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# What Employees Want

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**There are two things people want more than sex and money. . .  
recognition and praise. —Mary Kay Ash**

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**T**his section of the book will be kept relatively short, so you can get to the “good stuff” quickly. But I think it’s important to touch on why recognition and praise are important in the workplace, even if it’s just a brief overview.

Research tells us that employees want some specific things from their jobs (Blanchard & Bowles, 1998). These are

- The ability to provide for their families and themselves
- Control of achieving a goal
- Worthwhile work
- Recognition of staff efforts and accomplishments

Most of us don’t have much control over paychecks, so we’ll pass over that the first one and move on to control of achieving a goal.

## Control of Achieving a Goal

*“When teachers were asked, ‘What is it that makes you so outstanding?’ they readily remarked that they had an administrator who encouraged and supported them, trusted their professionalism, and made them feel like a significant member of a very important team.”*

—Neila A. Connors

In his work, Maslow talked a lot about reaching levels of belonging and esteem (Podmoroff, 2005). Teachers and staff members having a say in the development of the school or district goals falls nicely into supporting the development of these needs: belonging and esteem. When teachers are in a positive environment, one in which they are contributing towards the common goal, they are more apt to share their fulfillment with their students in a win/win situation. “Purpose is a powerful motivator. The inherent recognition in purpose comes from seeing progress towards goals” (Ventrice, 2003, p. 25). Sharing a common goal and working towards its attainment doesn’t just benefit the individual person; it is a major contributor to school growth. Additionally, it is one of the leading factors as to why teachers stay at given schools or in the profession entirely.

Simply stated, folks that work in schools don’t want to be treated as unthinking drones. They want to be part of the plan, they want their input to be heard, and they want their ideas to be taken seriously.

## Worthwhile Work

*“People have to understand how what they do contributes to the well-being of mankind.”*

—Blanchard and Bowles

We spend nearly one-third of our adult lives at work, so it stands to reason that we want our workplaces to be a source of need fulfillment. When that happens, our lives are full and enriched, and we can focus our attention on finding meaning through work. When it doesn't happen, we are so preoccupied with finding other ways to satisfy our needs that we are never truly present at work (Podmoroff, 2005).

As educators, we can easily understand the importance of our work. In our young people, we nurture academic talent, mold behavior, increase occupational choices, develop civic accountability, and encourage personal maturity. In sum, we shape the future.

We cannot assume, however, that all our school staff members feel appreciated in this work, and we should not take their efforts for granted. Instead, we should highlight and recognize their contributions to the present and the future, both because it is the right thing to do and because it will motivate them to continued excellence. Whitaker argued in *Motivating and Inspiring Teachers: The Educational Leader's Guide for Building Staff Morale*, "Principals who take the time necessary to make sure that teachers understand their worth will find that classroom instruction will improve as teachers' self-efficiency improves" (Whitaker, Whitaker, & Lumpa, 2000, p. 188). We have all experienced the joy and honor we feel when a former student finds us and lets us know that we've made a difference in their lives. That's why we teach, that feeling. Administrators and other leaders can harness that commitment and passion by reminding our staffs that they matter.

The contributions teachers make to the development of young people is readily apparent. We must also remember to recognize and reward the other members of our staffs whose

## **KEY CONTRIBUTORS**

### *Praise, Thanks*

Recognize staff members for making a “Key Contribution.” Buy large gold skeleton keys. Create a certificate and present it and the key to parents, staff, or community members who do something significant for your school or district. (K.C., La Conner Middle School, Washington, [http://www.wacaonline.org/resources\\_staff.html](http://www.wacaonline.org/resources_staff.html))

**Needed:** *large cardboard keys, certificates*

**NOTE:** You probably can get pre- printed large keys at party decoration stores.

Date Used: \_\_\_\_\_ Recipient: \_\_\_\_\_

## **LET IT GROW**

### *Opportunity*

For school employees who live in cities or don’t have access to garden space, the school can set aside space on campus for spring and summer staff gardens. Employees can grow their own plants, flowers, or vegetables. If you’re lucky, they’ll share part of the bounty with you or even with the school kitchen.

**Needed:** *pre-laid out and sized garden spaces*

**NOTE:** Make sure the staff members know that they need to provide their own seeds, plants, and tools.

Date Used: \_\_\_\_\_ Recipient: \_\_\_\_\_

FIGURE 5.3  
**Friday Fishwrap**

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## **The Friday Fishwrap**

To: All ESD Employees  
From: Superintendent/Principal Mary Sakuma  
March 17, 2009

### **Leprechaun Mischief**

Friday! No, Monday! NOOO . . . Tuesday!

A mischievous little leprechaun got hold of the Friday Fishwrap and delayed its delivery until today . . . He also altered the color of the paper usually used for the Fishwrap.

Bad leprechaun!

### **Science & Art Fair Tonight!**

Come out and enjoy an evening of art and science in the Junction Gym. The event starts at 6 p.m. Refreshments will be available for purchase.

### **Faculty Meetings**

There will be a K-8 faculty meeting on Monday, March 23, from 3:15 to 4:15 p.m. Please bring your Tools for Teaching book and your VIP power point, if possible.

