

Above and Beyond

Why “good enough” is never good enough for your clients, business associates and employees



Course Book

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Introduction – The Status Quo vs. The Wow Factor

“Go the extra mile. It’s never crowded”
– Wayne Dyer

Try to think of a time when you've been completely blown away by a company's great service. Not just a time when a company did what it was supposed to do, but a time when you were absolutely delighted with the experience you had. What was it that the company did and how did it make you feel towards them?

If you can remember an instance like this, you've had a "wow experience." The experience didn't just meet your needs but exceeded them, surprising and delighting you and creating a feeling towards the company that doesn't fade over time.

Here's a thought experiment. Imagine the three different restaurant experiences:

Situation A

You are welcomed and seated. Once you sit down, you wait for 10 minutes and it seems like your server has disappeared. When the server finally arrives, you order your drinks and meals at the same time. Your food comes out before the drinks, which you can see sitting in the corner waiting to be carried to the table. You have to flag someone down to get them.

The server only comes back once at the end of the meal to say, "Everything okay," in such a tone that you can't tell if he's asking you or telling you. You order another round of drinks that take so long to arrive, they aren't cold anymore. The server testily apologizes, saying the restaurant is busy and drink orders are backed up.

Situation B

You receive a warm welcome and are seated right away. Your server comes over immediately and asks what you'd like to drink. He makes some recommendations when you ask and then tells you about the specials. You order drinks and an appetizer.

Your drinks arrive within minutes and they're ice cold. Your appetizer arrives a few minutes later. The server checks in with you to make sure everything is alright and you order a second round of drinks along with your meal.

After the meal, the server comes along with the dessert tray and an offer of coffee. When he brings your bill, he leaves a coupon for next time where you can receive 20% off any appetizer. You tell the server that unfortunately, you're visiting from out of town, so you can't use the coupon. The server then suggests you share it with a colleague who can enjoy it.

Situation C

Situation C is the same as Situation B but with just one key difference. Instead of suggesting you share the coupon with a colleague, the server applies it to today's appetizer and, smiling, says he hopes you'll remember the restaurant in the future. After you leave, you notice that he left you a note with the receipt thanking you for visiting and urging you to have a good

time during your visit, addressing you by name.

Which restaurant would you like to dine at again? It's a given that you won't be visiting Situation A's restaurant on your next visit. That was a classic example of bad customer service. The server did his absolute least for you.

Situation B was great, but Situation C was outstanding. The basics of the service were the same, but C had a few slight touches that personalized the experience and made you not only want to come back again, but also share your experience with friends.

Let's look at the key differences in more detail

Situation A was an example of cascading bad service. Everything was poorly executed from the outset. Even though the server apologizes at the end, it's an excuse at best. Furthermore, even though the service was bad and the server acknowledged it, he offered nothing to compensate the guests.

Situation B is an example of great service, but C is an example of the "wow factor." Not only did you get outstanding service, but your server went the extra mile. He did more than he needed to do for your satisfaction. The coupon was technically for the next visit, but he bent the rules and applied it to your meal tonight because he knew you wouldn't be able to use it. He did this for no immediate benefit to the company, but purely for your enjoyment. In addition, he put your names on the note, which shows that he cares to know who you are.

From a sales perspective, Situations B and C netted more profit for the restaurant. Good customer service encourages people to buy more. You'll notice that in B and C, you bought a second round of drinks, appetizers, and desserts. When a company offers the least possible in terms of service, they can expect the least possible from customers.

From a referral perspective, the guests in Situations B and C will undoubtedly refer others to the restaurant because of its good service. But the difference between the two is that the guests in Situation C will rave about how wonderful the restaurant was. The server created a powerfully memorable experience. The guests will sing the praises of the restaurant for a long time to come and the experience will create a positive enduring association with the restaurant's brand. If it's a chain, they'll likely visit its locations in other cities.

These examples can be altered to suit almost any industry. For example, you bought something online and it arrived late, broken, and/or different from its description, and the website's "customer service" is a user forum without live support people tracking comments. Compare this with a purchase that arrived early with an added gift and a follow-up email from a human being to make sure you were satisfied with your purchase.

