

Recognising your team's value



"The deepest principle in human nature is the craving to be appreciated." - William James

As a species, we humans have mastered the art of shaping the natural environment to our needs. This has allowed us to inhabit every continent in every climate, and live in relative safety all over the world.

However, our ancestors didn't have it quite so easy. They lived in a dangerous world where, at any moment, they could end up being lunch for predators that were bigger, stronger, and faster than they were. In order to survive, they had to join together into social groups where they could protect each other from danger. But, in order to avoid being shunned and left to fend for themselves in a dangerous world, they had to give something back. They had to add value.

Today, our chances of being eaten by a lion are fairly slim and although our modern social groups are much less important for our survival than they used to be, our primal fear that we'll be abandoned for not contributing still exists.

As a manager, you're responsible for leading an effective team of people and this means creating a culture of team spirit and an environment where people feel safe, secure, and valued. We'll begin by looking at what it means to recognise the value of your team and why it's so important to do so, then we'll highlight what simple and practical actions can have an immediate and lasting positive impact on your team.

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Recognising Value

To help make somebody feel like a worthwhile member of the team, it's important that you spend some time recognising the value that they bring. This doesn't need to be difficult or time-consuming; in fact, it's actually very simple.

When somebody does something for the team - whether they make a contribution during a meeting, give a presentation, diligently perform their role day after day, or finish a project they've been working on or help somebody else with theirs - take some time to acknowledge their efforts, talents, or the personal qualities which helped make it possible and highlight how they made a positive difference.

It's as easy as saying *"Thank you for helping me, without you we wouldn't have met our deadline"* or *"Your attitude in the team meeting today really made a difference and your contributions were very insightful"*.

Recognising somebody's contribution to the team will motivate them to keep up their hard work and to continue performing at the same high standard. It also helps foster a sense of team spirit which is a benefit for everyone.

As a manager, it's important that how you recognise people's efforts is fair. For example, if you create a rewards scheme for sales staff *only* as an incentive for them to hit their targets, then non-sales staff are going to feel like their contributions aren't as important or as valuable. You can still reward the sales staff, but you need to ensure that you have a way of rewarding other departments when they perform well too.

Why recognising value is so important

There are lots of reasons why it's important to recognise the value of others and there are numerous studies which show that there's a link between feeling valued and better job satisfaction, motivation, and engagement as well as improvements in both mental and physical health. These are all very important reasons why taking the time to recognise someone's value is so important.



However, perhaps one of the most important reasons is that recognising the value of other people within the team creates a sense of team spirit and motivates everyone to perform better¹ - something they want to continue feeling. This encourages them to carry on performing to the same high standard and to play their own part in fostering team spirit in others.

This creates a positive cycle where your actions can influence the behaviour of somebody else who, in turn, influences another person's behaviour and so on. The team is stronger, it's members happier and more satisfied, and, in the end, everyone benefits.

Influencing

We all like our hard work and contributions to the team to be recognised and knowing that others value us is incredibly motivating, but whose recognition do you think has the biggest impact on our performance - our manager's recognition, our colleagues' recognition, or our clients' recognition?

According to this [Employee Engagement and Organisational Culture Report²](#), the number 1 motivating factor for people at work is peer motivation and camaraderie, or in other words, the recognition of their colleagues. Customer recognition was the 6th most motivating factor and manager recognition came in 8th.

But don't get complacent! Your role is critical here. You're in a unique position to help encourage your team to develop its spirit, to foster camaraderie, and to create opportunities for it to grow stronger.

Take Action: Increasing Value

Action 1: Recognising Individual Efforts

Part of feeling valued is believing that you bring something unique to the role and that you offer something which no one else can. People who think that they're replaceable aren't going to feel like a useful member of the team.



However, recognising someone as an individual can be as simple as changing the way you approach them.

