

Why Aren't You Praising Employees?

Most people know that praise can go a long, long way toward motivating employees to give 100 percent. But praising is still difficult for many managers to do. For example, how many times have you caught yourself rationing out the compliments as if they were some precious commodity? There are several common reasons many people find it difficult to praise others.

For many, it's just a simple case of procrastination, putting off something that's not easy for them to do. But putting off praise is not something a good manager should do. If someone puts aside his work in order to round up some material for you for a surprise Monday meeting, it just isn't as meaningful to him if you wait until two or three days later to praise his efforts — your subordinate will usually spend those two or three days resenting you for your ungratefulness.

Other managers don't want to seem redundant. These managers are sure their subordinates are already aware that they did a good job and are afraid of pointing out an obvious fact. But the fact is that while an employee may be

totally aware that he did a good job, he has no idea if it was appreciated or not — unless you tell him.

Some supervisors are afraid of coming across as patronizing or condescending. These supervisors can learn from practice. Learn to praise in a collegial, person-to-person way. No one is offended by others' recognition that he does his job well.

Another problem is that many people have difficulties relating to others on a personal basis. In this respect, praise is just like criticism — discuss the work, not the person. There's no need to give anyone a big hug and a kiss for staying late to help out. Merely tell the person you're really happy with his work.

Ever find yourself pouring on the praise when you're in a good mood and dismissing it as unnecessary when you're not? If you follow that pattern often, employees will begin to believe there's no connection between the praise and their work. Then you might as well stop offering praise at all, because it will be completely useless.