The same also goes for professional service suppliers. You might hire a ghostwriter to create two blog posts for you, but they end up over-delivering and throwing in an extra one free of charge, as well as recommending your blog to their large social media following.

The key to delighting your customers or 'wowing' them is to deliver MORE than what you promised and what they expected. Situation A above was far below expectations. Situation B met expectations, but Situation C soared above them. The server over-delivered, and that's the key difference.

While the example above showcases how you can use the wow factor with customers, you can also use it in the same way to wow business partners, colleagues, and employees. Everyone loves to be treated as special and the impact is the same – appreciating people makes them loyal followers who

want to be associated with you or your brand.

Example of 'wowing' an affiliate or business partner:

You've been working with an affiliate who has done an outstanding job promoting your product. Sales from this affiliate have grown by 25% in the last year.

Situation A: You're really happy with her results so you send her an email to say thank you with a report that shows the sales growth.

Situation B: Since her results are so good, you call her directly and tell her that you'd like to increase her commission rate by 10% because you appreciate her efforts in promoting you. You remember from her social media profile that her birthday is coming up so you take a moment to wish her a happy birthday and ask how she's planning to celebrate. You then send out five emails to close friends introducing and recommending her as a referral.

Example of 'wowing' an employee:

Let's imagine that you have a new employee joining your team.

Situation A: You greet him on the first day, take him on a tour of the office, and then introduce him to HR for the rest of his onboarding. You tell him you'll reconnect with him tomorrow.

Situation B: You greet the new employee on the first day. You remember from the interview that he said something about liking dark roast coffee served black, so you have a hot cup ready for him. You take him on a tour of the office and introduce him to HR. You tell him you'll be back at lunch and

take him out to eat along with the other team members to welcome him to the group.

Over-delivering, delighting, exceeding expectations, and creating lasting memories is what will help to differentiate you in your market. It's the little things that count. Most companies strive to satisfy their customers through excellent customer service, but businesses that consistently create these "wow experiences" are rare.

Creating memorable experiences does indeed take effort. But the long-term results in terms of referrals, repeat business, branding, and upsells are more than worth it. Very often, creating these experiences is inexpensive or free. It just requires a bit of creativity and thoughtfulness to think them up.

Wowing people has indirect benefits as well. It helps to establish your reputation far and wide. It offers a great deal of social proof when people are out there telling others how great you are. In all areas of your business, it can result in increased profits in the long-term.

As a business owner, it is up to you to prioritize this as a key initiative for your brand and implement strategies to deliver a wow experience. You then need to provide your team with the information, ideas, and resources they require to create these experiences in their daily interactions with others.

By the time you complete this course, you will be able to:

- Understand and describe the key differences between serving customers, business partners, and employees well and wowing them to create delightful and memorable experiences that translate to long-term relationships.

- Create exceptional experiences for your prospective and existing clients so that they buy more, stay with you over the long-term, and recommend you to others.
- Elevate your business partner relationships so that you are always a top priority, keep your valued partners over the long-term, and acquire new talent.
- Engage and retain your employees, whether full-time or freelancers, by ensuring that they are aware that their contributions are personally valued by you and your team.
- Implement your 'Wow' program so that your customers, business partners, and employees feel heard and valued immediately.



Learning Activity:

1. Think of some situations where you've had an exceptional customer experience.
 - a. What did the person do that caught your attention?
 - b. How did that experience make you feel?
 - c. How did you react to that experience?
 - d. Did you refer any friends, spend more money, or go back again?
2. What experiences are you giving your customers, employees, or partners currently?
3. On a scale of 1/10, rate the types of experiences you are creating for them today, with 10 being 'wow', 8 being very good, 6 being okay, 4 being underwhelming, 2 being terrible

Creating Exceptional Customer Experiences

The first thing to understand is that there is a difference between customer service and customer experience. Customer service is primarily the interaction the client has with your brand, product, or service. It is what happens between the two parties.

Customer experience is much broader. It is the evolving personal relationship between your customer and you. Customer service is something you offer anyone who buys your product or service. Customer experience offers a more personal and individual touch. It begins with the customer or client's first contact with you and lasts before and after each transaction or encounter.

A potential customer enters your store to learn about your products and services, and receives a warm welcome and excellent service. This is good customer service. After purchasing your product, you as the owner reach out to them personally to see how they're doing and offer help on anything related to the product. This is customer experience.