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### **Kudos**

*A big kudos for our maintenance crew who turned "The Swamp" into a 1st class softball field by opening day!*

• • •

**Important Dates**

Okay, we have some final-final dates for the spring calendar:

Thursday, March 19	Board meeting
Monday, March 23 @ 9 a.m.	D.A.R.E. Graduation
Friday, March 27 @ 10 a.m.	E.S. Awards Assembly
Friday, April 3 @ 1:15 p.m.	M.S. Awards Assembly
Tuesday, April 7 @ 6:15 p.m.	8th grade Cake Auction
Friday, April 10	Snow Day
Mon–Fri April 13–17	Spring Break
Monday, April 20	Staff Development (teachers)
Thursday, April 23	Board meeting
Thursday, May 14	Middle School Open House (Incl. 6th & 8th grade Project Night)
Wednesday, May 20	4th to 8th grade Band Concert
Thursday, May 28	Elementary Open House

*(Contributed by Mrs. Mary Sakuma)*

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**Good for a Few Laughs**

Sammy had stolen the rabbi's gold watch. He didn't feel too good about it, so he decided, after a sleepless night, to go to the rabbi.

*"Rabbi, I stole a gold watch."*

*"But Sammy! That's forbidden! You should return it immediately!"*

*"What shall I do?"*

*"Give it back to the owner."*

*"Do you want it?"*

*"No, I said return it to its owner."*

*"But he doesn't want it."*

*"In that case, you can keep it."*

• • •

## PICTURE THIS

### *Praise, Thanks*

Take pictures of your staff as they work with students and post the pictures around campus. If you have access to a poster maker, it will make this project come alive. You can add captions describing the activity. See Figures 6.1 and 6.2.

**Needed:** *access to a poster printer*

Date Used: \_\_\_\_\_ Recipient: \_\_\_\_\_

FIGURE 6.1  
**Picture This 1**

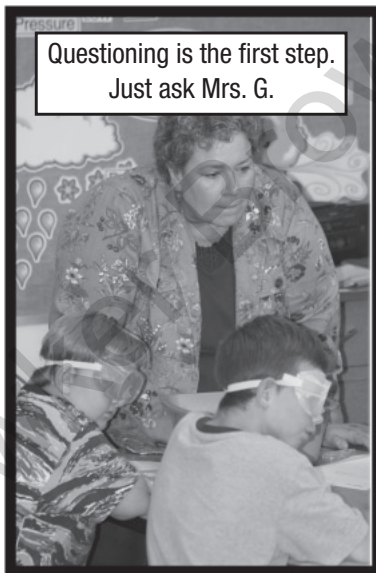
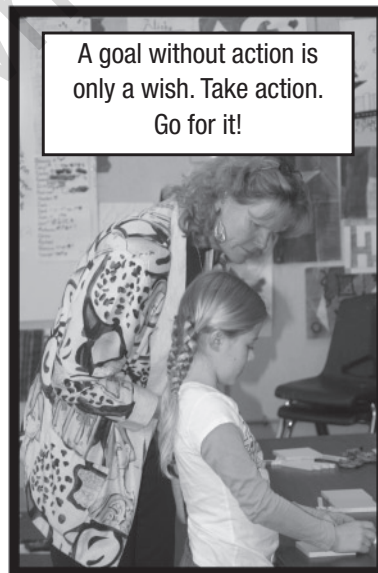


FIGURE 6.2  
**Picture This 2**





## WORKING AT THE CAR WASH

*Praise, Thanks*

This would be a good reward for the employee of the month. Bring your hose, bucket, and rags to the staff parking lot, and wash the recognized employee's car. It pairs nicely with a favored parking space. It's better if you do it in the parking lot rather than taking the car to a car wash. It's a bigger gesture. You can expand on this by having your entire administration team wash the cars of all of the employees in the parking lot.

**Needed:** *water source, buckets, rags, towels, soap*

**NOTE:** Make sure you remind your administration staff so they can bring a change of clothes.

Date Used: \_\_\_\_\_ Recipient: \_\_\_\_\_

## WRAP IT UP

*Respect*

*Do you long to be a Christmas elf?*

Set up a workstation, and wrap the gifts that the staff members are going to give out. If you are personally going to provide this service, I suggest you recognize folks with a coupon that outlines your appreciation for their services. The coupon would entitle them to your "expert" gift wrapping services for up to 10 packages during the holiday season. If you want to do this for your entire staff I suggest recruiting the help of your student council to help you wrap gifts. You should be there too. Digging in and working with the kids is a great way to build rapport.

**Needed:** *music, wrapping paper, tape, ribbon*

Date Used: \_\_\_\_\_ Recipient: \_\_\_\_\_

Item	Page	EFFORT NEEDED				ELEMENTS ADDRESSED				
		Low	Moderate	More	Thanks	Praise	Respect	Opportunity		
Midterm break	90		X		X					
Military families	91		X		X		X			
No food, no meeting	41	X			X		X			
No interruptions	43	X					X			
One-on-one	118			X			X			
Open your house	92		X		X		X			
Pamper room	119			X	X					
Pay them/shake them	119			X	X					
Paying thanks	120			X	X	X		X		
Perk up	43	X			X					
Picture this	121			X	X	X		X		
Pizza anyone	44	X			X					
Place mats	92		X		X	X		X		
Plan a staff field trip	44	X					X	X	X	
Planning days	45	X					X	X	X	