

AN EDUCATIONAL PUBLICATION

THE WORKPLACE OF THE

FUTURE



20¢

**DISCOVERING THE
SCIENCE OF EMPLOYEE
APPRECIATION**

awardco

The Workplace of the Future

Discovering the Science of Employee Appreciation

Welcome, traveller, to the workplace of the future! Here we celebrate the past, delight in the present, and look forward with optimism to the future—a future we are creating together today through the power of SCIENCE!



The Rocketship of Progress is propelled onward and upward by the rocket fuel of science. But you, dear reader, may be wondering: “how might the wonders of science propel my organization to new worlds of promise, possibility and wonder?!” “What can I do to bring this future organizational utopia to my workplace today?!”

Excellent questions indeed! Before they can be further examined, we must first explore the workforce perils of today. Peruse the list below. Are any of these nefarious occurrences keeping your organization from achieving the impressive innovation and pivotal progress you strive for daily?

- The Great Resignation
- Increased turnover
- Decreased productivity
- Decreased employee happiness
- Employee discontent
- Difficult employee interpersonal relationships
- Lack of team cooperation

If so, you're not alone! Many HR leaders share your woes!

The ills listed above are common to many modern organizations and, if left untreated, lead to microscopic organizational fractures that compound quietly until they're so large they need company-wide initiatives to fix. Such initiatives are expensive, time consuming, and often ineffective because they're simply too broad. But never fear, dear reader! There is a simple, yet effective tonic that has been scientifically proven to cure your ailments now and prevent future fractures: GRATITUDE.

Perhaps this solution seems overly simple, like your friendly neighborhood druggist prescribing a baby aspirin a day to improve your heart health. However,

just like baby aspirin, a small dose of gratitude & appreciation in the workplace can fix the most pressing and painful aspects of work—and fix them before they happen. It is a simple concept any Tom, Dick, or Sally can understand: someone who is thanked will be more motivated, productive, and happier. And people that feel that way at work will spread that to others like a work-wide pandemic of positivity.

Daily demonstrations of gratitude and consistent employee appreciation bring the workplace of the future to you today! Come with us as we explore the science of gratitude, the why and the how, and how you can move forward from the problems of yesterday into a shining, bright, and glorious future for you and your company.

Gratitude Science!

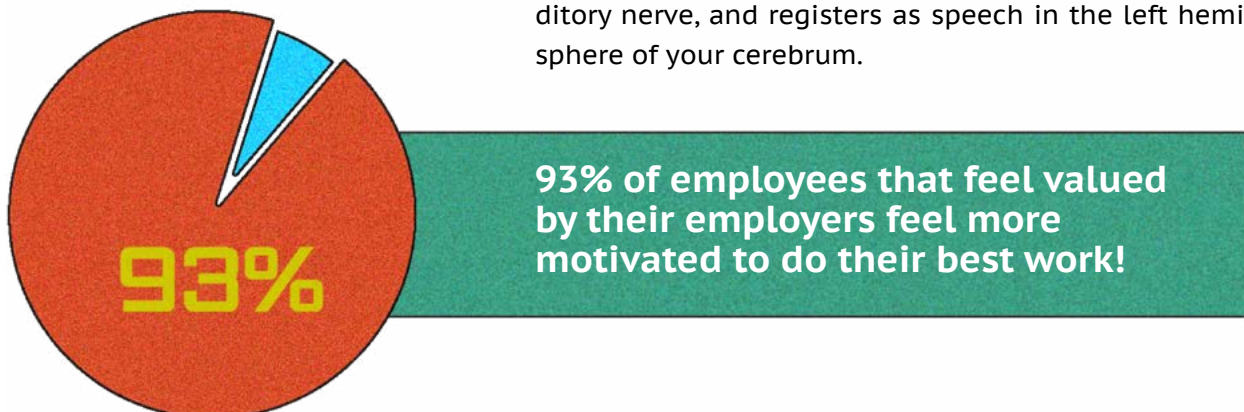
The power of gratitude cannot be overstated, and yet all too often in the workplaces of today it is overlooked as unnecessary. Employees feel this way, too: [40%](#) of modern workers say that they're not recognized enough, which leads to feeling underappreciated and a decreased sense of belonging within their organization. The natural outcome of such sinister symptoms is disengagement and an ever-growing rate of turnover in the organization.

