



Passionately proactive: Show appreciation before it's too late

Minutes from sitting down to write this article, I was notified of the passing of a close friend's mother. When we hear such news, dozens of things you wish you could have said begin to fill your mind. We all reflect on how much we cared for the individual and wished we would have shown our appreciation for who they were and what they provided to us as a friend or family member, proactively.

In business, when a loss or serious injury to an employee occurs, much is the same. However, in many companies, when a major incident occurs, employees see an outpouring of sympathy and passion for the safety of the injured and remaining work force. While this is the right thing to do, why is it not demonstrated so zealously prior to the event? Employees often wonder this as well when the level of passion decreases correspondingly with the passage of time. I call this unfortunate phenomenon "passionately reactive."

Showing appreciation and caring for others is not the new softer side of management some complain about. It is the reality of how we, as humans, operate. Mary Kay

Ash, founder of Mary Kay Cosmetics, once observed, "Everyone wants to be appreciated, so if you appreciate someone, don't keep it a secret." Moreover, in "First Break All the Rules," Marcus Buckingham and Curt Coffman found most people do not leave their employer because of their job; they leave because of their manager. Conduct an Internet search for "main reason employees leave their jobs" and the hundreds of thousands of returns will convince you the main reasons concern the immediate supervisor of the departing employee.

Appreciation for those you work for, or with, does not require complicated training, trinkets and incentive programs. Saying thank you for a job well done or desirable performance and letting an employee know how they have contributed to the company and its mission is one of the most effective, yet underutilized tools a manager has. Of course, it takes practice and needs to become part of daily routine to become a habit.

According to "The Incentive Federation" (2007), the use of tangible, noncash rewards

for employees, partners and customers has become a \$46 billion industry in the United States alone. I would argue the main reason for this is not born from the desires to show appreciation in differing ways; it is because the average manager is poor at providing positive feedback, showing simple, personal appreciation and offering the occasional sincere thank you. We all get busy and there are few individuals who have perfected the tactics outlined within this article, but it is hard to argue with how effective they are if executed and how easier it is to hand out gift cards, plaques or Jelly of the Month Club annual memberships.

Most employees are willing to provide more than what is required of them to collect a paycheck and go home. Most have a desire to want to feel a sense of accomplishment, feel they contributed to something and have substantial pride in their work. As a leader, what are you doing to create an environment or setting that further motivates this discretionary effort? If nothing, might you be creating a culture that actually demotivates the work force, resulting in average performance being viewed as

acceptable?

People work harder for supervisors who they view as mentoring, inspiring, trustworthy and above all, who care for them as an individual. If you agree that family is what most people care about more than anything else, can you name the family members of your close friends? Most likely you can, but what about your employees? If you don't know the most important people to those who work for and with you, how much of an influence will you be on their performance? Do not wait until someone is injured, passes or leaves your company to show your sincere appreciation. Become passionately proactive before it's too late.

Galloway is the coauthor of "STEPS to Safety Culture Excellence" and president of ProAct Safety. As a professional keynote speaker and internationally recognized safety excellence expert, he has helped hundreds of organizations within every major industry achieve and sustain excellence in performance and culture.

For more information, contact Galloway at (800) 395-1347 or email info@ProActSafety.com. ●



Our thermal insulating and anti-condensation spray-applied coatings have revolutionized the way companies insulate and protect surfaces.



Call today to find out how we can help you save time, money, and energy on your next project.

www.mascoat.com • 800-549-0043

Please visit us at NISTM International Aboveground Storage Tank Conference & Trade Show and NACE CORROSION 2013, booth no. 435