

## Leadership & Celebration

“Celebrations:

- Build pride and commitment among team members;
- Encourage team members to continue the behaviors or performance that you are celebrating;
- Support the growth of a positive team climate;
- Help members to get to know each other better;
- Send a message to members that their efforts are valued;
- Are fun (Parker, 2002, p. 274)!”

Reference: Parker, G. (2002). Team depot: a warehouse of over 585 tools to reassess, rejuvenate, and rehabilitate your team. San Francisco: Jossey – Bass/ Pfeiffer.

---

As leaders, why do we need to focus on celebration? After all, isn't it enough to give attention to conflict resolution, time management, strong team cohesion, producing an amazing product, and the list goes on...? Now we have to include celebration too?

The answer to that question is YES! Indeed, as leaders, we should embrace celebrations, and Parker (2002) tells us exactly why it is so important. Let's take a look at how those tenants can apply to our leadership situation.

Celebrations build pride and commitment among team members. In a world where people are stretched thin, and we continually hear that we need to do more with less, pride and commitment are extraordinarily motivating factors. Imagine how productive and efficient your team might be if you are confident that each member is committed to the team goals. When team members are proud of their team and the products that they produce, they are vested in the success of the team, and work harder to achieve the team's goals.

Rewards are powerful transactional motivating factors. Most individuals learn positive and negative reactions for good and bad behaviors fairly early in life. For example, you do your chores – you earn an allowance, you are rewarded with a dollar for every “A” on your report card, or conversely, you break a rule – you get punished, or you stay out past curfew – you get grounded. Therefore, by celebrating accomplishments, as a leader, you are encouraging your team members to continue the behaviors that you are celebrating. If a team meets a goal early and you, as the leader, reward your team by celebrating this accomplishment you are encouraging the team to continue striving to meet goals early or on time.

Celebrations are positive and support the growth of a healthy team climate. When a team celebrates a success, the environment of the team will become or remain positive. If you knew each week your supervisor would recognize and lead your work group in celebration for goals achieved, would you look forward to that time each week, if the celebration was genuine? Would

you view your work environment differently? It's the old adage—a team that plays together, stays together – and what better way to play than to have an old fashioned celebration to reward team members or team accomplishments.

The atmosphere of a celebration is very light. Individuals are relaxed and are more likely to mingle, talk and get to know one another. Celebrations can be the easiest way for team members to gel, or enhance member relationships in a non-formal, non-threatening kind of way. A major tenant of teamwork is cooperative effort by members of a group to achieve a common goal. How much more effective will the team be in achieving those goals if they've formed cohesive relationships?

We talked earlier about rewards as motivators. Celebrations are a great way to show that you, as a team leader, recognize the hard work that your team is putting forth and that you appreciate of their efforts. Think of it this way... Are you more willing to work for someone who recognizes, appreciates, and encourages you for your efforts, or for someone who does not offer individual encouragement and believes celebration and reward is unnecessary? When framed like that, I believe we can all see that one of these work environments is more positive than the other. We should all want our teams to be a positive environment. A "thank-you" is the quickest, and easiest was to make it so!

Finally, celebrations are FUN! Being able to infuse a little fun in the workplace is a great way to wrap up a week, or a challenging project. Letting people know you care and appreciate their efforts, allow people to relax after a task and get recharged before the next task comes up is a great future motivator. And who doesn't like to have a little fun—especially in our teams?

Join the celebration band wagon and discover how you might be able to have your own team celebrations!