

Debug Your “Work Language”

Jess Anderson - Plus Project Ltd
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Do You Feel Appreciated at Work?

This simple question predicts employee satisfaction, engagement
and retention more than almost anything else

Why Appreciation Matters

Recognition Drives Engagement

Employees who feel valued are more motivated and productive

Retention Over Role

People leave due to lack of appreciation, not the job itself

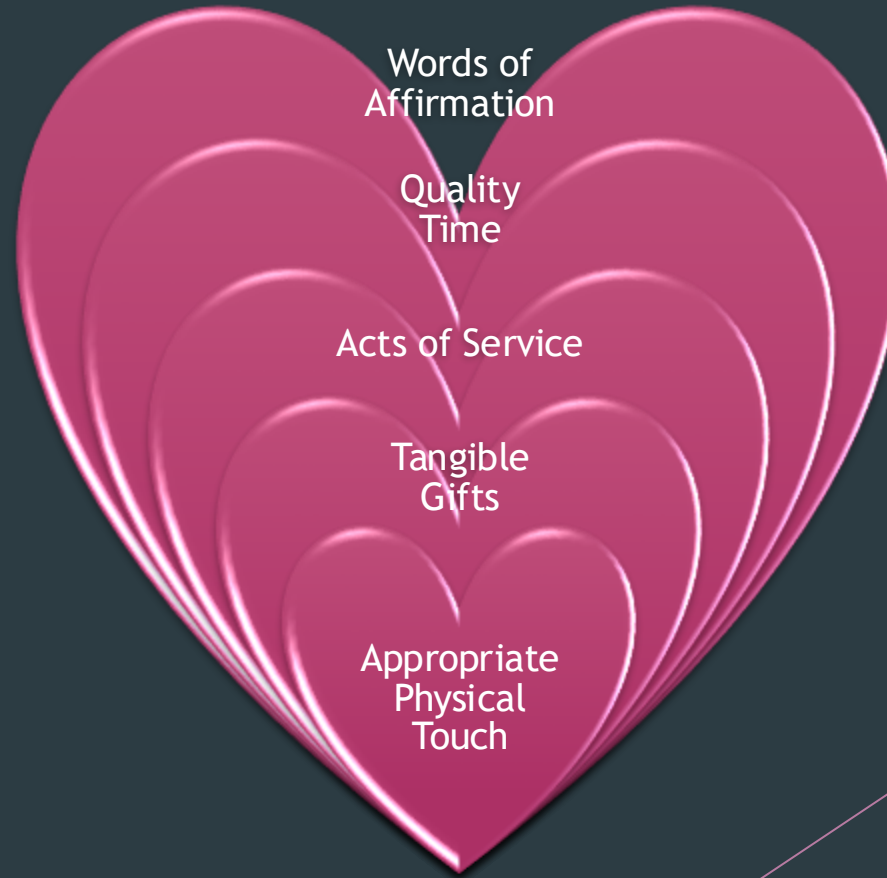
Performance Culture

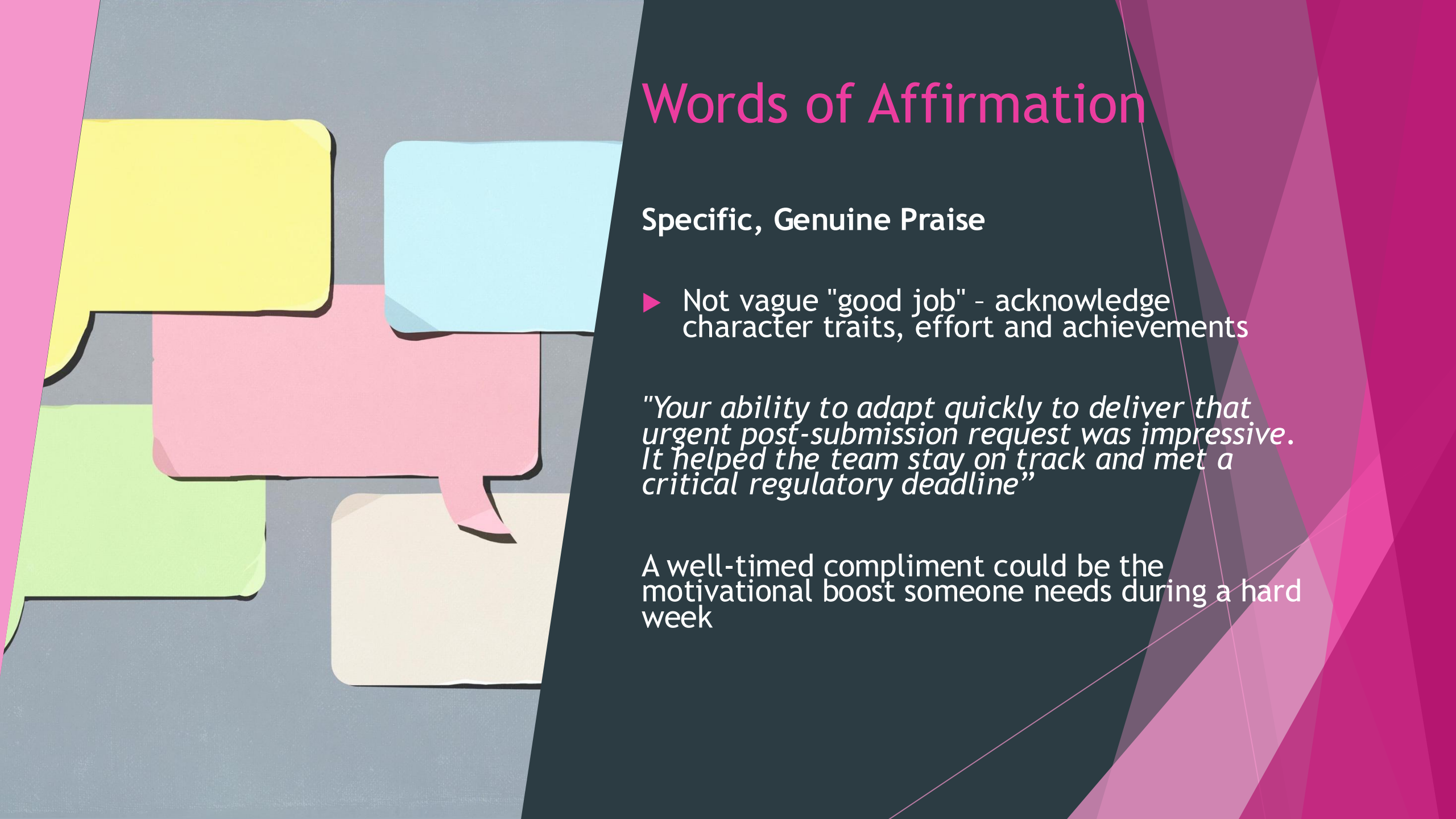
Tailored recognition fosters empathy and high performance

The Five Languages of Appreciation

A practical framework for understanding how different people perceive appreciation

Originally developed by Gary Chapman and adapted for the workplace by psychologist Paul White





Words of Affirmation

Specific, Genuine Praise

- ▶ Not vague "good job" - acknowledge character traits, effort and achievements

"Your ability to adapt quickly to deliver that urgent post-submission request was impressive. It helped the team stay on track and met a critical regulatory deadline"

A well-timed compliment could be the motivational boost someone needs during a hard week



Quality Time

Focused attention and undivided time

- ▶ Fully present during one-on-one meetings
- ▶ Collaborative problem-solving sessions
- ▶ Mentoring and walkthroughs

Leads to higher team efficiency and cohesion



Acts of Service

Actions speak louder than words

- ▶ Assisting with complex tasks
- ▶ Sharing workload to lighten burden