If you have a large client base, it might be impossible to have this kind of personal one-on-one relationship with all your clients. However, you should strive to create a personal experience in whatever small ways you can. You can also identify your highest value clients (those who spend a certain amount) and focus on giving them a more personal experience since they are your biggest supporters.

To create exceptional customer experiences, there are 6 factors to pay

attention to:



Do What You Say You'll Do

This may sound like a given but you'd be surprised by how often it is overlooked. Before you can exceed expectations, you must at least meet them. This is the most fundamental consideration for creating a good experience.

Think of the car mechanic that offers a 30-minute tire change. You're stretched for time and decide to drop off your car over lunch, but you have a 1pm appointment. The tire changing service may be 30 minutes, but the mechanic failed to tell you that you need an additional 10-15 minutes for paperwork and billing. You actually need 45 minutes and this will leave you

less than delighted when you realize you might be late for your appointment.

The mechanic may have offered the 30-minute tire change in good faith, but they made a tremendous mistake. You need to consider your service from the point of view of your customer. If you think from the customer's perspective, it's obvious that you shouldn't promise a 30-minute tire change if the total time needed is 45 minutes. But many businesses fail to put themselves in their customers' shoes.

The two key factors to consider are time and budget. In the example of the mechanic, they went over on time, but the same can happen with budget as well. Always make sure that you can deliver on your time and budget promises, and if you can't, change your promise to reflect what you CAN offer.

Reach Out When Your Customer Least Expects It

The element of surprise is one of the key ingredients to a “wow experience.” You've not only met expectations but done something beyond them, sometimes when your customer least expects it.

This is the reason a personal follow-up phone call or email is so effective. A customer doesn't expect a company to take the time after a sale to check in on them. What makes this work is not only the personalization but the surprise aspect as well.

By reaching out to customers at times like this, you also get valuable feedback. If you check in with them and ask how they're doing, they'll let you know if they have any problems with your product or suggestions on how to improve your service. You can implement these ideas next time.

Reconnecting with your customers helps to build a long-term relationship. You've opened a personal channel of communication, and they'll feel much more comfortable contacting you again whenever they need to. They'll also be more likely to buy from you again.

Say Thank You and Show Gratitude

Simply saying thanks and expressing your gratitude to customers is often overlooked. Although this can be automated, the personal "thank-you" is much more effective. There are also creative ways that you can express your appreciation to loyal customers. Try to think of ways to say thank you that have an impact.

To start you thinking about impact, consider these three similar situations:

A: An automated email that goes out to every new client. It is generic and non-personalized.

B: A personal email written by you saying "thank you" which mentions specific details about the customer or your relationship with them.

C: A card with a hand-written note inside.

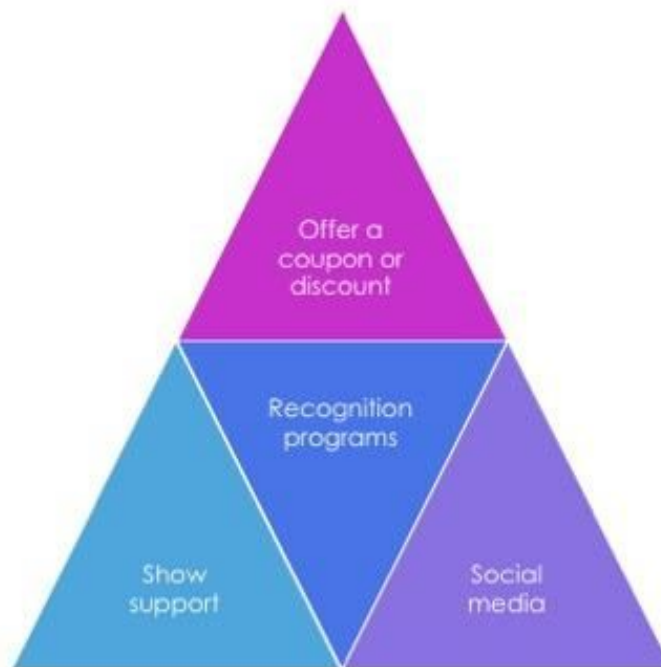
Clearly, the hand-written card is the most personalized option here and thus has the most impact.

