

Article:

THANK YOU VERY VERY VERY MUCH

There is no doubt that the recession caused pain for many companies and their employees and probably still does especially if one works in the public sector or in a private sector company dependent on public sector purchasing power. But despite the pain, the gain has been quite astonishing. Fewer companies collapsed than was anticipated, unemployment has only just reached 2.5 million; employment remains at near record levels; there are more stories in the press about organisations with growth plans than those announcing redundancy.

Why may we ask has the gain been so much better than anticipated and the answer is simple - employee flexibility. The stories I have heard: from clients; articles in newspapers and the trade press; articles in technical publications; from TV and radio programmes; and from flexible employees suggest to me that never before have employees given so much for so little immediate reward, other than perhaps job retention which is great in itself. How flexible have they been? They have worked longer for no extra pay; they have taken pay cuts or pay freezes; they have taken on more responsibilities; they have changed working hours and shift patterns; they have been supportive to change; and they have been creative in ensuring successful change. Yes they have just got on with it!

The next important question is: have you shown your appreciation? Receiving is one thing, giving another. While the economic circumstances have not been great for giving anything really tangible like an upward adjustment in pay there are plenty of things a company can do to show its appreciation.

The first one that comes to mind is thanking employees for doing a good job, taking on a new challenge or just giving support and of course don't forget to use

'please' when asking employees to 'go the extra mile'. Another great thank-you, and inexpensive too, used to recognise loyal service is to provide some shopping vouchers to employees every time they clock-up five years of service or to recognise a great suggestion to improve the organisation. Retaining employees in the business is motivational, promotes productivity and reduces the need for costly and sometimes risky hiring. If affordable a discretionary year-end bonus is a terrific way of thanking employees for their endeavours or if that is not affordable an out of work get together for a few drinks and a meal is often welcomed. Display a genuine interest in your workers family which is almost always appreciated. Bring cakes to work now and again to celebrate some event. Be flexible when employees need time off whether it be an unplanned holiday or leave to attend the dentist or doctor as these 'welfare' matters are very important. Lastly don't forget to give praise where praise is due.

Remember you won't get anything done without your employees. As Kenneth Blanchard, the author of The One Minute Manager once said "the best minute I spend is the one I invest in people".

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