

MONED GUIDES

School Office Briefing

Appreciated & Happy @ Work

Michael Auden

MONED

Monash Education & Training

1 Wedge Court
Glen Waverley
Victoria 3150

www.moned.net
moned@iprimus.com.au

How to get appreciation at work

“I am just not appreciated round here” is a common complaint when people aren't happy at work. The other common one is **“They just don't recognise what I do for them”**.

Should we expect appreciation when we are being paid anyway? Isn't being paid and being kept on in our jobs all the appreciation and recognition we should expect?

Just listen to my reasoningwhich is key to YOU being happy at work.

Taking control of your Appreciation

We all want and need appreciation, but the only way to get appreciation whenever you want it ...is to get out of the habit of NEEDING positive comments from others, in order to feel it.

One thing is for sure:-

- we can't control how often someone shows their appreciation and,
- we can't make them recognise what we're doing for them.

What we can do, to make us feel a whole lot better, is to control our own reactions and feelings when we don't get feedback. Then when we do get it, it will be icing on the cake and that much sweeter.

How to get the “feeling appreciated” habit

1. Start appreciating ourselves

Quite often, when we want lots of appreciation and recognition from others it is because we are not recognising our own worth often enough. We are not saying to ourselves “I did a good job there” or “Wow, that was great customer service”.

To put it simply, we are not patting ourselves on the back. Therefore we want reinforcement from others in order to feel good. So start today to appreciate yourself – write down what you did well today. This isn’t something peculiar to just males or females, the need to appreciate ourselves more, is universal.

2. Don’t expect appreciation

Those of us working in customer facing roles, know that many customers will not compliment you, but it doesn’t mean they weren’t happy with the service. They will pay on time and they will often recommend you to others, but they may say nothing to your face.

It is easy when you start out in a role, to be “super sensitive” to a lack of positive feedback. As your confidence builds and you KNOW you are good at what you do, you realise that people show their appreciation in different ways, often by just “not moaning or complaining!!”.

Managers and bosses can be the same – you know everything was OK because they didn’t complain.

If you approach your relationship with all customers, (the external ones and

bosses/colleagues) as one where you don't EXPECT appreciation. Then you will not be disappointed, only pleasantly surprised when it comes along.

3. Remember, it's not all about you

One thing that can cause annoyance is when you have been accustomed to praise in one job and you move to one where you don't get it or where a manager who used to praise you just stops. The thing to realise is "it is not all about you". People can have a lot on their plate, lots of pressures, and can just be relieved that things are getting done – their mind is not on giving praise.

Sometimes a boss doesn't think you need it. When a boss is told that a member of their staff is feeling "unappreciated" they may reply "But they know they're good!" or they might say "I'm just too busy these days to keep telling them things are OK, I'd soon tell them if they weren't"

So where does this leave you?

In Summary

We all need appreciation but we can't rely on getting it from outside of ourselves. SO, start appreciating yourself today. Write down what you achieve each day....say it out-loud if necessary "I did a great job there".

You will then control your own "appreciation tap" and you can turn it on when you need it! Then any appreciation from others will be an unexpected bonus.

What is your experience of being appreciated at work?

My experience is ...

Life's too short to hate your job! Choose to be happy at work.

Ten ways to be happy at work

1. Choose to Be Happy at Work

Happiness is largely a choice. You can choose to be happy at work. Sound simple? Yes. But, simplicity is often profoundly difficult to put into action. I wish all of you had the best employer in the world, but, face it, you may not.

So, think positively about your work. Dwell on the aspects of your work you like. Avoid negative people and gossip. Find coworkers you like and enjoy and spend your time with them. Your choices at work largely define your experience. You can choose to be happy at work.

I resolve to ...

2. Do Something You Love Every Single Day

You may or may not love your current job and you may or may not believe that you can find something in your current job to love, but you can.

Take a look at yourself, your skills and interests, and find something that you can enjoy doing every day. If you do something you love every single day, your current job won't seem so bad. Of course, you can always make your current job work or decide that it is time to quit your job.

I resolve to ...

3. Take Charge of Your Own Professional and Personal Development

A young employee complained recently that she wanted to change jobs because her boss was not doing enough to help her develop professionally. She was asked whom she thought was the person most interested in her development. The answer, of course, was that she was.

