# How Gracious Leadership Can Boost Business Performance




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Gratitude can be overlooked as something personal rather than professional. Throughout my career, I have learned that the way leaders make people feel directly impacts their performance. It goes with the well-known saying that people will never forget how you made them feel. That's why today, on World Gratitude Day, I'm sharing four benefits to embracing a leadership style of gratitude, the impact it can have on any business and how you can apply them to your practices on today and beyond.

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# 1. Appreciation and performance have a direct correlation

Leaders should take time to acknowledge both the work and the accomplishments of their teams — now more than ever. The past 18 months have pushed some employees to work more than ever before all while balancing trying circumstances and situations. We've all had moments of saying hello to families over Zoom or trying to hush a barking dog during important meetings. Leaders: Make time to share thanks and appreciation for your employees as they continue to deliver for your business.

Employees who feel appreciated for their contributions are more likely to maintain their strong work ethic. Praise can boost employee morale and motivation, leading high performers to continue to achieve. Think back to the last time a leader, manager or colleague praised your work. In that moment, did you feel that your hard work and time spent was worth it? Many people do.

Although sharing appreciation might seem like a small gesture, it can make all the difference to employees after successfully completing a project or navigating the messy middle. That is why I make a conscious effort to thank my team and let them know how much I value their hard work and the results they helped drive. I have seen increased positivity and higher performance because of this practice.

# 2. A strong culture drives a positive customer experience

I've witnessed firsthand that leading with gratitude has a ripple effect in company culture that in turn can lead to more fulfilled employees. When employees are happier, they take part in creating an atmosphere they are proud to be part

of that ultimately translates to a better client or customer experiences.

The reality is that you are more likely to have an enjoyable experience when interacting with someone who enjoys their job. That enjoyable experience makes all the difference in determining whether you will return or recommend the product, service or business to others.

At The UPS Store, we foster a culture that leads with service. We train our team to be the highlight of a customer's day and the source of their most pleasant transaction. I've spoken with many of our retailers about how some of their customers have been shopping with us for decades or will travel out of their way because of how we make them feel like family. This is the work of our strong culture that allows us to build these important relationships.

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## 3. Deepening professional relationships drives a better understanding of business opportunities.

Taking the time to truly understand a team member's strengths and passions gives you an opportunity to find a role that suits their strengths and continues to push your business forward. In business, your relationships extend beyond employees and customers to vendors and suppliers as well. Oftentimes, these vendor partners are really extensions of internal teams and play a vital role in the company's ability to meet objectives.

The first step to deepening your relationships is to be kind,

supportive and genuinely interested in them. Having these strong relationships and showing appreciation also leads to better collaboration, which opens the door for more opportunities to learn from each other and better overall success. As a leader, if you prioritize your people, your business success will follow.

## 4. Leading with gratitude causes the leader to think about employees and understand their work for a more holistic view of the business overall

Finally, the pinnacle of gracious leadership is recognizing the role your employees make in the success of your business. When in a leadership role, it can be easy to fall into an isolated way of thinking. Considering and listening to employee perspectives and ideas can lead to a more well-rounded understanding of business needs.

At The UPS Store, we make it a point to regularly speak with our retail owners to learn what they are experiencing in their stores and ask what would be most helpful from our retail system. During the pandemic, this communication allowed us to better understand business needs and turn a difficult time for businesses into a period of incredible growth.

Although it should go without saying that leaders should act with their heart, sometimes this can be easy to sideline when faced with the challenge of running a business. I encourage you to take a moment to recognize the benefits of leading with gratitude to drive results.

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