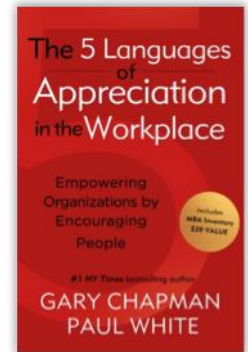




Why Your Least Valued Appreciation Language Can Affect Your Career the Most



When talking about and applying the concepts from the 5 Languages of Appreciation in the Workplace, most of the focus of discussion is on those languages of appreciation that are most important to you and your team members. This is natural and makes sense—we want to highlight those languages that people value and receive the most encouragement from.

As we have repeatedly stated, the most effective and impactful communication of appreciation and encouragement occurs when we use the languages that are most valued by those whom we want to encourage.

However, it is important to note that your least valued appreciation language may actually be the most important in your career success and development. How can this be? Consider the following facts:

- *A good manager pays attention to the needs of their team members.
- *Generally speaking, we are most in tune with those who are similar to us. Therefore, we are more observant of those who have similar languages of encouragement as we do.
- *It is typically easier for individuals to communicate appreciation and encouragement to others with similar primary and secondary languages of appreciation to ours.
- *As a result, we are less likely to communicate effectively in the language which is least important to us personally.
 - a. We are not as good as communicating in this language; it doesn't flow naturally for us.
 - b. We are more likely to miss the subtle cues sent by our colleagues who value this language;
 - c. We are at risk for not encouraging and showing appreciation to these team members in ways that are important to them. We are more likely to communicate in our preferred languages, but those are not as meaningful to these colleagues.

*Over time these colleagues will feel undervalued and unappreciated.

*We will begin to become frustrated because we are trying to show appreciation but it is “missing the mark.”

*They become frustrated because they are not getting the messages of encouragement and appreciation they need.

The result of this ineffective cycle of communication leads to negative results. These team members are more likely to:

*Become dissatisfied in their work and complain about lack of support;

*Become discouraged and their work performance will suffer;

*Have increased negative communication among the team and create more management headaches;

*Leave the organization even though they are a valuable team member.

Fortunately, there are actions to take that can counter this process.

1. Acknowledge that your least valued language of appreciation isn't that important to you, and that it is a potential Achilles heel in your relationships with others.
2. Identify those colleagues for whom your least valued language is their primary and secondary language.
3. Make a list of the specific actions items that are important to each team member. Save and print the list and have it easily accessible to you throughout the day (either in hardcopy form at your desk or electronically on your computer, iPhone or Blackberry).
4. Create an action list with related timeframe for you to take specific actions with these team members (e.g. schedule a weekly reminder to show up on your calendar). If you don't, you will forget to do something in their language!
5. Check in with them occasionally, and see if they are feeling supported by you, and if there are better ways you can show your appreciation for them. (Remember this is a needed area of growth for you.)

Summary

Needless to say, those supervisors and managers who have team members who are not working up to their potential, who create a negative work environment, and who leave the organization dissatisfied typically will not be as successful in their organization as those who have well-functioning and highly productive teams with long term team members. It is important to you and your career to pay attention to your least valued language of appreciation and how it impacts your relationships with your colleagues. By taking a few proactive steps, you can actually use this “blind spot” to your benefit to grow into a more effective manager.

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