Here's what you need to do. When you assign somebody a new task or set them up with a new project, explain why you specifically chose them to do it. For example, you might say *"You've got a great attention to detail and you really work well under pressure. We have a new client who's a bit picky but they need results fast and so you are the best person for the job"*. This ties your team members' unique abilities and past achievements into why you need them now and will help make them feel irreplaceable.

The same is true when you offer people praise, particularly if you do it publicly. Don't just say *"Well done"*, be more specific. What did they do exactly? Did they work particularly hard, put in extra hours, or go above and beyond in some way? Or did they bring a unique talent or skill to the group? And what did all their efforts achieve for you, for the team, or for the company as a whole? Be very specific with what you are praising and explain just how big an impact they, as an individual, have made.

For example, *"Thank you for helping me with project X, especially yesterday. Without you*

suggesting we make that change from A to B we wouldn't have met our deadline" or "Your attitude in the team meeting today really made a difference to how person X responded to the change and your contributions were very insightful".

Action 2: Collecting Feedback

Though positive feedback is great, it can begin to have less of an impact if it always comes from the same person. After all, you're their manager and it's your job to be supportive.

That's not to say that *you* shouldn't praise individuals within your team, but by showing them that their efforts are appreciated by other teams, customers, and even senior management, you can make it much more impactful.

Here's what you need to do. Firstly, pay attention to any feedback given by other people - whether it's a praise filled email from a happy customer or recognition from another manager during a meeting - and make sure you pass it on. This'll remind them of the impact their work has on others and will show them just how important they are to the company.

Secondly, it's a good idea to be proactive about collecting feedback. Instead of just waiting for people to come to you, find ways for people to share feedback and encourage them to do so. Maybe this means setting up a feedback meeting or creating a feedback form to use any time a member of your team helps another department. Or it might include creating a feedback page on your website or setting up an email address and encouraging customers to send in their thoughts and experiences with your staff. Make sure you highlight any positive responses and celebrate them with your team.



Action 3: Peer Recognition

Colleague recognition and team spirit are much better at motivating people to work harder than anything else. You should use this to your advantage and encourage your team to recognise each others' hard work.

Here's what you need to do. Find opportunities for members of your team to give thanks for or praise each other's efforts. [Some organisations use online peer-to-peer recognition programmes which allow users to send real-time, public recognition from anywhere and which can be accessed by anyone at any time](#)³. These kinds of programmes have been proven to have a hugely positive impact and can help build a sense of team spirit across the wider organisation for employees both on-site and working from home.

Other organisations, however, benefit from much simpler solutions. It might be as easy as setting up an online chat room dedicated to sharing praise, having a "Gratitude Wall"

where people can stick notes and letters recognising their colleagues' efforts, or you might set aside 10 minutes at the beginning of the week to let people say "Thank you".

There are no right or wrong answers and what works well for one organisation might not work so well for yours. If you all work remotely, for example, then something that needs everyone to be in the same location, like a *Gratitude Wall* might not work so well. Take some time and think about what's best for you and for your team.

Action 4: Be Fair

Recognition is only worthwhile if it's inclusive, regardless of a person's role and position within your organisation. Getting it wrong not only makes people feel undervalued, it also creates a divide within the organisation which can be difficult to overcome. It also crushes any sense of team spirit which, as we know, is the number one motivating factor for performance at work.



So, here's what you need to do. Firstly, make sure that you clearly communicate your expectations of every member of your team and set goals or targets. Follow up frequently throughout the year with some one-to-one sessions and see how they're getting on. If they've met or surpassed your expectations, great! That's a reason to celebrate.

Secondly, always be consistent. If one person gets an extra day off for hitting their monthly target, then everyone should get the same. Though you should make sure that any rewards you offer are sustainable - no "Free Ferrari Fridays" for example - and consistently offer them to everyone.

Lastly, don't be afraid to recognise people who just *get the job done*. Some roles don't really lend themselves to going *above and beyond* and so it's easy to overlook them. However, those people still provide huge value simply because they keep things running smoothly on a day-to-day basis.