Fortunately, gratitude has been scientifically proven to be effective in promoting healthy organizational outcomes like increased retention, productivity, engagement, and employee happiness. In fact, [93%](#) of employees that feel valued (i.e. thanked!) by their employers report feeling more motivated to do their best work, and 88% reported feeling more engaged overall.

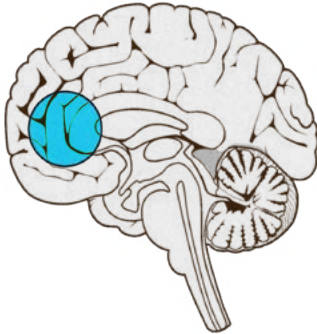
Behold the inner workings of the brain:

Jane from engineering notices the TPS report you've handed in is filled out thoroughly and follows all best-practices. A rare occurrence! She responds with a smile and a heartfelt expression of thanks!

Her expression of thanks floats gently through the air where it enters your auditory system, tickles your auditory nerve, and registers as speech in the left hemisphere of your cerebrum.

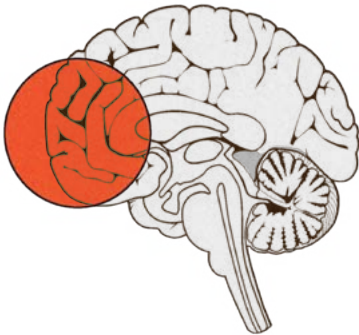


Your brain processes Jane's expression of thanks in a series of lightning-fast neurological processes, and activates the brain in dramatic ways!



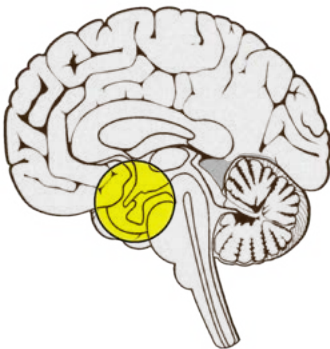
The Anterior Cingulate Cortex

- The A.C.C. is responsible for feelings of empathy, impulse control, emotion, and decision-making. An essential set of functions!
- Giving or receiving gratitude helps you empathize, calm your emotions and impulses, and make better decisions.



The Medial Prefrontal Cortex

- The great mediator! The M.P. C. helps in better decision making (do you notice a pattern, dear reader?), using both logic AND emotion to make more productive choices!
- Gratitude in the medial prefrontal cortex helps you make better decisions—just like the anterior cingulate cortex. Double the decision making power!



The Hypothalamus

- Linked to the part of the nervous system that controls body temperature, hunger, sleep, and emotional activity, the hypothalamus keeps your body dynamically stable!
- Gratitude calms you down. It helps you control your ability to stabilize yourself emotionally AND physically. It's a win win win.

In other words, when gratitude is received (OR given! It works both ways!) brain activity is better regulated, decision-making is improved, and the whole self is more powerfully grounded physically and emotionally. A great many pharmaceutical companies make a lot of money selling drugs that regulate the brain in similar ways—and while many are needed and effective, we can perhaps add gratitude to the prescription for better work and a better life.

Here's a bonus science tidbit: because gratitude helps employees make better decisions and lead healthier lives, your insurance costs might actually go DOWN as you appreciate employees more. Science leads to less expense? Indeed it does!

Unappreciated Employee

- Unhappy
- Negative
- Unfocused
- Emotionally volatile
- Poor decision maker
- Hungry
- Hot and bothered

Appreciated Employee

- Happy
- Positive
- Productive
- Emotionally stable
- Improved decision making
- Creative
- Kind
- Better relationships
- Great with kids
- Always has a good joke
- Better smile
- Smoother skin
- Great hair
- Lower insurance premiums

SCIENCE SUMMARY!