You are the person with the most to gain from continuing to develop professionally. Take charge of your own growth; ask for specific and meaningful help from your boss, but march to the music of your personally developed plan and goals. You have the most to gain from growing - and the most to lose, if you stand still.

I resolve to ...

4. Take Responsibility for Knowing What Is Happening at Work

People complain that they don't receive enough communication and information about what is happening with their school, their department's projects, or their coworkers. Passive vessels, they wait for the boss to fill them up with knowledge. And, the knowledge rarely comes.

Why? Because the boss is busy doing her job and she doesn't know what you don't know. Seek out the information you need to work effectively. Develop an information network and use it.

Assertively request a regular meeting with your boss and ask questions to learn. You are in charge of the information you receive.

I resolve to ...

5. Ask for Feedback Frequently

Have you made statements such as, "My boss never gives me any feedback, so I never know how I'm doing." Face it, you really know exactly how you're doing. Especially if you feel positively about your performance, you just want to hear her acknowledge you. If you're not positive about your work, think about improving and making a sincere contribution.

Then, ask your boss for feedback. Tell her you'd really like to hear her assessment of your work. Talk to your clients, too; if you're serving their needs well, their feedback is affirming. You are responsible for your own development. Everything else you get is gravy.

I resolve to ...

6. Make Only Commitments You Can Keep

One of the most serious causes of work stress and unhappiness is failing to keep commitments. Many employees spend more time making excuses for failing to keep a commitment, and worrying about the consequences of not keeping a commitment, than they do performing the tasks promised.

Create a system of organization and planning that enables you to assess your ability to complete a requested commitment. Don't volunteer if you don't have time. If your workload is exceeding your available time and energy, make a comprehensive plan to ask the boss for help and resources. Don't wallow in the swamp of unkept promises.

I resolve to ...

7. Avoid Negativity

Choosing to be happy at work means avoiding negative conversations, gossip, and unhappy people as much as possible. No matter how positively you feel, negative people have a profound impact on your psyche. Don't let negative parents, students and staff bring you down.

I resolve to ...

8. Practice Professional Courage

If you are like most people, you don't like conflict. And the reason why is simple. You've never been trained to participate in meaningful conflict, so you likely think of conflict as scary, harmful, and hurtful. Conflict can be all three; done well, conflict can also help you accomplish your work mission and your personal vision.

I resolve to ...

9. Make Friends

In their landmark book, *First, Break All The Rules: What the World's Greatest Managers Do Differently*

Marcus Buckingham and Curt Coffman list twelve important questions. When employees answered these questions positively, their responses were true indicators of whether people were happy and motivated at work.

One of these key questions was, "Do you have a best friend at work?" Liking and enjoying your coworkers are hallmarks of a positive, happy work experience. Take time to get to know them. You might actually like and enjoy them. Your network provides support, resources, sharing, and caring.

I resolve to ...

10. If All Else Fails, Job Searching Will Make You Smile

If all of these ideas aren't making you happy at work, it's time to reevaluate your employer, your job, or your entire career. You don't want to spend your life doing work you hate in an unfriendly work environment.

Most work environments don't change all that much. But unhappy employees tend to grow even more disgruntled. You can secretly smile while you spend all of your non-work time job searching. It will only be a matter of time until you can quit your job - with a big smile.

I resolve to ...

Make your job work for you

Are you feeling increasingly unhappy about your job? Do you find yourself day-dreaming about other things you could do with the time you spend at work? Do you dread the thought of Monday mornings?

Then, it may be time for you to address the issues that you dislike about your current job. Without leaving your job, you may be able to solve the problems and make your current job work.

Do You Feel Overworked on Your Job?

You probably are overworked. Employers have cut back on hiring and are expecting employees to do more with fewer resources.

At a local university, a customer service counter was staffed by five people until recently. Now, one person staffs the counter. Is she overworked or was the counter overstaffed in the first place? You will never convince her that the answer is anything but the first - overworked.

- Talk with your employer, after collecting good data and evidence, if you find that the job is indeed more work than one person can comfortably handle. Brainstorm options that include these:
 - hire a new employee,
 - assign a part-time employee or intern to work with you,
 - identify tasks you can stop doing, and
 - determine the value-added tasks and eliminate non-critical job components.
- Take time to flowchart your work processes and see where you have waste in the process. Are you doing rework? How does extra time or steps make your work processes more difficult and time-consuming than they warrant?

