

## Why Should Celebration Be a Part of Our Culture?

“In successful change efforts, empowered people create short-term wins—victories that nourish faith in the change effort, emotionally reward the hard workers, keep the critics at bay, and build momentum. Without sufficient wins that are visible, timely, unambiguous, and meaningful to others, change efforts inevitably run into serious problems” (Kotter & Cohen, 2002, p. 125).

“Milestones that are identified, achieved, and celebrated represent an essential condition for building a learning organization” (Thompson, 1995, p. 96).

“Remembering to recognize, reward, and celebrate accomplishments is a critical leadership skill. And it is probably the most underutilized motivational tool in organizations” (Kanter, 1999, p. 20).

“Win small. Win early. Win often” (Hamel, 2002, p. 202).

“The most effective change processes are incremental—they break down big problems into small, doable steps and get a person to say ‘yes’ numerous times, not just once. They plan for small wins that form the basis for a consistent pattern of winning that appeals to people’s desire to belong to a successful venture. A series of small wins provides a foundation of stable building blocks for change” (Kouzes & Posner, 1987, p. 210).

“Specific goals should be designed to allow teams to achieve small wins as they pursue their common purpose. Small wins are invaluable to building members’ commitment and overcoming the obstacles that get in the way of achieving a meaningful, long-term purpose” (Katzenbach & Smith, 1993, p. 54).

“When people see tangible results, however incremental at first, and see how the results flow from the overall concept, they will line up with enthusiasm. People want to be a part of a winning team. They want to contribute to producing visible, tangible results. . . . When they feel the magic of momentum, when they can begin to see tangible results—that’s when they get on board” (Collins, 2001, p. 178).

“Reward small improvements in behavior along the way. Don’t wait until people achieve phenomenal results” (Patterson et al., 2008, p. 205).

“Small successes stimulate individuals to make further commitments to change. Staffs need tangible results in order to continue the development of their commitment to the change program and small steps engender understanding as well” (Eastwood & Louis, 1992, p. 219).

“Visible measures of progress are critical for motivating and encouraging educators to persist in the challenging work of improvement. Even the most dedicated and optimistic among us will stop if there’s no sign that what we’re doing is making a difference, or might make a difference eventually” (Elmore & City, 2007).

“When you set small, visible goals, and people achieve them, they start to get it into their heads that they can succeed. They break the habit of losing and begin to get into the habit of winning” (Heath & Heath, 2010, p. 144).

One of the most important things leaders can do is to create the conditions that allow people to experience progress in their work and then recognize and celebrate their accomplishments, even small accomplishments (Amabile & Kramer, 2011).

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