Gratitude provides the giver AND the receiver:

- Calmer emotions!
- More empathy!
- Better decision making!
- More physiological stability!
- Greater happiness!



Generations of Gratitude

So, dear reader, it's clear that gratitude has a measurable impact on the brain. But does it influence different brains in different ways? Many leaders might find themselves saying "sure, gratitude may work elsewhere, but our workforce is too [young/experienced/diverse]." We conducted an in-depth double-blind physician-supervised peer-reviewed industry-published comprehensive study on how gratitude penetrates and influences the minds of different generations to find out, and what we discovered may surprise you.

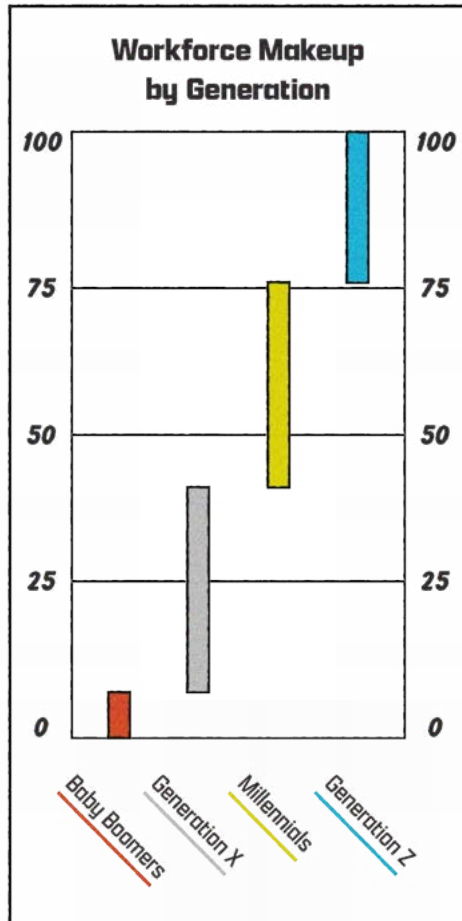
Baby Boomers

Contrary to what you might imagine, the majority of Baby Boomers (adults born 1946-1964, [21%](#) of the population) are still working, and are staying in the workforce at higher rates than any of the generations before them. Currently [6%](#) of the workforce is composed of Baby Boomers. That means though Boomers make up comparatively less of the population, they're still making up statistically more of the workforce. They've seen it all, done it all, and are still contributing at a high-level. Don't count these seasoned veterans out.

What does this mean for you as an HR leader? You need to know how to appropriately appreciate and show gratitude to those Baby Boomers in your workforce. Here's our science-backed recommendation:

Thank them. Regularly.

When you show gratitude to the Boomers in your workforce we guarantee you'll see a change in them and their work.



Gen X

Gen X (born 1965-1980) makes up [20%](#) of the population and [35%](#) of the workforce. These individuals are likely your tried and true workhorses. Dependable, reliable, and almost always ready for a good conversation about MTV, your Gen-Xers make up a really solid chunk of your workforce. How can you ensure they have the emotional tools they need to be successful?

Appreciate them. Often.

Showing your appreciation to these employees will have an incredible impact on their brain function and their work overall (see above). Trust the science.

Millennials

Millennials (born 1981-1996) make up [22%](#) of the population and [35%](#) of the workforce. This is the most prominent, and perhaps the loudest, group in the modern workforce. Millennials are the backbone of your organization. How can you make sure they feel valued and return incredible value to your company?

Show your gratitude. Frequently.

Millennials often get a bad rap, and may be seen as entitled, flighty, lazy, and unfocused. These misplaced labels often stem from millennials' need to be seen, fulfilled, and valued at work. If you need proof: 40% of employees would put more energy into their work if they were thanked more often. Appreciate your millennials and they'll appreciate you—and in return they might just be your most powerful asset in the days ahead.

