Building a Culture of Gratitude

Ryan Fehr
Associate Professor
Foster School of Business
University of Washington, Seattle
BUILDING A CULTURE OF GRATITUDE

THE HUMAN SUSTAINABILITY PROBLEM

THE POTENTIAL OF GRATITUDE

BEST PRACTICES FOR ORGANIZATIONS
THE HUMAN SUSTAINABILITY PROBLEM
EMPLOYEES ARE DISENGAGED

> 67% feel disengaged at work
> 51% say they are looking for new jobs
> $600 billion in revenue is lost annually due to employee disengagement
EMPLEYES ARE STRESSED

> 80% of employees report feeling constant workplace stress
> 61% of employees report that workplace stress has made them physically ill
> 7% of employees report that they’ve been hospitalized because of workplace stress

O’Connor, 2006; Pfeffer, 2018
THE POTENTIAL OF GRATITUDE
THE GOALS OF A CULTURE OF GRATITUDE

> To feel more gratitude
> To express more gratitude
> To receive more gratitude
EXERCISE # 1

> Individually, write down three occasions when you’ve felt grateful at work, and why (5 minutes)

> In groups of four, share one or two of the experiences you wrote about (2-3 minutes each; 10 minutes total)
GRATITUDE IMPROVES WELL-BEING

> Reduces overall stress
> Reduces feelings of depression and anxiety
> Improves sleep
> Extends average length of life

Emmons 2007; Łackowska 2016; Leppma 2018
GRATITUDE BUILDS RELATIONSHIPS

- Increases relationship commitment
- Reduces aggression and conflict
- Increases humility
- Increases patience

Desteno 2014; DeWall 2012; Kruse 2015; Lambert 2010
GRATITUDE HELPS ORGANIZATIONS

> Facilitates constructive conversations
> Decreases turnover
> Increases employee citizenship
> Improves employee engagement
> Increases dedication to CSR

Andersson 2007; Fehr 2017; Guarana 2017; Ng 2016; Spence 2014
MY EXPERIENCE WITH AN AIRLINE CATERING COMPANY
MY EXPERIENCE WITH AN AIRLINE CATERING COMPANY
WHAT EMPLOYEES SAY

> 88% of employees say that expressing gratitude to colleagues makes them feel happier and more fulfilled

> 66% of employees say they would "likely leave their job if they didn't feel appreciated"
  – 76% among millennials
WHAT EMPLOYEES SAY

> How do you feel when your manager doesn’t acknowledge you?

I feel great frustration
– Christopher S.

Perhaps I would not go above and beyond next time for that person
– Brent P.

I’d not feel good enough
– Barbara L.

I would feel let down
– Kevin C.
What Employees Say

> How do you feel when your manager gives heartfelt acknowledgement?

It inspires loyalty
– Karl S.

It’s the way life should be!
– Lynnda P.

I’d walk into hell for the one manager who deeply acknowledged me
– Cynthia L.
THE GRATITUDE GAP

> Only 10% of employees on a given day say “thank you” to a colleague
> 60% of employees never or very rarely express gratitude at work
> Employees who feel unappreciated are twice as likely to say that they will quit in the next year
THE GRATITUDE GAP

TOO DISTRACTED
THE GRATITUDE GAP

TOO DISTRACTED

TOO TRANSACTIONAL
THE GRATITUDE GAP

TOO DISTRACTED

TOO TRANSACTIONAL

TOO COMPETITIVE
A GRATEFUL ORGANIZATION MUST...
GIVE EMPLOYEES SOMETHING TO BE GRATEFUL FOR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THE HELP THEY RECEIVE</th>
<th>THE IMPACT THEY HAVE</th>
<th>THE SKILLS THEY BUILD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

> Appreciation programs
> Gratitude expression exercises
A GRATEFUL ORGANIZATION MUST...
GIVE EMPLOYEES SOMETHING TO BE GRATEFUL FOR

- Beneficiary contact
- Volunteer programs
A GRATEFUL ORGANIZATION MUST...
GIVE EMPLOYEES SOMETHING TO BE GRATEFUL FOR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THE HELP THEY RECEIVE</th>
<th>THE IMPACT THEY HAVE</th>
<th>THE SKILLS THEY BUILD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

> Developmental feedback
> Cross-training
A GRATEFUL ORGANIZATION MUST...
MAKE GRATITUDE A HABIT
A GRATEFUL ORGANIZATION MUST...

FOCUS ON APPRECIATION

Positive feedback based on results and performance

Positive feedback based on who a person is and what you admire about them
A GRATEFUL ORGANIZATION MUST...
ENCOURAGE TAILORED GRATITUDE
A GRATEFUL ORGANIZATION MUST...
WATCH OUT FOR NEGATIVE EMOTION

ENVY

PRIDE

ANGER
A GRATEFUL ORGANIZATION MUST...

MEASURE SUCCESS

> Globoforce metrics

- 80-90% of employees touched by program
- 60% of employees participate regularly
- 90% of managers participate regularly
- Two-year internal survey shows increase in employee engagement
BONUS RULE...

PRACTICE ACCEPTING GRATITUDE
EXERCISE #2

> In groups of four, place one group member in the “appreciation seat.” Everyone spends 1 minute expressing gratitude to that person.

> Rotate in your groups so everyone is in the appreciation seat once.

> While in the appreciation seat, the only thing you can say is “thank you”
IDEO + BERKELEY’S GRATITUDE CHALLENGE

GRATITUDE IN THE WORKPLACE CHALLENGE

$40K for Impactful Ideas

openIDEO Greater Good Science Center
'Thanks For’ - An E-mail Plug-In

'Thanks For’ is an e-mail plugin that lets the user send and receive personal messages of gratitude in a interactive and dynamic manner.

Written by Pragun Agarwal
Updated on 14:31, Dec 08, 2017

03 VISUAL LANGUAGE

OTHER LAYOUT EXAMPLES

Thanks for making me feel so welcome. I just wanted to tell you that it’s been pleasure working in your team.

Thanks for having my back in the meeting.

Thanks for having my back in the meeting.
Vestaboard: visible expressions of gratitude among leadership & co-workers

Combined with a mobile app or Slack, Vestaboard can serve as a dedicated and visible board for expressions of gratitude.

Written by Dorrion Porter
Updated on 14:59, Dec 08, 2017
Exhibiting Gratitude

The “Exhibiting Gratitude” activities will encourage staff to share expressions of gratitude using interactive models.

Exhibiting Gratitude: three pilot exhibits premiered at our annual staff holiday party.
BUILDING GRATITUDE AT...
WHOLE FOODS
BUILDING GRATITUDE AT...
FACEBOOK
BUILDING GRATITUDE AT...
INTUIT

RESULTS WITH RECOGNITION
SUSTAINED INCREASE IN ENGAGEMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Engagement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data from Globoforce
SOME BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS

THE POWER OF THANKS
How Social Recognition Empowers Employees and Creates a Best Place to Work
ERIC MOSLEY
CEO of Kolabora
Best-selling author of The Crowdsourced Performance Review
DEREK IRVINE
VP of Client Strategy and Consulting, Kolabora

Grateful Leadership
Using the Power of Acknowledgment to Engage All Your People and Achieve Superior Results
FOREWORD BY DOUG RAUCH
Former President of Trader Joe’s and CEO of Conscious Capitalism, Inc.
JUDITH W. UMLAS
Senior Vice President, International Institute for Learning, Inc.

focus on the good stuff
THE POWER OF APPRECIATION

Mike Robbins
Foreword by Richard Carlson, author, Don’t Sweat the Small Stuff
Thank you!

Ryan Fehr: rfehr@uw.edu