

# STAFFING LETTER

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## Tap Into the Power of Thanks: Six Effective (and Affordable) Ways to Improve Your Organization's Morale, Motivation and The Bottom Line

Foxboro, Massachusetts, PRNews-wire – Employees go through their days assuming that their coworkers, and especially their bosses, don't notice or appreciate all of the hard work that they do. And if that's the way they feel, employees won't likely be engaged and productivity will be mediocre at best.

"In the midst of an already tough economy, this is the absolute last thing you want for your organization," says Todd Patkin, author of *Finding Happiness: One Man's Quest to Beat Depression and Anxiety and – Finally – Let the Sunshine In*. "In a very real way, tapping into the spirit of Thanksgiving can tip the balance between success and growth and stagnation and failure."

If you're a leader who wants to harness the power of thanks (or even an employee who wants to start a grassroots movement), try Patkin's how-to tips:

Always say "thank you." With just a few seconds out of your day, you can improve another person's mood, day, and productivity level. You'll also be making yourself more approachable and likeable and your team will begin to relate to you more positively.

"I have found that consistent and heartfelt recognition – when it is deserved, of course – is a better

long-term motivator than money," Patkin shares.

Take intent into account. Patkin often tried to show his employees just how much he appreciated them by sending high achievers to sports games, highlighting various employees in company newsletters, planning company parties, etc. Sometimes those plans were well received; other times they weren't.



"There will always be someone who says, 'Gosh, the food at this party tastes horrible,' for example," he says. "However, despite negative feedback, showing gratitude is always the right thing . . . and the

majority of non-complainers probably loved your gesture."

Invest in others. Leaders, constructively tell your people how they can improve their performances. If you're a team member, be proactive about asking your coworkers and boss how you're doing and how you can get better at your job. And no matter what your position is, learn how to receive constructive criticism.

"Showing others that you care enough to either help them or to improve yourself is a form of gratitude, because you're demonstrating that your team is worth the investment of your time, energy and advice," Patkin asserts.

Learn to graciously accept thanks. How you respond to appreciation is also important. Brushing off compliments or ignoring expressions of gratitude – even if it's because you'd rather stay out of the spotlight – will discourage the person complimenting you from reaching out to others in the same way.

"Whenever someone thanks you or notices something positive about you, truly engage with them and let them know that their words have been meaningful," Patkin recommends.

Keep the gratitude going outside of your organization. Thank your

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customers or the people you serve for choosing your organization.

"This is something that many clients don't hear, so when they do, their loyalty to your company is strengthened," Patkin says.

Use gratitude to reinforce stellar performances. Using gratitude to shape your team's habits and priorities can be every bit as valuable as training programs and industry conferences . . . at a fraction of the time and cost.

"Whenever I saw an employee going out of her way to make sure that the product a client purchased was the best possible value, I thanked her for doing it," Patkin recalls. "If a store manager made a mistake and came clean to me about it, I thanked him for that, too. Never forget that whatever you acknowledge positively will be repeated."

"Throughout my years of leadership, I became increasingly more amazed by just how strong the power of thanks really is," Patkin concludes. "Gratitude is an amazing motivator, it strengthens employee and customer loyalty, and it really can allow you to see a positive change in your company's bottom line. And especially in today's tough economic environment, it's extra-important to give your people something to be positive about and thankful for." ■

**Todd Patkin** is the author of *Finding Happiness: One Man's Quest to Beat Depression and Anxiety and - Finally - Let the Sunshine In* (StepWise Press, 2011, ISBN: 978-0-9658261-9-8, \$19.95).

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*Dare To Lead*, By Byrd Baggett

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