Gen Z

Gen Z (born 1997-2012) might not be on your radar yet, but they should be. They currently make up about [20%](#) of the population and nearly [24%](#) of the workforce. Some research findings report that Gen Z doesn't seem to be as proactive about work as previous generations. This perceived disinterest in work may come from their upbringing in relatively prosperous times. But make no mistake: your organization will benefit from the energy Gen Z provides. How can you attract the best talent Gen Z has to help your organization thrive?

Make employee appreciation part of your culture. Tirelessly.

Gratitude impacts retention in powerful ways. In one study 63% of respondents said that feeling appreciated at work made them much less likely to look for another job. If you could improve retention rates by [63%](#) you'd love it, right? Right. Now think about recruiting. If you could make employee appreciation one of your most powerful pieces of culture, think of the caliber of talent you'd attract and retain!

SCIENCE SUMMARY!

No matter the age, thanks gets through to ALL brains.





Thankers' Almanac!”

When we talk about gratitude, what are we saying exactly? Are we talking about appreciation or thanks, or both? Let's lay the groundwork of SCIENCE so we know exactly what we're saying.

Thanks: An expression of gratitude.

“We'd like to give thanks for the wonders of science!”

Appreciation: A full understanding of the situation. Gratitude.

“Showing appreciation is a great way to recognize employees for their hard work.”

Gratitude: The quality of being thankful; readiness to show appreciation for and to return kindness.

“We express our gratitude for the way you've conducted yourself!”

Bonus definition: Recognition is a synonym for thanks, appreciation, AND gratitude. There's no better way to express your gratitude, appreciation, and thanks for your employees than recognizing them.

If all that was too heavy on the word-related science, think of it this way: gratitude, appreciation, recognition, and thanks are all part of the same family—and there's no wrong way to express those feelings.

The Workplace of Today

So, intrepid explorer, we've gone over the facts, the statistics, and the science of gratitude and employee appreciation. Now let us delve into how best to appreciate your employees in the most powerful ways!

As an HR leader, it's invigorating to know you're doing your best, even if it may not feel like it some days. The science supports that most HR leaders are doing everything they can to show appreciation to their employees. We conducted a study with HR.com and discovered many thrilling insights, including that 96% of organizations offer some form of rewards and recognition. Think of it, dear reader! Almost every organization has some form of rewards and recognition! The workplace of tomorrow is here!

But wait! Is the workplace of tomorrow really here? Only 19% of HR leaders said the recognition and rewards programs they had were highly effective. Perhaps even

more shocking: 52% said the most common negative feedback they received on their programs was that recognition wasn't frequent enough.

Thus we see, dear reader, that while most organizations of the future have some form of rewards and recognition, the vast majority of those feel like it isn't very effective. Why?

- Rewards and recognition aren't frequent enough.
- They're only focused on a few individuals (like high-performing sales reps).
- Reward options are lacking.

It's time to do better.

SCIENCE SUMMARY!

The dusty workscape of today has three failings:

- Rewards and recognition aren't frequent enough.
- They're only focused on a few individuals (like high-performing sales reps).
- Reward options are lacking.

The Workplace of Tomorrow

Finding success in the workplace of tomorrow depends on the knowledge you gain today—and we have the knowledge you need. We'll help you face the failings of yesterday with the tactics of today, and propel you forward on the pathway of progress to a new tomorrow!

The Workplace of Today: Rewards and recognition aren't frequent enough.

The Workplace of Tomorrow: Encourage gratitude everywhere with everyone—and start with yourself.

If your employees feel like rewards and recognition aren't frequent enough in your organization, there's one simple, tried-and-true solution: start recognizing and thanking your employees more often. It's simple science, as we've discussed. Appreciating employees boosts engagement, and that [increases profitability](#) by as much as 21%, strengthens retention by [reducing turnover](#) by 31%, and helps the brain [mediate anxiety and depression](#) by better regulating the emotion and decision-making centers of the brain.

