



**The Power of Gratitude, Thank You!**  
**By Ann Golden Eglé, MCC**  
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Never underestimate the power of acknowledging your team for their contributions. As a leader, your job is to set and communicate high expectations for your people. Give them something to reach for, something for which to feel proud when accomplished.

When they meet your expectations let them know. Gratitude is one of your most powerful yet underused motivational tools. Your people need to know that you hear, see and value them. They need to feel appreciated. This simple gesture produces volumes of positive results. An attitude of gratitude is contagious.

For example, I've heard Gary Fish, founder and chairman of Deschutes Brewery, claim that one of his *top ten keys to success* is in hiring people smarter than he is to do their specific jobs. He doesn't need to know how to do their jobs. Instead, he's wise enough to hire the best and then trust them to perform to the top of their ability.

How inspired to excel are they when they hear Mr. Fish claim that they are smarter than him? When they feel trusted and their skills are appreciated by him. That's quite an acknowledgment that flows throughout the organization.

Take a leader of a different species, one who looks solely for how their team can improve. This leader is constantly looking for and communicating things that are wrong. Wrong with their people, their performance and results. We all know leaders like this. They have an attitude of discontent that also flows throughout the organization.

Which leader do you want to follow? Which leader are you? Which do you aspire to be? Any room for improvement?

Gratitude is a powerful motivator. Building company cultures of gratitude and appreciation can transform our work lives, leading to deeper connections to each other and to the work being done.

Appreciation is a cornerstone of the culture at Southwest Airlines, named by *Forbes* as [America's #13 Best Employer of 2018](#). One way the company appreciates employees is by paying attention to special events in their personal lives—from kids' graduations to marriages to family illnesses—and recognizing those with small gestures like flowers and cards. "We're all encountering different obstacles in our life, we're all celebrating different things in our life," says Cheryl Hughey, managing director of Culture at Southwest.

Though research on gratitude has exploded over the past two decades, studies of gratitude at work are still somewhat limited; results, so far, link it to [more positive emotions](#), [less stress and fewer health complaints](#), a [greater sense that we can achieve our goals](#), [fewer sick days](#) and [higher satisfaction with our jobs](#) and [our coworkers](#).

This is a special time of year. The holiday season, Thanksgiving in particular, causes us to naturally think about all the special things in our lives and to express gratitude for them. This is a favorite time of year for many because we are surrounded by loved ones and visibly reminded of all that we must be grateful for.

Yet this may not a joyous time of year for each member of your team. There are year-end deadlines; an awareness that 2019 goals may not come to fruition; anniversaries of lost loved ones, loneliness and sadness.

Though a simple “thank you” expressed with sincerity is important to hear throughout the year, this is an especially important time to show your appreciation. People are vulnerable, they may not always see their worth, especially when stressed. You, as their leader, have a powerful role to play in helping them feel valued.

How do you create a culture of gratitude? Here are my **Top ‘7’ Tips**:

**Inside Job.** Know that genuine gratitude must come from within ‘you’. Create a gratitude routine. Take time each day to be grateful for all that you have. One of my executive coaching clients sets his timer for 12:34pm (1234) each day to alert him to take a moment to silently list things in his life for which he is grateful.

**Be sincere.** We can spot insincerity instantly, which diminishes credibility. Express gratitude only when you genuinely feel it.

**Be specific.** Your recipient needs to know exactly what they did right in your eyes. Saying “great job” is nice but not as powerful as; “Robert, the details you lined out in your presentation painted the perfect picture for everyone in the room to understand. Great job. Thank you!”

**Timing is of the essence.** The sooner you express gratitude, the better. Don’t leave people guessing whether their act or input was acceptable to you. Grow them through immediate recognition and gratitude.

**Do it often.** Studies show that the most successful leaders spend an average of one hour each week showing gratitude to their people.

**Encourage colleagues.** Gratitude is a natural state of mind for some, not all. Help colleagues see the benefits of acknowledging their teams, and their teams showing gratitude for one another.

**Practice, practice, practice.** Especially if expressing gratitude is not a natural state for you, start small and work your way up. Set a goal of expressing appreciation to one team member each day.

I challenge you to make a difference in the lives of your team members through the simple art of gratitude. You’ll thus increase their productivity, creativity and overall level of professional

fulfillment. Begin or strengthen your company attitude of gratitude today. It won't take time to reap the benefits.

Still curious? Leadership expert Adrian Gostick's newest book *Leading with Gratitude* will be released on March 3, 2020. You can preorder on Amazon today.

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