Some other ways to express gratitude include:

- **Offering a coupon or discount.** This works especially well on birthdays. You can also give them a gift. Combine this with the surprise element

mentioned above and you could have a very impactful "thank you."

- **Show Support.** For a high-profile client, attend their event or other activity to show your support. When you talk to them, tell them it's the least you could do to support them since they support you.
- **Recognition Programs.** Depending on the type of business you have, you can build a recognition program into your service. The client knows they are in the recognition program because of their support. But through the program, you can offer surprise deals, discounts, gifts, and personalized "thank you" messages.
- **Social Media.** Social media can work for saying "thank you" as well. You can either send a private message or post something saying thanks to the person. Be sure to use their name and tag them. If they reply to your post, this also has the added benefit of gaining you exposure.



Go Above and Beyond

If you understand the customer's expectations when they use your service or buy your product, you can figure out a way to go above and beyond. This makes the client feel that they've received good value, and it's a great way to wow them.

In the restaurant example, the server went above and beyond by honoring a coupon that wasn't yet available. Hotels and other travel services often do this by offering an unexpected free upgrade. This is a great way to delight a customer and create an even more memorable trip.

This also works well in cases where the client is dissatisfied. Suggest a refund or some form of compensation before the customer asks for it and you'll turn what could have been a bad experience into a "wow experience."

Companies often try to find ways to avoid having to give refunds in the first place, but this is actually a great opportunity for building a relationship. If a customer is dissatisfied and you own up to the mistake and wow them with something they didn't expect, you can win them over and turn a potentially disgruntled ex-customer into a lifelong fan.

A refund situation also gives you an opportunity to understand what is working and what isn't working. Customer complaints can offer valuable feedback and give ideas on how you can better meet or exceed expectations in the future.

Offer Something They Didn't Know They Needed

This is a more generous version of the cross-sell or up-sell. Whenever you

buy something on Amazon, the website immediately offers you similar items based on your purchase. The effect is to offer you something you didn't know you wanted. It's a very clever sales tactic and you can use it to wow your customers.

You can use this technique yourself. Someone might contact you regarding a coaching service you provide. But, rather than a regular single session, you might have a better deal that's more suitable for them, such as three mini-sessions at a discounted price.

The key to wowing people with this technique is to offer them 1) something they didn't know they needed, and 2) a special value. In other words, instead of just cross-selling, you need to offer something that also saves them time and money. Plus, the offer is personalized to their particular needs.

This can also work well if you can't accommodate a person's request. If they contact you asking for something you're not able to do, you may offer them an alternative by referring them to someone who can. The value here is a no-strings-attached offer for help that doesn't profit you at all.

Personalize the Customer Experience

Get to know your client well and think carefully about them. What delights them? What are their likes and dislikes? We all know it's the little things that count. We're thoughtful towards our friends and family in this way. Take this thoughtfulness and these nice little things you do for friends, and do them for your important clients as well. A very simple gesture can go a long way.

For example, if you know that one of your higher profile clients has been off work sick and that they love cinnamon buns, imagine how delighted they'd

be to receive a "get well soon" card with some of their favorite treats (or failing that, a gift card for a shop that sells them).

This is not easy to do if you have a large client base, but it's still possible. You can keep whatever personal information you know in a client profile card or CRM (Customer Relationship Management system). Along with purchase history or whatever other data, include a field for personal notes and keep track of foods, drinks, treats, hobbies, pets, and so on.

A great way to find out personal information about clients or customers is to connect with and follow them on social media. Although we might use a social media site for business, people nearly always share personal information too, either through personal posts or through profile information. Even a person's Facebook cover photo could tell you something about their hobbies or interests.

The key to customer experience is to find little ways to surprise and delight your customers. Whether they have purchased from you or not, going the extra mile can help to retain them now and in the future. Even if they haven't bought anything, this can bring you longer term benefits than a sale today.



Learning Activity

1. Doing what you say you'll do: This is the first step to really understanding the value you can offer to your customers and honoring their decision to buy from you. What do you promise your customers you'll do on a regular basis? What are the ways you are delivering on your promises?
2. For each of the tactics discussed, think of some ways that you could take your customer experience a step further. What are some ways you can delight your customers?

