How to Motivate Employees With Gratitude

One of the most common questions I receive is how to motivate recalcitrant employees. While there are several attitudes and skills that we teach in our management and leadership sessions, one of the simplest is gratitude. In this season where we are all remembering what we are grateful for, take a moment to thank the people you work with.

This isn't just good manners, the research shows that it's good for business. Researchers at the University of Southern California showed this in a 2011 study -- "Power, defensive denigration, and the assuaging effect of gratitude expression". [http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2012/03/120329100901.htm](http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2012/03/120329100901.htm)

Especially when their competence was questioned, the subjects tended to lash out with aggression and personal denigrations. When co-workers or bosses showered them with gratitude, however, they reduced the bad behavior.

The best way to disarm and motivate that disgruntled employee or bad boss: issue a warm and sincere "thank you". You may have to offer this over time since what changes behavior is repetition, repetition, repetition.

I once conducted a training session for a group of HR managers and executives and one of them came up to me afterwards and mentioned how polite we were with the group, even when people were attempting to argue with us. "I'm going to try using that as a technique", she suggested. "I never thought of politeness as a technique."

Brain science also supports this assertion, not just your mother. Studies show that kindness increases serotonin, which makes employees more cooperative and more willing to do what you say. Specificity works best.

Don't just thank them for everything but for some special task that they completed well or quickly.

So motivate and uplift your troops this week with a simple thank you, while you're thanking your family and friends for celebrating with you and of course, the turkey for its sacrifice!

And while we're thanking people... please know that I'm thankful for all of you for reading our Monday Memos and newsletters, as well as for all of your referrals.

Let us know if we can help you before the end of the year. Many times our clients notice that they have money left in their training budget and education goals left unfinished. We're planning to be around even over the holidays and we're happy to help.
For much more about how to create workplaces that are both productive and humane, see our website [www.workplacethatwork.com](http://www.workplacethatwork.com) or my book *We Need to Talk* - *Tough Conversations with Your Employee.*

![Book Cover]

**MORE TIPS ON IMPROVING EMPLOYEE RELATIONS**

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For additional information on this and many other workplace related topics go to [Workplaces That Work website](http://www.workplacethatwork.com)

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