

Three Good Reasons CEOs Should Give Everyone Else the Credit

Would you like to know the secret to improving the performance levels of your employees? Let them know they matter. Give them credit for their hard work. And, in the touching farewell words of Oprah Winfrey when she signed off from her daily talk show, “Validate them.”

For many entrepreneurs, that is easier said than done. Their belief in accepting full credit is sustained by years of hard work and sacrifice.

Creator and writer of the hit television series *Modern Family* poked fun at this belief during his 2010 Emmy award acceptance speech when he said, “I want to thank the incredible writing staff. Chris (Lloyd) and I get so much credit for what is often their amazing work, and I just want to say, ‘That’s Hollywood, dude.’”

In a world where it seems that arrogance and success go hand-in-hand stands a man who thinks differently.

Godard Abel is no stranger to public attention and receiving accolades from his peers and business partners. In 2011, his most notable endeavor resulted in Oracle Corporation purchasing Abel’s software company, BigMachines, for 400 million dollars. His retirement could have begun there. Even now, his career continues to reflect mindful leadership skills and business savvy that many entrepreneurs strive to emulate, competitors hope to duplicate, and investors clamor to support.

But what makes Abel even more exceptional is his steadfast belief that success is a cooperative effort. By sharing credit with his team, validating their contributions to the business, and encouraging each employee to pay it forward, Abel maximizes the capabilities of each member of his team. His business philosophy could bring about the best in your team, as well.

1. Share the spotlight. As the CEO, Abel receives plenty of recognition. He makes it a habit to celebrate those that don’t get recognized.

“I enjoy giving people credit,” he said. “The external world gives me enough credit. I experience tons of opportunities to be recognized. Why not recognize your team?”

Author Rosa Say agrees.

“To have inner drive, to want to be successful is a good thing,” she explained in her Lifehack article, *Humility in the Workplace*. “I do believe that part of humility is believing in those possibilities which presently may be larger than life for you. However humility also speaks to the demeanor and attitude we must have as we seek our success, so that our inner drive and desires are in balance with our

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composure, and our conduct with those who interact with us. After all, they could factor into being a big part of the success we eventually will enjoy.” The more we recognize our collaborators and employees, the stronger our company will be.

2. Provide positive feedback. Every person appreciates receiving positive feedback on what he or she contributes to the company. The truth is, no entrepreneur achieves success alone. Each is supported by a team who contributed to the overall success of the business.

In his companies, Abel is quick to recognize those accomplishments. He has a firm belief that validating what employees do improves overall performance. Positive feedback motivates a person to bring her best work to the table every day. While Abel uses good judgments in employee salaries, he rewards the exceptional performance of employees with stock in his companies, illustrating his strong belief in the quality product and service his company produces. He shares with his employees what he values most.

3. Pay it Forward. Abel is extremely generous in sharing recognition with his employees, and he celebrates employee accomplishments in a public way. At each monthly meeting, one employee, nominated and voted on by co-workers, is honored. That person’s accomplishments are then promoted on the company’s website.

Paying it forward also means taking the time to assist those who are in need. For Abel, contributing to the community in various charitable ways is the responsibility of each employee, and he makes that possible by providing 300 dollars for each employee to donate to his or her favorite charitable organization. This focus on charity is a strong motivator for employees. Always being mindful of our responsibility to local communities keeps us grounded and grateful for the things we have in our lives.

In his article for The Center for Association Leadership, Matt Howe discusses some of the advantages of encouraging charity and other community-based activities within the workplace. He points out that it provides opportunities for team-building, and it is an effective tool in building company morale, relations and retention. For Abel, taking the time to focus on the community is an integral part of his business plan.

If you are looking for ways to improve employee performance, consider the advice of Godard Abel. By sharing public accolades with employees, recognizing the individual efforts of employees, and encouraging staff to pay it forward in the form of charitable service, you can create an employee base worthy of recognition regardless of where the spotlight may shine.

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