of Responsibility does not end. Thinking so is ... wishful thinking.

But you can reprioritize and make the Ultimate Habit a must-do leadership skill in helping you to create the environment where more people will become more engaged. When you do, you will fuel the work environment with what employees **CRAVE: more respect, a better understanding of purpose, and a stronger relationship with you—decreasing stress and saving you time.**

Leaders who do a great job recognizing employees commit to a small investment of time each week: **10 Minutes by Friday!**

If you commit to the **goal of 10 Minutes by Friday**, you will share a strategic recognition some weeks, and some weeks you won't because you may not witness anything worthy of sharing. But at the end of the month, if you've demonstrated your habit at least a few times, you will be doing a very good job.

You don't need to be perfect. You do need to make progress in making employee recognition strategic, genuine, and results focused. And if you are able to find and share a success every week, you will be doing an amazing job!

Everyone has at least 10 minutes a week they could invest to consider an opportunity to recognize an employee in a way that fulfills their craving, especially, if it accelerates motivation, engagement, and stronger performance.

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THREE STEPS TO BEING STRATEGIC ABOUT RECOGNITION

Regardless of the type of recognition, make sure it is strategic.

This can be done by following the three simple steps below:

Recognition Friday
Pass it on...



1. TELL THE ACTION:

Describe what the person did (behavior) that is worthy of being recognized. Be specific, and do the recognition in a timely manner. Doing so

shows the recognition recipient that you respect them for their effort and are helping them to see the purpose of their work.

2. CONNECT to a focus area: may be living the core values, performing a customer service experience, or implementing an “operational excellence” improvement program or any other behavior-based program. All require certain behaviors to be successful. It is important to link the action because doing so makes it clear that what the person did “makes a difference” in achieving a priority or goal for the organization.

3. SHARE the IMPACT: Note why it is important. In this step, it is critical to show the benefit of the action for the team, customers, or the organization as a whole. By sharing the impact, you are providing another healthy dose of respect and purpose!

Every supervisor, manager, and executive—no matter what title, rank, level of busyness, or responsibility—can become a more effective and trusted leader who creates an even better place to work, leading to better customer experiences. ***And you will accomplish this when you invest up to 10 minutes a week to stop, think about, and/or actively recognize employees in a way that connects their effort to the specific business results that matter most to your organization.***