Impress Your Business Partners and Stand Out

Your business partners also have a certain type of experience with you and your business. While it's not a "customer experience," it's very similar. You have a kind of brand with business partners, and their loyalty and opinion of you is just as important as the one your customers have. It can also lead to long-term profits, better relationships, and more business through referrals.

You can use many of the customer tactics from the previous module for your business partners as well. But in this module, you'll learn more techniques specifically for wowing the people you partner with in your business.

If there's one central principle behind wowing your customers, it's "Do what you say you'll do." For partners and affiliates, the underlying principle is to recognize their efforts in supporting you. This means establishing mutual respect and showing gratitude for your partnerships.

One similarity here is that, just like your customers, you want your partners to be happy. You want to delight them. If they're not happy, they won't do their best to support your business. But if they are, they'll reciprocate by doing their best and maybe going the extra mile for you as well.

Your partners have a wide range of options in terms of businesses they can work with. All of them provide compensation in some form. You can differentiate yourself among the others they do business with through the way you communicate with them, support them, and make them feel. Make them feel great and they'll do their best work for you.

Here are some of the ways you can do this.

Create Win-Win Relationships

In any partnership, you need to work hard to establish a mutually agreeable middle ground. This means not only putting your needs first, but also considering the needs of all involved. You need to pursue agreements that benefit both of you.

With affiliates, if you pay a low percentage, you're saying that you don't value the affiliate's efforts in the deal. How much you offer them for compensation expresses your feelings toward their efforts. If you're late in paying, this suggests that you don't respect the arrangement you've set up with them. If you pay generously and on time, they will feel valued.

The key here is respect. If you respect your partners, you show this respect through your actions. In addition to making sure your partners are well compensated according to your agreement, here are a few other ways to show this respect:



- **Don't nitpick or micromanage.** If you trust and respect your business partners, you can let them do their own work. Nitpicking and micromanagement add unnecessary strain to your relationship.
- **Reciprocate.** When you contact or touch base with your partners, everything shouldn't be about you and your bottom line. Good communication means listening to them. Make sure that their needs and issues are addressed at least equally to yours, if not more.
- **Provide samples.** Be generous with samples of your product or service. You need them to understand as much as possible about it, so they need access. If they know the product, they can engage more effectively.

Communicate Openly

Relationships can erode over time if there is not regular open communication between the parties.

First, be consistent in your communications. If you disappear for 6 months, any relationship you have will deteriorate. It also looks bad if you only get in touch when you need something. Figure out an appropriate frequency and method for communicating, whether it's a simple email or a regular Skype session.

In-person meetings are the best, if possible. Try meeting your partners regularly for coffee or lunch. The idea behind the meeting is just to touch base and see how they're doing. You don't need any specific business to discuss.

If you schedule regular meetings, you can also keep in touch through emails or social media messages just to check in. This helps your partners realize that you're accessible. You're always there if they need you.

One good way to keep in touch is to create a weekly newsletter. You can also create a private social media group or a private blog accessible only to business partners. The advantage of the last two options is that there's two-way communication. Using your group or blog, your partners can comment or ask questions. Through this regular dispatch, you can also share marketing tips, helpful information, content updates, program updates, and shout-outs to your partners.

In your communications with your partners, don't dwell on problems. You may not always agree or get along, but once an issue has been resolved, move past it. Don't let little things fester and don't revisit touchy issues that have been resolved.

As always, the key to good communication is listening. Make sure that you listen actively to your partners and respond to whatever comes up in conversations. Especially when there is a conflict, take the time to talk to all parties involved before you respond. Relationships change over time and

your partners' needs may change as well, so you always need to be open and paying attention to what they say.

Honesty and transparency are also important for good communication. Make sure that you fully disclose everything possible to your partners so that they understand what's going on in your business.

With affiliates, as you learn what works and what doesn't in your program, share these results with them. You want them to succeed, so make sure they know this feedback from you and other affiliates. Keep them informed of the latest strategies that are working well and provide information to help them succeed.

