

Reengage Your Volunteer Teams by Recognizing Individual Gifts

How can you re-engage your volunteers to serve enthusiastically with passion and energy?

Lee Cockerell, retired Senior Vice President of Operations for Walt Disney World Resorts, brings over four decades of experience on the front lines of some of the world's best run companies to his writing and speaking. Lee responded to the question above with this simple, yet profound thought:

Leaders ARE their teams.

He went on to say that leaders should never underestimate the emotional impact they have on their team members by employing an ARE method.

Appreciation, Recognition, Encouragement: ARE. Together they make up a cost-free, fully sustainable fuel, one that builds self-confidence and self-esteem, boosts individual and team performance, and keeps an organization running cleanly and smoothly. ARE is more powerful than the fuels that make engines roar and space shuttles soar, because it propels human energy and motivation. And unlike costly, nonrenewable fuels like oil and gas, its supply is inexhaustible. You can give out ARE all day long, at home and at work, and wake up the next morning with a full tank. In fact, the more we use, the more there is, because every time people receive some ARE they discover more of their own internal supply and start giving away the overflow.

- Lee Cockerell, *Creating Magic*

Unfortunately, even though we all need a little ARE, the speed of ministry and Sunday's coming mindset prevent many leaders from employing this simple, yet profound practice.

THE QUICK SUMMARY - [O Great One!](#), by David Novak

When was the last time you told your colleagues how much you value them? It sounds like a trivial thing in the middle of a busy workday. But as David Novak discovered during his years as a hard charging executive, there's nothing trivial about recognition. It can make a life-or-death difference to any organization, when people see that someone important really notices and appreciates their contributions.

Rather than explain the power of recognition in a typical business book, Novak decided to write a fun story that draws on his real-world experiences at Pepsi and Yum! brands, as well as his personal life.

The story opens when Jeff Johnson becomes the third-generation CEO of his family business, after the sudden death of his father. The Happy Face Toy Company had many hits in the 1950s

and 60s, including Crazy Paste, but its results have been declining for more than a decade. The board has given Jeff just one year to turn the business around, or else they'll have to sell it to the highest bidder.

As Jeff races to save his family's legacy by getting the company back on track, he meets downtrodden factory workers and an uninspired executive team. Then a birthday gift from his own grandson gives Jeff an important insight into why Happy Face lost its old culture of innovation and excitement, along with its profitability. Jeff comes up with an idea that seems crazy... But is it crazy enough to work?

Whether you're trying to lead a small department, a Fortune 500 company, a non-profit, or your own family, the lessons at the heart of *O Great One!* can help you make everyone around you happier and more effective.

A SIMPLE SOLUTION

Recognizing and developing the potential of individuals is a real path to leadership.

Recognition done well encompasses much more than inspirational wall posters, logos on a t-shirt, or the other things that organizations often turn to. Effective recognition is a little hard – but worthwhile. It's strategic. It's timely. It's frequent. But most important, it's human.

Personalized recognition gets everyone's attention. The simple but transformative act of a leader expressing appreciation to a person in a meaningful and memorable way is the missing accelerator that can do so much good yet is used so sparingly.

If you give people the recognition they've earned, if you show genuine appreciation and acknowledge the unique things people have to offer, then you will drive real results. And at the same time, you will lift the spirits of everyone involved. It really does feel good to receive recognition, and it feels every bit as good to give it – often even better.

Considering that recognition can have such a hugely positive effect, it's amazing to me that it's still vastly underused in business, and also in life. I think that's a crime.

As you'll see throughout this book, making use of recognition is not hard, it's not expensive, and you don't need an MBA or even a position of authority to do it.

Recognition works for the leader of a small team just as well as it does for the chairman of a large enterprise. It works for an individual who isn't in a leadership position at all. It works outside of business for parents, teachers, community groups, sports teams, and everyone else.

The important thing to understand about recognition is that it's simply good for people – all people – no matter who they are, what they do, or where they come from.

David Novak, [O Great One!](#)

A NEXT STEP

Giving recognition is a privilege – don't think of it as just another item on your to-do list as a leader or manager. When exercised in the right way, giving recognition is a privilege that feeds people's souls and makes them feel great about themselves. And by feeding the souls of others, you'll feed yours in return. It's as good for the giver as it is the receiver!

Create the following experiment as a way to recognize your team members.

- Secure approval to spend an appropriate sum on a recognition system utilizing a small but meaningful gift for team members who demonstrate an action or attitude beyond expectations.
 - Develop and promote the system throughout your entire organization, or for an individual department as a test.
 - Create a central mailbox or collection point, and give it a name appropriate for your organization (Hero Awards, Magic Moments, Above and Beyond, Second Mile, etc.). Print appropriate cards and posters to support the recognition initiative, and designate someone to manage the process.
 - Inform your team that any team member is allowed to recognize any other person with a small reward by slipping a note or card prepared above into the box.
 - Check the box every day, and announce publicly who received a compliment and why. Take the lead by making sure you notice and reward team members.
-

If you don't appreciate, respect, and encourage those you lead, they'll give you only a halfhearted effort or, worse, sabotage you or leave you high and dry. Great leaders know that, and they look for opportunities to give out the free fuel of ARE in an authentic, specific, and timely manner.

- Lee Cockerell

Excerpted from SUMS Remix Issue #54-2, released November 2016

*This is part of a weekly series posting content from one of the most innovative content sources in the church world: **SUMS Remix** Book Summaries for church leaders. SUMS Remix takes a practical problem in the church and looks at it with three solutions; and each solution is taken from a different book. As a church leader you get to scan relevant books based on practical tools and solutions to real ministry problems, not just by the cover of the book. Each post will have the edition number which shows the year and what number it is in the overall sequence. (SUMS provides 26 issues per year, delivered every other week to your inbox).*

> [Subscribe to SUMS Remix](#)