Furthermore, if finances are a concern, never fear! Frequency of recognition and rewards doesn't have to be dependent on budget. As a leader you can strive to have empathy for others—and then recognize them, thank them, and support them. Notice others around you, and make a special effort to call out their successes.

Expressing gratitude will serve two purposes: not only will recognition and rewards increase (because saying "great job!" is also a social reward), but you'll inevitably start recognizing other people around you, not JUST the high performers.

The Workplace of Today: Recognition is only focused on a select few.

The Workplace of Tomorrow: Expand your egalitarian efforts of recognition.

The power of recognition is a benefit to all employees everywhere, no matter their status or job role. Unfortunately too many organizations become complacent in their recognition efforts, and default to recognizing high performers only. They're the ones contributing the most, right?

This is old science, based on nothing but anecdotal evidence that belongs in the past. Leaders in employee appreciation realize that recognizing high performers only isn't enough. In fact, these particular HR leaders understand this so well that they are 2X more likely to have multiple recognition programs that highlight all contributions by employees.

How can you become an employee appreciation leader in your field? Consider the following:

Review current rewards and recognition programs.

As we mentioned before, knowledge is what will power your progress. Knowing where you're starting from will help you determine where you want to go. Do you have any recognition programs? Are they effective? Conduct a simple audit to find out, then act on the feedback you receive!

Celebrate your employees

- Every employee deserves to be celebrated no matter what their particular role. How do you do this? Reflect on what every employee deserves to be celebrated for!
- Employee appreciation day (the first Friday in March)
- Birthdays
- Service anniversaries
- Holidays



Science Tidbit!

If you're not sure where to start with celebrating holidays, or need some pieces of collateral to promote your holiday celebrations internally, our science-certified [celebration kits](#) will help!

The Workplace of Today: Reward options are lacking.

The Workplace of Tomorrow: Offer the potent power of choice.

HR leaders of tomorrow understand that offering limited rewards to employees will cause stagnation of the soul, and will stifle the success of the future. In our study with HR.com we found that ineffective employee appreciation programs perform poorly because they don't offer enough reward options for their employees. 77% of HR leaders said their employees told them this was the #1 reason their programs were ineffective—all from a simple lack of reward options.

What do workplaces of today use for employee appreciation in place of providing the power of choice? Perks. Perks like workplace snacks. A ping pong table. The occasional pizza party or work-provided lunch. However, these perks often are used as a stop-gap measure to treat a symptom rather than strike the source of the problem.

Perks don't communicate value. At best they're a lackluster effort to satiate appreciation-starved employees, and at worst they're used to cover up an emotionally and mentally abusive work environment. Perhaps even more disconcerting: perks still cost money, but is that money being spent on helping employees feel truly valued? We argue that it is not.

Perks don't enter the brain. They don't convey appreciation. And they might even alienate some employees that feel that the perks are a pittance in a polarizing work environment. What DOES enter the brain? Gratitude. Gratitude creates a fertile ground for engagement—and one of the best ways you can convey gratitude to your employees is to let them choose their own rewards when they are recognized and appreciated at work.

The science is simple: when an employee is able to choose their own reward, they'll feel a [greater sense of value](#) from that reward. Another way to say that? When an employee feels cared for at work by being given the power of choice in their rewards, they'll care more about their work.

Science Tidbit!

With Awardco you can offer your employees more choice than any other employee appreciation and recognition platform. And there's zero markups because of our relationship with Amazon.

SCIENCE SUMMARY!

Encourage gratitude everywhere with everyone—and start with yourself.