- ▶ Proofreading important communications
- ▶ Mentoring for professional growth

Demonstrates collaborative spirit and commitment



Tangible Gifts

Thoughtful tokens, not extravagance

- ▶ Coffee voucher after project milestone
- ▶ Personalised office items
- ▶ Training opportunities and certifications
- ▶ Birthday or work anniversary recognition

"I see you and value what you bring to this team"

A photograph of two hands shaking in a firm handshake. The hand on the left is darker-skinned, and the hand on the right is lighter-skinned. A white square frame is superimposed over the center of the handshake. The background is a light gray.

Appropriate Physical Touch

Respectful gestures with clear boundaries

- ▶ In person: handshake, pat on back, high-five
- ▶ Virtual: celebratory emoji, applause, GIFs

Releases endorphins, reduces stress,
creates moments of positivity

From Theory to Action

1. Raise Awareness

- Introduce the Five Languages to your team

2. Assess Preferences

- Use workshops, surveys, conversations and observation

3. Tailor Efforts

- Personalise gestures to match individual preferences

4. Use Multiple Languages

- Incorporate variety for inclusive appreciation culture

5. Lead by Example

- Be proactive and intentional in showing appreciation

6. Continuous Improvement

- Invite feedback and adjust approach as needed

Considerations for Diverse Teams

Cultural Differences

- Public praise may be uncomfortable in some cultures or welcomed in others
- Ask about preferences to ensure inclusivity

