

You Need Rituals of Celebration!

By Larry Robbin

Rituals of celebration are one way to fight the burnout that is so prevalent in our job seekers and staff. We need to celebrate when people get jobs so everyone feels the positive energy that comes with this accomplishment. A ritual of celebration can be as simple as an email that goes out to all staff, customers, and resource room computers that talks about a job seeker who landed a job. It can include information about how they kept motivated, successful job search techniques, and advice they have for other people. You will need a release of information to do this appropriately. When people see the email it will give them hope that they can be successful too. Your staff will feel a shared sense of accomplishment when they get the email. Rituals of celebration are important morale and motivation boosters in these challenging times.

In a program I managed we ran a monthly customer panel called Do You Want to Know How I Got My Job? This panel was composed of customers that had job offers, but hadn't started working. These sessions were standing room only with customers still in job search and my staff. We started them with a parade of the successful customers entering the room calling out their names as each one entered to a round of applause and cheering. We used noise makers, confetti, music, and a lot of hoopla to get everyone smiling and sharing in the positive energy of these successful job seekers. We gave them certificates of accomplishment and donated food purchasing cards. Some people brought in pot luck food to share. Then my staff interviewed the panel and we took questions from the audience. We ended it with a parade around the room and more fun. My staff and all the customers

left invigorated, more knowledgeable about how to get a job, and motivated to take on the fight against the recession.

We used other rituals of celebration devices as well. One Saturday a month we had Family and Friend Day. On these days customers could bring their families and friends to the office. We talked about the importance of family and friend support and celebrated the efforts of the job seekers and the people, including the job seekers' children, that helped the job seekers keep going. We had testimonials from job seekers about the importance of this support. Every time people cried tears of appreciation for being recognized. You could see people come together as they understood their role in helping the customer stay motivated. Many customers reported that this event was crucial in keeping them going and

building their support system. Often times our working program alumni showed up to provide an additional layer of support for people. My staff volunteered for the event and we always had a huge turnout from staff. Staff often brought their family and friends so people could see what they did at work. This event made them feel good as well. All around this was a great ritual of celebration.

You can organize a management and staff committee to brainstorm how you are going to make rituals of celebration a part of your organization. To be effective these strategies need to provide both information and emotional support. Encourage people to think out of the box and experiment with all kinds of ideas. Even the process of planning the ritual will help build the morale of your staff. Make sure you ask

your customers for ideas as well. Don't keep doing the same rituals over and over unless they are tremendously successful. Make perpetual ritual of celebration development a part of your organizational culture. This isn't a frivolous idea when you consider the fact that the private sector spends billions trying to keep their staff in a celebration mode even in the most challenging of times. Rituals of celebration are one way to fight burnout in our job seekers and our staff. Start planning yours today!

Larry Robbin has over forty-five years of experience providing innovative consulting and training solutions to help workforce organizations become the state-of-the-art in the field. For information about his services or a list of three other rituals of celebration, contact him at larryrobbin@aol.com.