I resolve to ...

Staff Development

School culture enhances or hinders professional learning. Culture enhances professional learning when teachers believe professional development is important, valued, and "the way we do things around here." Professional development is nurtured when the school's history and stories include examples of meaningful professional learning and a group commitment to improvement.

Staff learning is reinforced when sharing ideas, working collaboratively to learn, and using newly learned skills are recognized symbolically and orally in faculty meetings and other school ceremonies. For example, in one school, staff meetings begin with the story of a positive action a teacher took to help a student--a ceremonial school coffee cup is presented to the teacher and a round of applause follows.

The most positive cultures value staff members who help lead their own development, create well-defined improvement plans, organize study groups, and learn in a variety of ways. Cultures that celebrate, recognize, and support staff learning bolster professional community. Negative cultures can seriously impair staff development. Negative norms and values, hostile relations, and pessimistic stories deplete the culture.

MONED has a range of in-school staff development programs. Some of these programs can be run by a staff member while others are better suited to being conducted by a **MONED** facilitator. Visit www.moneted.net to explore how your school culture can be re-booted with a staff morale, motivation and loyalty program.

Resilience in the School Office

Workplace resilience is critical in the school office. Use a proven workplace resilience framework to optimise personal resilience skills and discover how to make staff more resilient to unsettling situations. Your **Resilience in the School Office** training course will help staff roll with the ebbs and flows of working life. Developing workplace resilience helps staff bounce back and manage their reactions at work. Are your staff resilient or do they bounce from crisis to crisis with many different emotional states?

How resilient is your school office team?

- Ask yourself the following questions about your people:
- We are optimistic.
- We manage the way we react to other people.
- We feel composed at work and don't let people get under our skin.
- We flow through tasks rather than fire fight through tasks.
- We value open and honest feedback.
- We have a healthy work/life balance.
- We have a strong understanding of who we are and how we contribute to achieving strategic objectives.
- We work well as a team.
- We remove unnecessary tensions from our daily routines.
- We value workplace resilience and we generally feel good.
- We feel empowered and are not always afraid of making mistakes.
- We bounce back well after disappointment.
- We nip poor performance in the bud and are unafraid of having courageous workplace conversations.
- We recognise the telltale signs of poorly motivated and/or unengaged staff.

Teams that respond with "No" to more than 6 of these questions are not resilient enough.

Bring this workshop to your school

Practical strategies for building resilience

Practical Strategies for Building Resilience is a workshop for staff working in environments where stress and anxiety affect their emotional wellness and workplace performance.

Session One – Why resilience may be important in your working life

Together, we will explore What is resilience? Character strengths, knowing yourself, and your resilience learning objectives

Session Two – Enhance your skills

This session will outline how you learn about resilience, problem solving as a strategy, and your emotional literacy skills.

Session Three – Resilience strategies

In this session we will explore effective coping strategies, including setting boundaries, thinking traps, and building strong relationships with effective communication.

Session Four – Mindfulness as a resilience tool

This session will look at the balance between stress and relaxation. We will explore relaxation techniques that will comfort and quieten your anxiety when in a stressful situation.

Session Five – Resilience Plan



The final session will cover your reasons for creating a resilience plan. It will highlight what is undermining resilience in your life and what resilience will bring into your life.

Duration – Each session can be tailored to meet a team’s needs. Minimum 20 minutes – maximum 40 mins. Organisations can select to spend more time on one session and less on another to fit their time available.

Support resources – Each session is accompanied by a CD of reference resources that you can draw upon to remind yourself of the session contents or to take your level of understanding to a higher level.

Your workshop presenter – Michael Auden is an experienced teacher and workshop presenter. Over recent years over 9,000 Australian people have attended his development workshops throughout Australia. His training and development resources are popular across the English-speaking world.

Workshop fee – a two-hour workshop costs \$1200. Anything longer is open to negotiation.

Buy the CD – Resilience Training Program. Just \$99

Contact

Tel - 0405 424 881

Email - mauden29@iprimus.com.au

Web – www.moned.net

Mail - 1 Wedge Court Glen Waverley Vic 3150

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