

10 Things Employees Wish Their Bosses Said More Often



HR Morning | Michele McGovern | February 17, 2023

Do employees leave work feeling appreciated and respected? Or do employees wish their bosses said more to make them feel that way?

There's a good chance they aren't hearing what they need to.

Just 31% of employees say they feel valued for the work they do, a TINYpulse survey found.

And it's not because employees don't do good work. And it's not because their direct bosses don't think their employees do good work.

Often, the problem is many front-line managers (and probably some people at the C and VP level) don't naturally know what to say or how to show it.

And it's a shame, because the right words boost morale, engagement and productivity.

"We are social beings and we get our greatest satisfaction out of helping others," says Todd Patkin, author of Finding Happiness. "And it doesn't have to involve money."

In fact, it doesn't have to involve much more than the right words, said sincerely.

According to Patkin's research, here's what employees want to hear more often, plus ideas on how any leader in your organization can use them:

1) 'Thank you ...'

Thank you is one of the most powerful phrases in the English language.

Follow it up with specifics, and employees will remember what you said and how it made them feel.

"Thank you

... for the extra work on the Acme account"

... the patience you used when dealing with the angry customer"

... your attention to detail on the report."

2) 'I need your help'

You might be the boss, but if you treat employees as partners they'll feel more valued.

Ask for their help, advice or attention, and they'll become more engaged in their work and with the company.

3) 'What do you need from me?'

Employees sometimes won't ask for what they need because they don't want to nag or be considered someone who is not resourceful. Or they may not even realize they need more resources.

By asking employees what they need, you make them comfortable asking for what they really need.

4) 'What would you like to do?'

Just like businesses change, so do people. Periodically, ask if your employees are interested in new challenges, responsibilities or roles.

You might not be able to make changes happen immediately. But you can probably start to move them in a new direction.

5) 'Everyone, listen to what Jill did!'

When you compliment and thank an employee for an achievement, share it. Tell the team (assuming the employee is comfortable with public praise).

Highlight successes on the company website and in your social media.

6) 'Here's where we stand'

Help employees make the connection between their roles and how the company works from top to bottom.

It's important for two reasons: You show them their value in the big picture. When they understand all the internal processes, you also reduce misunderstandings.

7) 'This is the bottom line'

Similarly, employees should be able to quantify their value to the company.

Show them how performance and the bottom line are related. Ask your CFO to help present the information in a clear way, if necessary.

8) 'That's OK'

Don't take mistakes lightly, but help employees recognize that missteps are part of professional growth.

Recognize the mistake, then focus on how the employee will fix it and keep it from happening again – plus, what can be learned from it.

9) 'You got this'

Tell employees you believe in their skills and knowledge by giving them tasks and taking a step back.

Micromanagement undermines trust and devalues employees.

10) 'I noticed that you...'

The little things add value to every team and shouldn't go unnoticed. Let employees know when you see the things they don't have to do but they do anyway – because that's what a team player does.

"I noticed you ...

... cleaned out the fridge"

... stayed a little late"

... helped Jaden understand"

... followed up with the client."