Have fun with your communications. It shouldn't always be about business. Try to bond with your business partners over common interests or hobbies. If you're both into football, invite them to a game sometime. If you both love jazz, invite them to a local performance. You can also interact in a fun and purely personal way through social media, if that's relevant for your business.

Be Thoughtful

Just as you do with your customers, be thoughtful. Thoughtfulness goes a long way in building and maintaining relationships. Recognize the contributions of your partners and affiliates. This can be done personally through a phone call, email, or text message telling them you appreciate their hard work, or publicly by giving shout-outs and praising them.

When you remember details about someone's work or personal life, this shows your thoughtfulness. It shows that you're not just thinking about the task at hand and that you sincerely care about the other person.

Learn and remember important details about your partners and affiliates. Do you know their birthdays? You can ask them, or find out through social media. They may put their birthday on their profile, or you might be able to see birthday messages. Put all partners' birthdays on a calendar and make it a point to send them a birthday message.

Get to know a bit about your partners' families and pets. Remember any key events in their lives that they share with you or on social media, such as buying a new house, having a baby, and so on. Send them a message congratulating them or a small gift.

Take the time to learn about your partners' interests and hobbies. Take regular notes on this type of information as it can be useful. For example, you end up with tickets to a concert or sporting event but you can't go. If you have an affiliate who likes music or sports, you can offer them the tickets.

Even small gestures of thoughtfulness like this can go a long way.

Say Thank You

Just as you always thank customers for buying from you, say thank you often to your affiliates and partners. Make sure they understand that you appreciate everything they do for you. This is all too easily forgotten.

Sometimes, business owners forget to say thank you or adopt a grateful attitude because both you and your partner are benefitting from the partnership. If a partner makes a huge sale this week, you may feel that they are making a lot of money from your partnership, so they're benefitting and there's no need to say "thank you." But you should always remember the ways they are helping you. And, like your customers, they could choose

someone else, so don't forget to thank them.

Recognize and Reward Contributions

One way to recognize hard work is to offer incentives or increase a partner's commission. You might, for example, offer a partner who has gone above and beyond your expectations a higher percentage of their commission or a special, unannounced bonus. This not only shows that you appreciate their hard work but also makes the business arrangement even more profitable for them.

Learning activity

1. From the ideas presented in this module, pick one or two things you can implement to wow your business partners or affiliates.

Engage and Retain Your Employees

So far, we've discussed in detail how to create a "wow experience" for your customers and your business partners. Now, we're going to look at how you can do the same for your employees.

Very often as business owners, we think first and foremost of our customers and clients. However, successful organizations apply the same considerations to their team members. It is hard to hire and retain quality talent in any organization. This is why it is critical to wow your employees and create an exceptional experience working for you.

The Importance of Employee Recognition

Research shows that recognition is extremely important to people when they consider their working environment. However, this recognition is often overlooked.

According to a study by McKinsey & Company, praise and commendation from managers was rated as the top motivator of employee performance. Most workers chose it over financial incentives, new skill acquisition, noncash incentives, or any other motivating factors.

Other studies, such as one carried out by Taleo Corporation and the Human Capital Institute, have found that recognition programs can reduce employee turnover rates by approximately 25%.

Just as there's a difference between customer service and customer experience, there is a difference between treating your employees well and creating a wonderful employee experience. Treating your employees well is the absolute minimum that any business must do. Instead, you should exceed your employees' expectations and create a consistent personal experience.

Gary Chapman's "Five Languages of Appreciation"

In his book *The 5 Languages of Appreciation in the Workplace*, author Gary Chapman explains that not all employees are motivated by the same things. He says there are five categories of motivation styles:



1. **Words of Affirmation:** Use words to acknowledge your appreciation of people's work. Some people react most strongly when they see the words or hear your praise out loud, especially in front of others.
2. **Acts of Service:** For many, actions speak louder than words. For these, you should help your employees in areas where they need it, such as with a task they're struggling with or a tight deadline where they could use a hand. Offer your assistance as a genuine desire to help vs. a rescue effort.
3. **Gifts:** Many people associate the gesture of giving with appreciation, particularly receiving physical gifts. A simple example is to offer a specially catered meal for a team celebration. Or you could provide a gourmet coffee subscription for an employee who excelled.
4. **Quality Time:** For some, it's spending time that matters. This is "quality time" where they have your undivided attention, preferably face to face, like a one-on-one lunch with your employee.
5. **Appropriate Physical Touch:** While this can be a sensitive topic and there are a lot of legal boundaries, physical appreciation is still important to many employees. At work, it comes in the form of a handshake, high-five, fist bump, or pat on the back. Pay attention to whether the other person is someone who likes that type of physical connection or not.

