

Celebrate the Wins at Work

I don’t think we focus on the positives nearly enough. This is true in our personal lives, but also in workplaces, where around two-thirds of people say they do not feel their efforts and achievements are acknowledged or valued.

To put it another way, there is not enough celebration of the wins.

Celebrating the wins at work has several benefits:

**1 It makes you and others feel good**: When we focus on making other people feel good by celebrating their wins, everyone wins. We get the feel-goods as well. It is also important to remember, we can celebrate people's wins in their personal lives as well.

**2 It shows progress towards important goals**: Yes, the big wins can be celebrated but even the small wins deserve acknowledgement. It could be those early steps in embracing change or it could be simply surviving a period of prolonged stress such as report card time or the end of a busy semester.

**3 It motivates the team**: When our individual and group efforts are acknowledged, it can be quite affirming and motivating. When our efforts are not acknowledged or someone steals the credit for our achievement, it is highly demotivating. One workplace I know has Wins of the Week as a regular agenda item, where everyone’s achievements are acknowledged.

**4 It unifies the team around something positive:** To achieve important shared goals, teams need to be cohesive. So, if you have a choice between unifying the team through a shared suffering or a shared celebration, I know which I would rather choose.

**5 It helps people focus more on the positive**: An interesting quirk of human beings is that many of us focus on the negative. But we gain a more balanced (and helpful) perspective when we also focus on what is right or going well.

**6 It reminds people of the purpose of their work**. When we are connected with an important purpose for our work, it becomes easier to put up with the challenges. When teachers, for example, celebrate a win they have had with a particular student, they remind themselves about why they do the work they do.

**7 It helps build a more positive culture at work**: Workplace culture is determined by the values and behaviours that are shared by the majority. If you’re in a leadership role, it is essential that you lead the way. When the leaders are celebrating the positives, it becomes easier to follow their example.

**8 It gives everyone a break from their everyday work**: Human beings are social animals and it strengthens relationships when we connect in ways that are not always work-related. Such breaks from the routine also help us to recharge.

Some workplaces celebrate their wins at the Christmas function at the end of the year. But I say, don’t delay. Look for opportunities now.

Celebrate the wins, whether it be genuine praise for a team member's achievement, sharing a success story with a colleague, finding an excuse to bring in a cake, organising wine and cheese for a Friday afternoon or arranging for your work to pay for a special lunch for your team.

You can be serious. You can be silly. You can dress up in a tuxedo if you like, but the rewards are there – for your colleagues, yourself and your workplace.

Working in schools can be stressful!

These articles are intended to help the great people who work in schools.

Key points

Most people say they do not feel their efforts or achievements are appreciated

Celebrating progress towards goals is affirming and motivating

Too many people focus on the negative and miss the positive aspects of their work in schools

Celebrating our successes reminds us of the purpose of our work

I always like to look on the optimistic side of life, but I am realistic enough to know that life is a complex matter.

Walt Disney

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