

## LEADING WITH GRATITUDE

*By Marilyn Thiet*

Are you leading with an attitude of gratitude? Are you intentional in giving thought to all of the things your team is doing well or are you focused on all of the ways in which they are falling short? In my last few blogs I've talked about the issues many businesses are facing with disengaged employees and top performers leaving companies because they don't feel appreciated. The call to action has been to make sure you are telling your employees how much you appreciate their contributions and how important they are to the organization. This however, can be a difficult conversation to have if we don't believe it ourselves. If we are focused on what we wish the person would do better, we have trouble with coming across as being authentic in our positive feedback.

The first step to leading with gratitude is to practice being grateful. Spend time each day (or minimally each week) writing down the things you are grateful for within your team and organization. What are the things your employees are doing, the attitudes, the skills, and the behaviors they bring into the workplace, which makes a positive contribution? Be intentional about noticing and noting as many things as you can for each person, at all levels within the organization. A consistent practice of recognizing the talents and skills your team brings to the table will enable you to move into a place of gratefulness.

The critical follow up is to frequently tell each person how much you appreciate the specific things you have listed. Take someone to lunch with no agenda in mind other than to thank them for what they bring to the workplace each and everyday. Write notes of gratitude and appreciation for their unique skills or the way they approach their work. Stop by someone's desk unexpectedly to let them know specifically what it is you appreciate about them. Don't combine these messages with feedback on performance to goals, even if the news is good. Appreciate them for who they are, not the revenue or productivity they bring. And don't mix the message with any constructive feedback. Make that a separate conversation, in another place and time. Make this effort all about your appreciation.

I challenge you to try this over the next several weeks and see what happens. Live it, believe it, mean it. See what comes from your leadership with gratitude. My guess is you will be surprised at the shift in engagement and quite possibly performance from your change in attitude.