

Expressing Appreciation in the Workplace

Have you ever talked with a coworker and been shocked to hear how different what they want from their workplace is from what you want? It's easy to forget that everyone expresses and receives appreciation in unique ways. The most effective communication of appreciation and encouragement occurs when the message matches the values of the recipient. Unfortunately, when the message of appreciation and encouragement is not the language valued by the recipient, it will tend to miss the mark and they will feel unappreciated.

Words of Affirmation	Use words (spoken or written) to communicate a positive message to another person	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ One-on-one affirmation▪ Public affirmation▪ Encourage, appreciate and affirm through verbal or written words▪ Send an unexpected note, text, or card
Quality Time	Spend time with someone and give them your undivided attention (maintain eye contact, remove distractions, listen to thoughts and feelings)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Individual or group lunches▪ Take a walk together▪ Make a phone call to check in▪ Plan for team building activities▪ Volunteer together
Acts of Service	Go out of your way to assist or help someone with something that needs to get done	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Let them know you are wanting to help to lighten their load▪ Ask what you can do to help▪ Attempt to do it their way▪ Complete what you start
Tangible Gifts	Give someone something tangible and meaningful that serves as a symbol of caring	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Self-care items▪ Food/sweets/beverages▪ Gift cards▪ Bonuses/extra paid time off
Physical Touch	Human to human contact (Remember to ask first!)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Handshakes, high fives, fist bumps▪ Touching their shoulder or arm▪ Brief hugs (especially in emotional times)

Informal ways of discovering someone's language...

- Observe their behavior. They are likely doing for others what they wish others would do for them.
- Observe what they request of others. Our requests tend to indicate our primary appreciation language.
- Listen to their complaints. The things that an individual complains about might reveal their primary appreciation language. In other words, the opposite of what hurts you the most is probably your appreciation language.