



# How to Reward Your Employees Without Spending a Dime

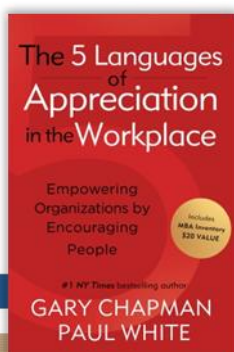
One of the biggest issues businesses, and organizations of any type, have to deal with today is the ***lack of financial resources***. We are in a new “world” where profits are slim in the for-profit sector, contributions are down in the non-profit sector, and budgets are being reduced in the governmental sector. Virtually every organization has to “do more with less”. This is creating a tremendous amount of stress within organizations – both for managers and supervisors, as well as for front line employees and even volunteers. There are less funds available for raises, bonuses, perks that were common in the past (use of a company car; tickets to sporting events), and even company parties.

At the same time, team members are dealing with the loss of staff within their departments and they have fewer funds available for training or technical upgrades. Resources are tight all over. At the same time, their workload and responsibilities have increased. More demands + fewer resources become a perfect recipe for stress. And stress over the long haul leads to burn out and discouragement.

## Communicating Meaningful & Impactful Appreciation

Here is what research shows are effective ways to communicate appreciation and encouragement to your team members, *without having to spend a lot of money*:

1. **Make sure your communication is personal and fitted to the individual rather than utilizing general communication across the organization.** The key component to effective appreciation and encouragement is the sense by the recipient that you mean what you say and that you took time to think about them personally. Conversely, we have found that a global “Thanks for a good job done” email to a wide range of people across the organization actually generates a negative response from most team members, given its impersonal nature and perceived minimal effort to complete.
2. **“Speak the language” of the person whom you are trying to encourage.** If the action we take to communicate appreciation to our colleagues isn’t what is important to them, we have wasted our time and effort. Communicating encouragement and appreciation which is impactful must “hit the target” for the recipient. This is why we developed the MBA Inventory – to identify each team member’s preferred languages of appreciation and to specify the actions most valued by them.
3. **The languages of appreciation people value the most don’t have to cost a lot of money.** Sure almost everyone would like a bonus or a raise – but for most



organizations that is not possible. The ways that people experience appreciation in the workplace fall into five categories:

**Words of Affirmation**

**Quality Time**

**Acts of Service**

**Tangible Gifts**

**Appropriate Physical Touch**

Most of these don't cost anything financially (even tangible gifts don't have to cost much). For example, some of the most cited ways employees report feeling valued include:

- \* Receiving a note from your supervisor complimenting you on the good job you are doing.
- \* A team member stopping by your office, spending a few minutes with you to see how you are doing.
- \* Obtaining some help from a colleague who notices you are "buried".
- \* Getting a gift certificate after you have worked long hours to complete a big project (for example, to go to the movies.)
- \* Having your co-workers give you a "high five" after you have successfully completed an important presentation.

Each person has their own preferred "language of appreciation". And within each language, there are specific actions that are most valued by that individual. None of these actions cost much money. But the key is to be able to use the right action with the right person, at the right time, and with a genuine spirit of appreciation. Then your actions will "hit the target" and be effective in encouraging those with whom you work.

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