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The Power of Thanks
How Social Recognition Empowers Employees and Creates a Best Place to Work
Eric Mosley and Derek Irvine

SYNOPSIS

The Power of Thanks is a guide for business leaders to build an organizational culture rooted in recognition. The book uses examples from Fortune 500 companies to demonstrate that "thanks" isn't merely a word that makes employees feel good and can boost their individual performance. Rather, it's a concept that can unify and transform an organization to create competitive advantage and drive results.

Authors Mosley and Irvine organized *The Power of Thanks* into three sections. The first emphasizes the importance of organizational culture, particularly in today's economy, and the need to engage employees' hearts. Part two submits that the key to achieving engagement is through *social recognition*, defined as "the mass mobilization of all employees in unleashing the power of recognition." Finally, the book provides some actionable steps for implementing social recognition in an organization.

Essentially, social recognition is about using processes and technologies to give employees a voice in saying "thanks," and enabling them to do so often and in ways that reinforce the organization's core values. The book offers the following framework for building social recognition, which incorporates formal rewards programs with opportunities (often involving social technologies) for employees and leaders to express appreciation:

1. **Sponsorship** – "The tempo starts at the top," so the CEO and senior leadership team must buy into and own the power of thanks.
2. **Design** – Link the effort to the company strategy and values, plan metrics and invite employees at all levels into the design process.
3. **Reach** – Integrate with all HR programs to touch as many people as possible, and calibrate your awards with achievements.
4. **Adoption** – Promote or perish; train managers and celebrate "recognition moments" in a simple, consistent, timely way.
5. **Rewards** – Offer a "great choice of rewards" that honors employees' uniqueness, humanizing them and the program.

For each phase there are useful questionnaires, tips and implementation checklists. These tools integrate and build on one another, so the book isn't for readers who are just looking for a few quick takeaways or low-hanging fruit. If, however, you're ready to build a business case and blueprint for a new approach to recognition that involves everyone in your organization, *The Power of Thanks* can serve as a useful guide.

Review by Keith Cucuzza, Bridge Consulting

RECOGNITION MYTHS

Throughout the book are a variety of "myth busters," to help shift perspectives on what great recognition looks like. Here are a few of the debunked myths:

- **"To get something done, give it to a busy person."** – Wait! Before "rewarding" someone with more work, acknowledge the great work they've already contributed.

- **"If it's free, it's forgotten."** – A sincere thanks, even without a tangible reward, activates people's intrinsic motivation.

- **"Gamification means awarding points."** – Game designers know it's not points that make games appealing; it's the "wins" that come from achieving something difficult.

- **"Managers should be the focal point of recognition."** – Managers matter—but they can't see everything. Everyone should be empowered to "catch someone doing good."

- **"Public recognition is best."** – Not always. Sometimes a quiet, personal "thanks" is appropriate.

- **"Cash is king."** – Cash is easily forgotten or spent on necessities, making the award unmemorable and thus ineffective.