

## Transcription - Receiving Praise

Welcome back. I'm Kim Baillie, she's Fulyana Orsborn and this is Inside Exec. Today, I'd like to explore how you and your organization handle praise.

We've talked in the past about complaints and handling customer complaints, handling internal complaints and we've talked about giving praise, but I don't think we've talked to any great degree about accepting praise and about how you personally and about how your organization handles praise. With the advent of reviews and review sites across the board, there is an opportunity for you and your organization to be aware of a whole range of feelings from your customer base. So, if you look at it in terms of you and your staff, personally, individually, if they're getting praise for an activity or an action they've taken or a service that they've provided, how do they handle that praise and I guess that comes in two parts. How do they handle it personally, themselves? There are a lot of people that are not good at accepting praise because we don't, as adults, we often don't know how to do it. And I think, secondly, that it's in the Australian culture anyway, it's not our way to then go around and tell everyone that they were praised for an activity. I think in an organisation it's important that that information gets passed on as well because it's all very well for someone to be praised individually for an activity or an action that they've taken, but if the organisation as a whole doesn't know that, how can they value that person?

It's about comes back to about valuing your staff, knowing you staff, knowing about the level of service that you are providing or the level of actions that are being taken. In organizational sense, if someone praises your organization, thanks your organization it's no different to a simple thank you. And these days, it's no different to the complaints side of things. We talked about one person in ten will actually, physically write down something that is a complaint. And I don't think those numbers have changed even though there's a greater opportunity for people to put their thoughts on paper, I should say in writing. It would be the same, if not even worse for praise, because as much as we talk about we should acknowledge good service, we should celebrate good service, if we don't know how to do it and if, when we do it, it's not accepted in a way that encourages us to do it again then we would hesitate about doing it again. Now I'm a great one for giving feedback regardless of where it is because I know the value of feedback. It's hard when it's not pleasant feedback and it's difficult to step back and not just go in to justification mode, but you need it to help your organization maintain its level, its standing, you needed to grow your organization, you need it to grow your staff, you need it to grow as a manager, so both sides of the coin are what is needed.

In recognizing that, I am very mindful of always giving feedback for whatever service wherever I go. And even if it is in the supermarket, these people have a job to do. No different to anyone else. So if I see that someone is packing the fruit really well or really taking care about putting the fruit in the right places, just as I walk past, I will tell them. You know, if that makes their day, that's good but it's not the sort of thing that they'd go to the staff meeting and say someone told me last week that I was packing the fruit really well. As a manager, you need to know that that's happening. There needs to be some mechanism that you give your staff that allows them to self recognize that they've done a good job and also a way of giving them the tools they might need, they might not have developed over their lives, to actually accept praise.

Once again, I'll fall back on some recent experiences because I've been moving around a little bit, around the countryside as much as I can. So I'm back into the mode of having direct services provided for me wherever I go. It's interesting for me because I go into automatic mode if I'm giving feedback and I'll do it automatically if it's an immediate thing. But I will also do the written feedback for the organization is a whole. Individual feedback I'll do face-to-face, organizational feedback I'll do in writing. But in terms of the writing one, I will also mention individuals in the organization that I feel have been outstanding in their service.

I like to see that someone appreciates the feedback I'm giving them, even when it is countered sometimes by what I might see as an improvement from a customer's point of view. What I like to see is that they listen, they hear it, that they understand why it's being given and they put some thought in to it. You can see them thinking about how they could incorporate from you're saying. What I get concerned about is when I give praise, particularly to someone, and they just don't know what to say. They don't even know to say thank you. They're embarrassed and no-one, ever, should be embarrassed about giving good service. But if they're embarrassed about giving good service, what is that saying about us as managers and our managerial style?