Chapman says that each person is motivated most strongly by one of the above categories. You can employ all of them to reach each person. If you consider it, most recognition programs fall into one of the above categories. You can also get to know your employees on a personal level and learn which category they respond best to.

Creating Excellent Employee Experiences

Let's look at some of the key areas of your employee experience and

consider how you can inject some pizzazz into them.

New Hires or Onboarding

Look for ways to make your new hires feel special and valued. During your initial introductions, look to create a personal bond. Get to know your new employees and create opportunities where your other employees can get to know them as well.

During the first week of onboarding, you could offer a catered lunch or potluck, or even take your team out for lunch. Eating together is a great way to break the ice and get personal. If your team is virtual, you can have a virtual coffee session.

In order to get people talking, you could plan some topic discussion questions or even prepare a light icebreaker game, like asking each person to share something interesting or surprising about themselves. This can then lead to other topics for discussion. Focus on hobbies, likes and dislikes, experiences, and so on.

As part of the new hire and onboarding process, gather personal information from your employees. Most companies collect basic information from their employees such as contact information, bank information, emergency contact, and other items. Along with this information, ask for hobbies, interests, likes/dislikes, favorite food, and other fun things as well. You could also ask deeper questions such as their personal strengths and weaknesses, or how they would like to be recognized.

When going deeper in this way, keep it light and fun. You don't want this to feel like a difficult interview session or another employment test. Make sure

they know that you just want to know a little more about them.

Keep this information organized someplace accessible so that you can look back on it easily. Create templates with your employees' details so that you don't forget and add important dates such as birthdays to your calendar.

Promotions

Communicate clearly about promotions, opportunities, and other ways for employees to move up and around in your company.

When one of your employees gets a promotion, send out a congratulations email and bring it up as an agenda item at a team meeting. Always highlight and 'affirm' any promotion or accomplishment in a public way.

Let employees know about any upcoming promotional opportunities. Don't only post on external sites, but always let the people already in your organization know. In fact, you should let them know first.

If there is an opportunity that is appropriate for a particular person, let them know personally. For example, you may know that a member of your team would love to get some experience in sales or has experience in retail. You could let them know in an email or face-to-face about this opportunity that suits them so well.

One way to make this more powerful is to have the communication come from the top. Your team members are used to hearing from you, but what if they got a personal message from the CEO? This can make them feel even more that they're highly valued in your organization.

If you've taken the time to learn about each employee and fit them into one

of Gary Chapman's five categories of appreciation mentioned before, you can let them know about promotion opportunities in the way that they appreciate the most. For example, you could set up a one-on-one lunch with the CEO where he or she explains the position.

Good Communication that Exceeds Expectations

Every individual communicates in a slightly different way. It's important to understand each employee's unique communication style, and especially what type of communication they respond best to. You can then figure out a cadence of communication that will support each individual.

Decide who needs you to meet with them one-on-one and schedule these meetings in everyone's calendars. If you don't schedule these meetings, they may not happen.

As a general guideline, it's best to hold a one-on-one meeting every two weeks. They should be 30 minutes to an hour. Since you're meeting on an individual basis, use these meetings to understand which of the 5 appreciation categories each person responds to. For those who value quality time, a longer one-on-one session held over lunch can be very motivating.

Team meetings should be held weekly or, failing that, bi-weekly. During each team meeting, in addition to touching base and marking progress, make sure that one item is to celebrate and recognize both team and individual accomplishments.

Depending on your business, you might hold all-hands meetings once a month or quarter. The main goal of these meetings is to talk about company successes and accomplishments, but you should also take the time to

celebrate team and individual wins. Recognition from the entire company is a great motivator.

Make all-hands meetings something exciting and flashy. You can do things like creating a fun video showcasing accomplishments. This is much better than just listing names or facts on a PowerPoint presentation.

