

Appreciation and Recognition

For an organization that goes through substantial change and there is uncertainty, it is a vulnerable time and the more that recognition and appreciation can be fostered it can help bring your team and your parish become closer together. If there is a good recognition plan in place and it is consistent it can help your Parish retain your employees. This also can lead to better job satisfaction which impacts the engagement. Employees notice appreciation expressed by recognizing their decent work because it confirms that their work is valued by others. Often it is the case that when employees feel that their work is valued, their satisfaction will rise. It is important for you as priests and leaders to look at this as a primary goal and know how to engage in this and put something in place. Recognition should encourage your employees to uphold and grow the mission of the church. “ Therefore, encourage one another and build one another up, as indeed you do” (1 Thessalonians 5:11)

Both things are important! They are different. A quite uncomplicated way to look at them is recognition is about what people do and appreciation is about who they are. When you recognize people , you show gratitude for their contributions and achievements based on results or performance and when you show appreciation for someone you convey your gratitude for their value as a human being. Recognition is performance based so it is conditional, and it is based on the past and what someone has done ,it is limited, not everyone can get it, there are only so many targets and goals to hit. Recognition should come from the priest or leader. Appreciation should happen all the time and not always when employees accomplish a specific task. With both, each employee can feel valued, noticed, and supported.

You can encourage peer recognition and put things in place to help that happen. You as the priest might not know everyone as well and often peers know each other better. Setting something up that is a little more public might be something to consider. Encouraging shout outs and thanks you can help build that collaborative team and build community in our Parish. Both Recognition and appreciation can come from peers and have a strong impact when done right and it is meaningful and personalized.

You may have wonderful things in place and things you are doing now, it will be important to keep those going and continue and do more. This is key, when going through a substantial change or upheaval it is important to look at employee’s morale and look often. We have provided ideas below.

Recognition:

- Make recognition frequent. This will help build your community up and a strong culture of appreciation.
- Try to tie the recognition to behaviors, such as collaboration and accountability. When people are recognized for certain actions, often they are more likely to take that action in the future. Often it is tied to performance, motivation, and tenure. It can be for innovation that improved processes that have a direct impact on the team or parish. This can be nonwork achievements at times as well such as volunteering, donating, and serving the community at large.
- Personalize and clearly communicate the action you are recognizing and rewarding. Focus on the accomplishments and getting thing done. A project completed ahead of time or done exceptionally well is a good example.
- For the best impact try to recognize in Real time: this shows you are observant and paying attention. And be genuine and specific.



- Recognize publicly, it can create a collective spirit of success and optimism. You could do this on a website or meetings , planned gatherings.

More formal:

- This can be a promotion or raise.
- A bonus
- A public acknowledgement
- An award
- Creating a public space like a wall of gratitude or hallway of fame
- Posting on a company website
- An award for safety, years of service, attendance,
- Framed Certificates
- Plaques and trophies
- And acknowledgement for retirement
- Challenging or interesting projects
- Opportunities to go to training sessions and conferences.
- Becoming a mentor on the team
- A gift certificate to their favorite restaurant, you could even take them there.
- The Bishop announces people celebrating milestone anniversaries in the past year (5, 10, 20, , 30, etc. years of service) and employees get a small check to commemorate their service. This could be coupled with a celebration.
- Employee of the month

More informal:

- A handwritten note
- A sincere expression of gratitude like a verbal thanks you' s
- Digital thank you cards.
 - Some tips with thank you cards, be specific about the accomplishment and effort, remember to mention the effect that the individual organization. And clearly express your gratitude for the recognition of the special efforts.
- A moving trophy -might seem old school, but they are still a terrific way to enhance team spirit and drive the right behaviors. Start by defining the award criteria and select a trophy, serious or silly, depending on what works best for your culture. Then determine how often the trophy should be awarded and organize a little event each time an individual or team wins it, so everyone can share in the celebration.
- A wall of accomplishments



Appreciation:

- Remember the difference and appreciation does not have to be tied to a specific event or outcome. Appreciation is about acknowledging who they are and what they are bringing to the parish. Appreciating them and celebrating who they are as a coworker and a human being. This will be a challenging time and there could be more difficult days ahead so remember sometimes letting your employee know that you appreciate them on a hard challenging day can be just as important as recognizing them for an accomplishment on one of their best days, this all ties together and matters! Appreciation can have a significant impact even though it seems simple and small.
- Pay attention to the method you use to show appreciation. Some employees will appreciate this in public some might like this better in private. Understanding and having that relationship with our employees will be important to know what will be the most effective.
- Be sincere! It must be genuine and real; your employees will know. Creative rewards tailored to everyone's interests help ensure that you appreciate their value. Ask them what they would like from you as far as how you show you appreciate them. You could put out an appreciation survey and ask how your team likes to receive appreciation at work.
- The more proactive the better, tell them what you value about them. Do they show up every day, how do they show up every day to work? Do they work hard? How do they effect the team? Are they dependable? Are ethe welcoming? Do they bring Humor? Are the kind? Are they Knowledgeable? Share what each person brings to the table!
- Check in with them often. Talk with you employees, show that you care about them as people! This will be key to start now. Do not let weeks or months pass between sincere and meaningful conversations.
- It must be genuine! People can tell if you are just going through motion of this and checking it off like to do list, more than anything else this must come from the heart. Give them your full attention.
- Listen! It goes a long way and matters that our employees know that their ideas, thoughts, and feelings matter to you .

