The Relationship and Differences between Recognition and Appreciation

Recognition Professionals International
2016 Annual Conference
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Goals of the Presentation:
1. To emphasize the need to communicate clearly about recognition and appreciation (to one another, to our clients & to end users.)
2. To affirm the purposes, benefits (and limitations) of recognition.
3. To acknowledge the purposes, benefits (and limitations) of appreciation.
4. To give us the perspective, language and courage to communicate clearly and accept the similarities and differences between recognition and appreciation.
5. To see the benefits of a "both / and" approach.

Recognition & Appreciation

What's the big deal?
We need to be Clear Communicators
Why is it important to communicate clearly?

- The Goal of Communication = Mutual Understanding
- Influences expectations
- Helps avoid confusion
- Assists in moving toward agreement
- More likely to result in actions (and results) desired

Being Clear Communicators

- Calling something by another name doesn't change what it is.

“Doggie”
Some people talk “in general” and some people talk in “specifics”.

We can agree:  
Recognition means different things to different people

Challenge:  
Who is the most important person / group to clearly understand what recognition means to them?
Understanding Communication

• The message intended may not be the message sent.
• The message sent may not be the message received.
• The message received may not be accurately understood.
  • “Don’t take one more step.”
• What is “understood” may not be what was initially intended.

Definitions: Recognize

1. to acknowledge formally: as
   a. to admit as being lord or sovereign
   b. to admit as being of a particular status
   c. to admit as being one entitled to be heard: give the floor to

2. to acknowledge or take notice of in some definite way: as
   a. to acknowledge with a show of appreciation
      <recognize an act of bravery with the award of a medal>
   b. to acknowledge acquaintance with <recognize a neighbor with a nod>

3. a. to perceive to be something or someone previously known: <recognized the word>
   b. to perceive clearly:

Acknowledge

• a: to express gratitude or obligation for <acknowledge a gift>
• b: to take notice of <failed to acknowledge my greeting>
• c: to make known the receipt of <acknowledge a letter>
Definitions: Appreciation

1. to understand the worth or importance of (something or someone):
   - to grasp the nature, worth, quality, or significance of
     - appreciate how much they contributed

2. to admire and value (something or someone):
   - to value or admire highly
     - they appreciate the quality of our work

3. to be grateful for (something):
   - to recognize with gratitude
     - certainly appreciates your kindness

4. to increase the (perceived) value of

Similarities Between Recognition & Appreciation

- Between two parties (persons or groups)
- Utilize communication: Sender & Receiver
- Positive focus
- Involve action
- Implies some knowledge of one another
- Intent: encourage, reinforce, motivate

Can you recognize someone’s accomplishments and not appreciate them?
Can you appreciate someone and not recognize their accomplishments?

Differences between Recognition & Appreciation

• Core component
• Goals
• What is required
• The effects

Core Component of Recognition:

Acknowledgement

• For what the employee has done
• By supervisors
• By peers
• By clients / customers / vendors
Core Component of Appreciation:

Value

- What they have done
- Who they are
- For what they bring to the organization
- May (or may not) be work related
- May (or may not) be related to performance

Goals of Recognition

- To increase the frequency and quality of behaviors that help the organization function well and achieve its goals
- To reinforce & increase desired behaviors
- To reward (psychologically, socially & tangibly) the individual
- To motivate and incentivize others (toward desired behaviors)

Goals of Appreciation

- To communicate a sense value for individuals
- To assist the organization to move toward health and better be able to reach their goals
- To reinforce desired behaviors
- To encourage and support team members
What is Required: To Recognize

- Standards for desired behaviors
- Observation, monitoring and measuring employees' behaviors / outcomes
- Understanding what is reinforcing to the individual employee
- Reinforcing behavior from supervisor, employer and peers
  (discriminatory reinforcement: only for the desired behaviors)

What is Required: To Appreciate

- Reflection: What do I value about this person?
- Understanding: The type of appreciation the recipient prefers
- Behavior: Communicate appreciation in the way desired by the recipient
- Authenticity: Attitude / perspective consistent with the behavior

The Effects of Recognition

- Increases desired behaviors (and performance) in many employees.
- Improves employee engagement (& related results) across groups of employees.
- Can increase performance level and reported revenue.
- Can be designed and implemented across large groups.
The Effects of Appreciation

- Creates a sense of encouragement, & feeling valued at an individual, personal level.
- Allows for focus on non-performance characteristics, so can be utilized with others than top performers.
- Develops loyalty; reduces conflict; increases openness to change.

#1 Reason Employees Enjoy Their Work

In a survey of 70,000 Chicago employees conducted by the Chicago Tribune, the top reason cited why people enjoy their work was:

“I feel genuinely appreciated at this company.”

Top 10 Reasons Employees Enjoy Their Work

The top 10 factors are:
1. Appreciation for your work
2. Good relationships with colleagues
3. Good work-life balance
4. Good relationships with superiors
5. Company’s financial stability
6. Learning and career development
7. Job security
8. Attractive fixed salary
9. Interesting job content
10. Company values
Appreciation Enhances Trust

"Feeling valued creates a deeper level of trust and security at work, which frees us to spend less energy seeking and defending our value, and more energy creating it."

Tony Schwartz
CEO/President
The Energy Project
Best selling author

The Challenges of Recognition

• Differential impact – primary focus on high achievers:
  • Some employees will be recognized more than others;
  • Some may be rarely recognized;
  • Some may never be recognized.
• Can be perceived as impersonal and inauthentic;
  • Leads to negative reactions (apathy, sarcasm, cynicism).
• Resentment by some
  • Feel only concerned about what benefits the manager / organization
  • Resent primary emphasis on “above & beyond” performance.

The Challenges of Appreciation

• Requires behavior + heart attitude
• More difficult to apply as a policy across a large organization
• Assumes a level of trust, respect & healthy communication within an organization

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Recognition & Appreciation

Not Either / Or
but
Both / And

The Benefits of Differentiating & Combining Recognition and Appreciation

• Clarifies the goals & purposes of each process.
• Helps decide when, how & with whom to use each process.
• Will reduce negative reactions by creating realistic expectations for each activity.
• Allows for better planning, decision-making, budgeting & training.

Recognition & Appreciation

A Great Combination to Improve Organizations & Employee Relationships!