Personal milestones can also be celebrated at these meetings. You can have a birthday cake to celebrate the birthdays of everyone born within that month. Turn it into a party or event where people can connect with each other on a personal level.

One final form of communication is the email newsletter. You can send out a weekly roundup of cross-functional news to share between team meetings. Through the newsletter, keep people up to date on the company's progress and milestones, but also recognize individual members on their accomplishments. Keep it fun and give it the personal touch.

Other Ways to Recognize Employees

In addition to the ways we've discussed for recognizing employees, you can also have a recognition program implemented. Build this into your guiding principles and include it as an agenda item for your meetings.

Although the above methods are all ways of giving recognition and appreciation from you or the higher-ups of the company, you can also set up an internal system for employees to give a shout-out to one another. Share these at your all-hands meetings and provide rewards for employees nominated by their peers. A good way to kick off a program like this is to remind your employees to send in a nomination regularly, such as once a

quarter. This can be done through email, a program like SharePoint, or even simple paper ballots.

Consider other activities that you can do as a team to foster engagement. If there is a charity event that you can support as a team, join it. Focus on getting everyone together to have fun. But make sure you carry out these activities during work hours if possible. If you want your employees to participate on weekends or outside of working hours, make it voluntary and reward them with a day off during the week as compensation.



Learning Activity:

1. Use the Employee Information form to collect additional information from your employees. Collect information about birthday, activities, hobbies, favorite candy, chocolates, treats, appreciation style, etc. Keep these with your employee files.

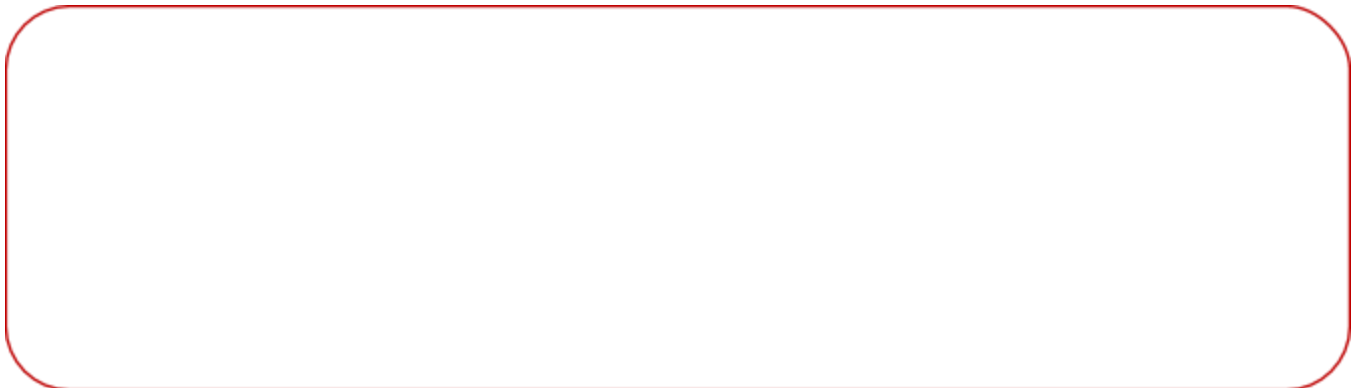
2. What are some ways you can recognize employees in different situations? Jot down some ideas for the categories discussed in this module.

Conclusion and Next Steps

Through this course, you learned:

1. The key differences between serving and managing your customers, partners, or employees versus wowing them.
2. How to create exceptional experiences for your prospective and existing clients so that they buy more and recommend you to others.
3. Methods for elevating your partner relationships so that you are always a top priority.
4. Tips on engaging and retaining your employees, whether full-time or freelancers, by ensuring they are aware that their contributions are personally valued by you and your team.
5. How to implement your 'Wow' program so that your customers, partners, and employees feel heard and valued immediately.

You've worked through the learning activities along the way as you learned the above and now it's time to review your notes, complete the learning activities, and implement your very own strategies for wowing your customers, business partners, and employees.



Learning Activity:

1. Review your learning activities in each of the modules.
2. Fill in your next steps and deadlines for implementing some of the new experiences you created for:
 - i. Customers
 - ii. Partners and affiliates
 - iii. Employees