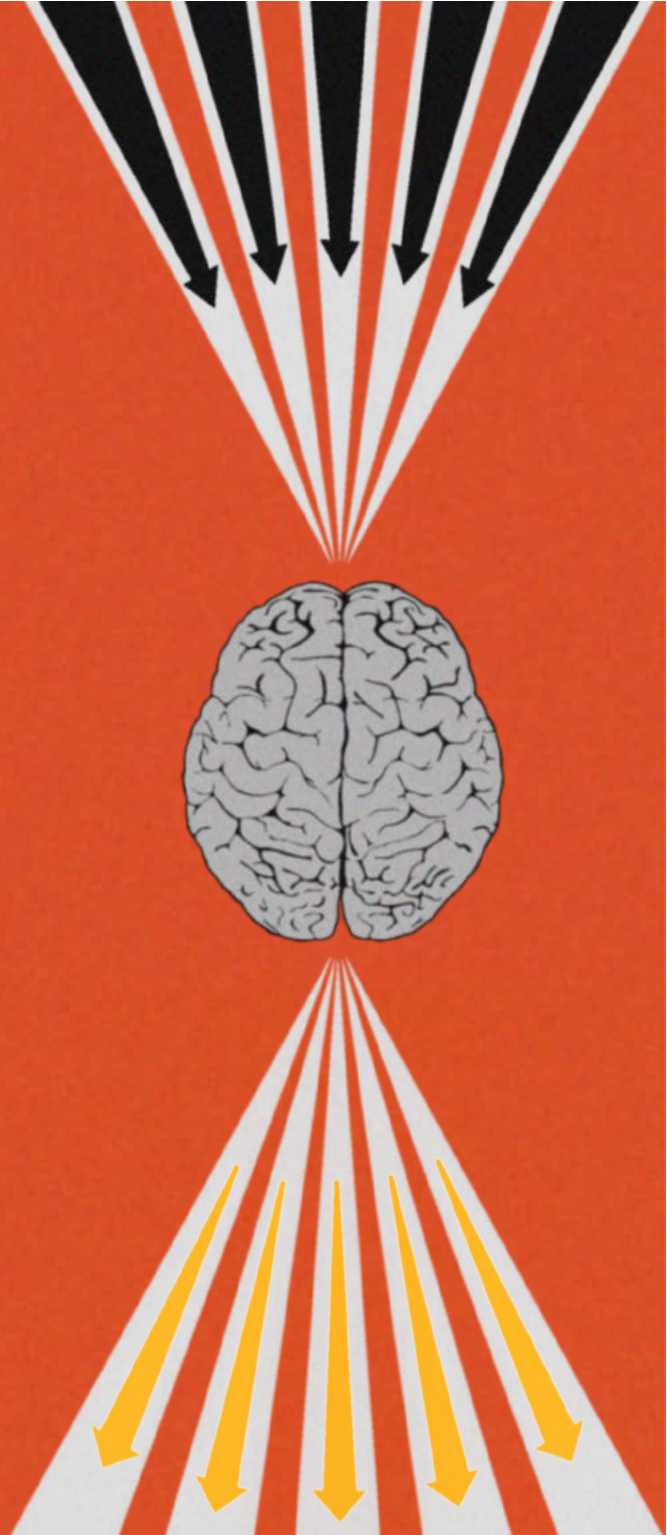
Expand your egalitarian efforts of recognition.

Offer the potent power of choice.

The Future of Employee Appreciation

Now dear reader, we've covered a lot of ground! The science of gratitude is powerful, and has a most potent impact on employees as you express appreciation. The challenges you face as an HR leader are indeed challenges to be reckoned with. It is all too obvious that many employers don't understand the nuances of appreciation, and that employees aren't being appreciated enough as a result. These cause micro fissures in every organization that can lead to appalling avalanches of employee dissatisfaction, turnover, lack of productivity, and lackluster engagement.

However, you are equipped with the power you need to succeed. You understand the simple, yet profound impact of expressing thanks to your employees. You know how to appreciate them in many different, powerful ways. You understand what you can do now to begin bringing your workplace to a place no one has gone before. With this newfound knowledge you can press forward with your efforts to make your organization a shining beacon, a bastion of employee appreciation and engagement, and a workplace of wonder.



Experience the Future

Bring your organization into the workplace of tomorrow!

Call 800.765.4321 | Email sales@awardco.com