Ideas:

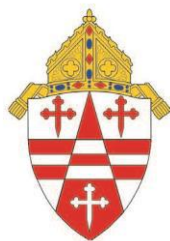
- An employee Appreciation day, this could include an observed day to honor everyone's hard work!
- Giving gifts, these could include a personalized mug, water bottles, custom candy, an aromatherapy kit, key chain Tech accessories, wireless EarPods, mobile charger.
- Fitness gear such as yoga matts, phone holders for runners, resistance bands
- Gifts with the Parishes or Archdiocese logo
- Snack boxes
- A spa care package
- Get together lunches.
- Dismissing employees early form work
- A retrospective slideshow with photos that capture your teams' accomplishments and celebrations from the year. Ask your coworkers to submit their favorite photos prior .
- When possible and it is applicable can they participate in some of the decision-making processes.
- Treat them, a pizza lunch, bring muffins, bagels, and coffee, unsolicited and just because can be great!



- A banquet or a luncheon that the Archbishop attends and there could be key speakers.
- A succulent in a cute pot for the plant lover, a funny mug for the coffee addict or a pretty blanket for the employee who is always cold.
- Playing fun office games or online games
- A thank you for just a thank you sake.
- Play gratitude round robins.
- Telling someone what you value about them- this is a gift to give someone! Not just because they did something great or something you want to form them.
- Checking in with them, it can be as simple as asking them how they are doing? You can discuss challenges they might be having with things ; this is important to do often.
- Share what everyone brings to your team that you value.
- Complements
- Talk with them and Listen- put the phone away, face them and not your computer.
- More appreciation is better.
- Hand out power bars on a busy afternoon
- Have a superlatives session, you can compile a list, some ideas to get you going: Most likely to Make People Smile or Mostly Likely to Drink All of the Coffee.
- Compliment note Station, you can have an area with blank note cards and pens and your employees can write anonymous compliments to each other. At the end of the week read them aloud to the team

Some other activities that can be just general celebration of teambuilding that is more informal are.

- Volunteering together
- Gratitude scavenger hunt
- A gratitude wall.
- Participate in a food drive.
- Celebrate all your volunteers at the Parish as a team together.
- "Breakfast with Bishop" and sometimes it is also moved to a luncheon depending on whether there is a religious holiday. On those days we celebrate mass together than break bread together. It has been everything from an outside barbecue (diocese paid) to a potluck with a theme (country of origin - or comfort food from childhood).
- summer picnic
- There is a cornhole (or beanbag toss? Everyone has a different name for the game!) tournament, catered dinner, and families are invited to attend. It is at a local park which is genuinely nice and family friendly.
- Plana wellness Day
- Organize a volunteer day for a local charity.
- Assemble care packages for families in need.
- Host a workplace fundraiser like a silent auction or 50/50 raffle.
- Plan a charitable team-building activity like a walkathon.



- Sponsor a local youth sport team.
- Birthdays
- Decorating for the holidays
- Baby showers and retirement
- Party planning committee
- Potlucks
- Movie night
- Attending Mass together
- Bring a food truck.
- Office exercise groups
- Office makeovers
- Clean out days.
- Prayerful Party Planners committee and we produced a calendar for a year to celebrate together- Then share the pictures of the celebration.
- staff day out at a baseball game
- dinner Christmas party
- two staff retreat offsite for all staff a year, typically in Lent and it shows a sense of care for the spiritual lives.

And do not forget:

Ensure that you provide all the tools they need to succeed! Equipment in good working order, needed software. Replace old broken office items. Employees will notice and notice that you care and appreciate them by taking care of their work environment. A comfortable clean environment is important.

Notice when employees feel over worked or overwhelmed. This is the time to approach them and ask what they need for support. In this time of change , pay attention and to that employee who is usually all smiles and outgoing and if they seem to be different. It might mean they need to talk it out with you, a break for prayer or leave early one afternoon. Paying attention is the first step and then follow through is key, this behavior shows that you care and that you appreciate them, and they matter and are any important member here.

Have their backs, support them protect them at times when needed. Get the whole story and take responsibility when you might have communicated or not communicated timely. Your employees know you are human too and what to hear when you might need a bit of forgiveness and support as well.

Ask for input and feedback , seeking opinions of your employees will show them that you appreciate their thoughts and feelings.

Be vulnerable and open with them it builds trust and shows you appreciate them and are open to receive their appreciation and kindness they want to share with you.

Successes will happen and along with this there will be failures and challenges all along this adventure of Partners in the Gospel. At times there may not be tangible results to point to, so it is important to not solely focus on praising only positive outcomes with recognition, please do not miss the special opportunities to connect , support and appreciate . Create some new traditions , make space for recognition, and appreciate



and celebrate each other along the way. Feeling a sense of belonging can really lead to better retention, productivity and motivation can increase and above all happiness.