If they are embarrassed by the fact that someone has recognized that they doing a good job, don't let's fall into the category of saying, well, maybe it's the only time that they have done a good job. That's not fair. That is not probably true either, it's just that no one has ever taken the time to recognize good service and because they might not have experienced or seen that happen anywhere else in the organization, so they don't know what the response is. They don't know the simple thank-you for the acknowledgement of someone taking time to tell them

how good the service is or what the service has meant to them.

It's a bigger issue, I think, than we'd like to address, a bigger issue than we'd like to think about because as soon as you start to talk about it and think about it and you think about your own experiences, you think about when you've had good service and you rewarded that good service by acknowledging it, by making an attempt to express your appreciation. When you don't get an acknowledgement in return, whatever it is, whatever level it is, then it does, as it does for me, makes you hesitate about doing it the next time because it's embarrassing. If you say to someone I really enjoyed that, thank you so much for doing that here, that you really made a difference and they just look at you like you've come from another planet, what are you going to do next time? You're going to hesitate before you give your feedback, you're going to assess them and see where they are the sort of person who is going to take it in or not.

Accepting praise - for many, many people, you would think you'll be delighted and jumping up and down, but you get a bit embarrassed as Kim said and sometimes you even deflect. So let's take some examples here. Somebody says, I really like your coat and you say, oh, that was on special for \$20. Why did you have to do that? Why can't you just say, thank you. But we do do that. Another one could say, I really like the article you wrote, it was very insightful. And again, you deflect and you say, well that was actually that was inspired by such and such, and so and so help me with that. Again, you didn't acknowledge yourself and you didn't acknowledge that praise that was directed at you. As Kim said, the first thing that you should say is, thank you.

I have problems with that myself. I have to remind myself how to respond. The other thing is, yes, you want to not be selfish and take all that praise and pretend like you're the person that deserves it all, what you do is say, oh, thank you very much, I appreciate your feedback (that can be done either when somebody tells you verbally or when it's in writing) and just say, my team will be delighted to hear your feedback I'll be sure to pass it on or if the praise is for the organization, say the same thing. Thank you so much for the feedback, our organization would love to hear that and I will pass it on. So you're acknowledging the person giving it to you, you're accepting the praise and you're sharing it if you're not the sole recipient of that activity. So you can be humble but you also can be the person that will accept it and say thank you.

In another podcast we talked about when you have team meetings and you do something called success sharing. This is a perfect opportunity when you're talking about what went right, what went wrong, what can we copy from each

other and learn from each other, this is a great time to pass on that praise. Because what would happen there is that firstly you are being the role model by telling them who said what from a customer, how you received it, how you responded to them as the manager and now, you're passing it on to the relevant people. So this way you actually, by example, show them how to accept praise and what to do with it and how to share it.

In summary, really just say thank you for any praise and take it on board and have a look a bit deeper about what they liked about it. So if they give you more information, take that as well and see if you can build it in your system to make other customers happy. Don't go fishing, you have to be a bit tactful when somebody gives you praise, is not to sound like I want more but to very much take it on board and look into it later, to use it better. Like Kim, I'm one of the people that actually do pass on compliments and thank-yous to people I interact with and it could be in any environment and Kim gave very good examples. Whether it's a service or a product, I think it's really, really important that we do that because it's a good way for whoever is providing that service or product to see what the customer values and then we'll do more of it. I don't do it for the reason so they can do more of it. I do it to absolutely say, I appreciate what that person or organization did. It's the genuineness of it and really, that would make the person's day because they work hard, some people complain, customers can be difficult, but when they also get acknowledged and thank you for their hard work and interaction, that means a lot. So let's make people happy by genuinely providing good feedback when it's well-deserved. And as managers, absolutely be the role model to show your staff how to say thank you and how to acknowledge and pass on the praise.

For feedback to be valuable, it should be genuine and should be regardless of what the reaction is going to be. I would just like us, as managers, to be giving our staff tools to accept praise when it's given at a personal level and at an organisational level. I'm Kim Baillie, she's Fulyana Orsborn and this is Inside Exec.