Conclusion

We may have clawed our way to the top of the food chain and largely removed the threat of being a lion's lunch, but we only did so by working together. Any of our ancestors who weren't useful to their social group wouldn't have lasted long; the ones who were developed an inbuilt need to feel wanted, useful, and valued so that they would be kept around and stay safe. Though life looks very different for us - their descendents - we still have the same fears that they did. However, armed with that knowledge and with just a small amount of effort, you can create an inclusive work environment where everyone in your team knows just how important, valuable, and irreplaceable they are.

Summary

- Be timely and specific with your praise
- Facilitate peer-to-peer recognition within your team
- Be fair and inclusive at all times
- Be up-front and transparent with your expectations
- Pro-actively gather feedback about the individuals within your team from *customers* and *other departments*, and share it with the relevant individual
- Never forget the people who work hard to make everyone's day run smoothly

How iHASCO can help you

We hope that you have found this White paper helpful, and remember that we're only an email or a phone call away should you ever need extra help or support.

We are a market-leading provider of [Online Health & Safety, HR, and Business Compliance eLearning](#)⁴ and have helped over 10,000 organisations across the UK with their workplace training.

We've been providing numerous industries with high-quality eLearning for over a decade. Counting some of the UK's largest and most reputable organisations amongst our client base, our online solution is designed to equip staff and managers alike with the correct skills and knowledge to perform their day-to-day roles to the very highest standard.

Recognise Your Value Training

Everyone wants to feel valued, it's just in our nature. But recognising our true value is far from simple. In our [Recognise Your Value Training](#)⁵, users will be introduced to the Japanese concept of ikigai - a way of discovering both what they have to offer the world and what they can gain from it. They'll learn how this ancient philosophy can be applied to their modern life and be used to gain a deeper understanding of themselves. They'll also carve out some practical steps they can take to add further value to their personal relationships, workplace, and wider community whilst living a life of meaning.



Soft Skills Courses

Soft Skills are becoming increasingly important in the modern workplace. They're skills which allow people to interact effectively and harmoniously with the world and people around them and they're often the reason why employers decide to keep or promote employees. Our ever-growing range of [Soft Skills courses](#)⁶ include such titles as

Communication Skills, Confidence Building, and Mindfulness.

Resilience Training

Resilience is a crucial skill both in the workplace and in general - in fact, over half of all employers consider it a key skill for all their employees. Our [Resilience Training](#)⁷ course provides staff with the tools they need to build resilience in order to better manage the challenges they face every day and improve their wellbeing in the face of adversity.



Effective Remote Working

Our [Effective Remote Working](#)⁸ course helps remote workers manage the trials and tribulations of working away from the office. It's been written for anyone; whether they're new to remote working or simply need a reminder of the basics. It teaches users how to create a productive workspace; how to effectively plan their working day and make the most of their time; how to set clear physical, mental, and social boundaries; and how important (and easy) it is to stay in touch with the rest of their team.

Appendix

- 1 <https://www.psychologytoday.com/gb/blog/the-i-m-approach/202005/why-do-we-need-feel-valued#:~:text=A%20person%20who%20feels%20valued,very%20foundation%20of%20a%20group.>
- 2 https://www.tinypulse.com/2014-employee-engagement-organizational-culture-report?__hstc=225544837.a615be0aa075e06d5aca001e9d4441eb.1501178480539.1501178480539.1501178480539.1&__hssc=225544837.1.1501178480539&__hsfp=3469819486
- 3 <https://www.kudos.com/>
- 4 <https://www.ihasco.co.uk/courses>
- 5 <https://www.ihasco.co.uk/courses/detail/recognising-value-training>
- 6 <https://www.ihasco.co.uk/courses/type/soft-skills-training>
- 7 <https://www.ihasco.co.uk/courses/detail/resilience-training>
- 8 <https://www.ihasco.co.uk/courses/detail/effective-remote-working-training>