Generational Differences

- Baby Boomers, Gen X, Millennials and Gen Z are all shaped by different influences
- Avoid assumptions based on age alone

Ask rather than assume

Benefits & Drawbacks



Benefits

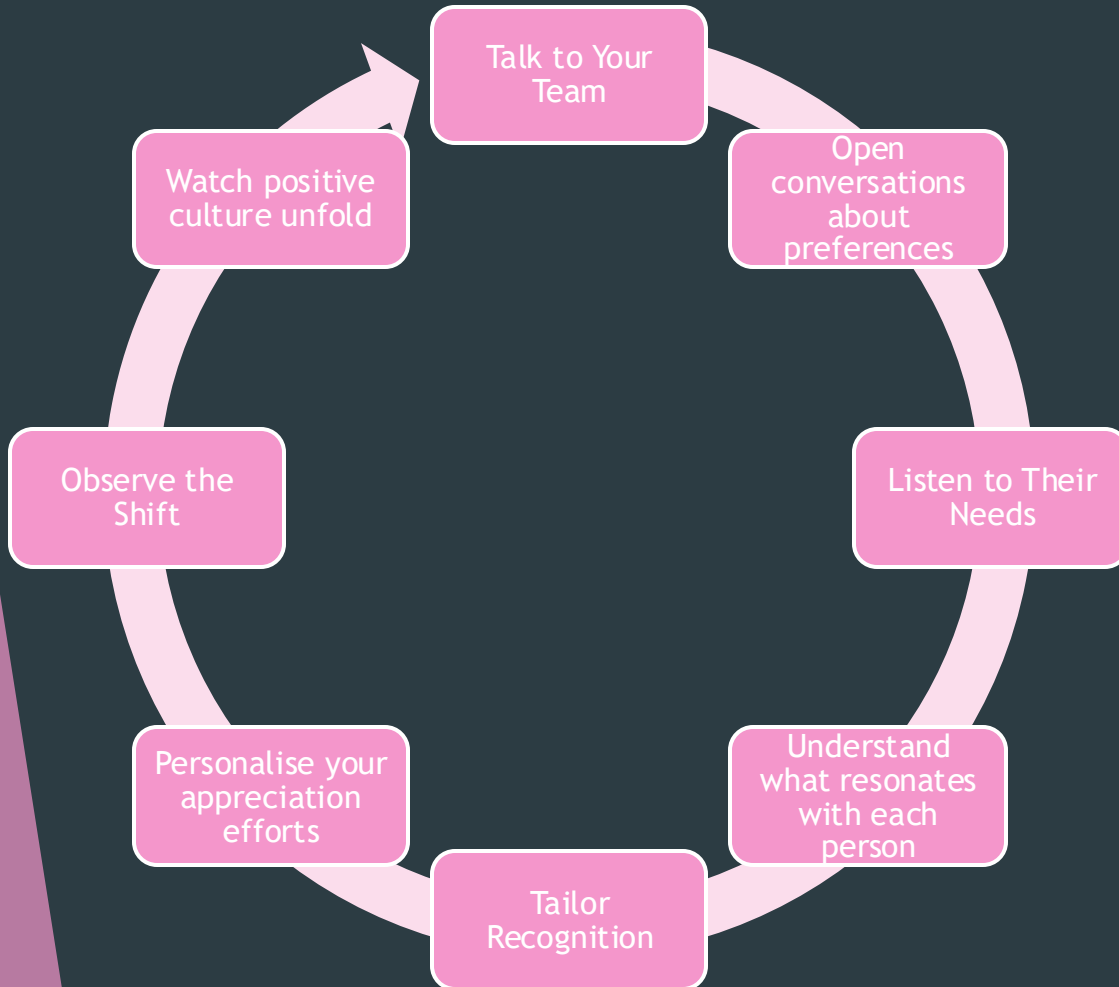
- Improved morale and team engagement
- Reduced miscommunication
- Higher job satisfaction and retention
- Stronger peer-to-peer collaboration

Drawbacks

- Over-reliance on one language may alienate others
- Cultural missteps or boundary crossing
- Insincerity can undermine trust
- Requires ongoing effort and consistency

Make Appreciation a Daily Habit

Not an annual performance ritual



When team members feel truly valued and supported, they bring their best selves to work and are more likely to stick around

Start Today

Thank you!
Questions are welcomed
and encouraged

JESS.ANDERSON@PLUS-PROJECT.CO.UK