

What's Love Got to Do With It?

By Kylie Fay, employee resources associate, HireElements

Love; it's not a word you often hear around the workplace. In fact, it's a topic we often shy away from. Although the topic of love in the workplace has become somewhat taboo (especially for managers), in actuality love is something that should be shown and promoted every day, even in the workplace. I'm not talking about romance, but instead companionate love: a less intense yet equally important form of love. Companionate love derives from connection, warmth, and affection instead of passion, and it is a key component of a highly functioning workplace.

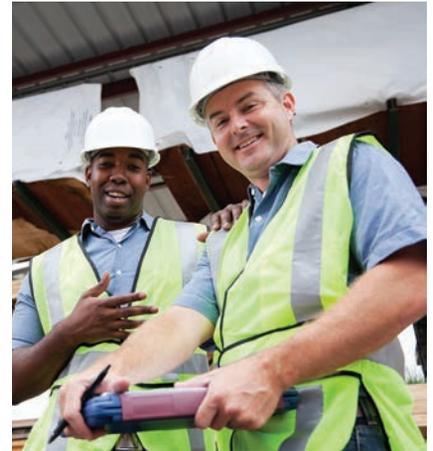
You may be asking, "Why is love so important in the workplace?" There is a pretty simple answer. Author Elie Wiesel put it best when he said, "The opposite of love isn't hate, it's indifference." When employees feel love from a connection with a manager or co-worker, they have a higher sense of teamwork, devotion, and overall engagement to the company, which results in a higher productivity level. When employees don't feel a special connection in the workplace they may feel less inclined to go the extra mile when needed. In fact, a study done by Sigal Barsade and Olivia A. O'Neill found that employees who felt that their company promoted a warm, loving environment had higher levels of teamwork and satisfaction and showed up for work more often. So suffice it to say, love in the workplace is pretty important.

So how do you go about showing companionate love within your workplace? Here are a few tips on how to start.

Create an open environment: It's extremely easy to get caught up in day-to-day work and not really interact with your coworkers outside of work-re-

lated matters. To combat this, many managers adopt an open-door policy. This can be done by literally keeping a door to an office open or by other simple gestures, such as having a candy or snack bowl on a desk for everyone to enjoy. These types of gestures encourage employees to feel comfortable to stop and chat for a time. While spending most of the day conversing with coworkers is not necessarily productive, a few minutes here and there while taking the time to ask about an employee's family, pets, or hobbies can go a long way in making the employee feel appreciated. On a similar note, keeping employees in the know about where their team and company are headed can help them to trust you and become more engaged in their jobs.

Pay your employees specific compliments: Sure, hearing "great job!" is nice and always welcomed, but for greater impact you can go the extra step. Instead of a simple "great job," add a personal touch that shows you know exactly how great of a job they did. For example, "Bob, I really appreciate all the work and effort you have been putting into this project. This is a



big project for us and you have really stepped up to complete it. It is a huge win for not only you but our team and entire company as well." That's a pretty solid compliment. Who wouldn't love to hear that?

Say thank you: This one is pretty simple but it is tried and true. The best way to show your employees that they are loved and appreciated? Say thank you! It can be as simple as saying "Thanks for all the hard work!" in the hall or offering them a little treat such as an order-in lunch or a happy hour. Regardless of how you do it, a thank-you goes a long way.

These gestures might seem small but when done every day, month after month, they grow into a culture that promotes and shows, you guessed it—love! 

Kylie Fay is an employee resources associate with HireElements, the recruitment network for A.W. Hastings & Co. As a strategic partner, HireElements aligns people and opportunities, leveraging a thorough understanding of its clients' corporate environment to provide the best human resources services for its culture. For more information, visit www.birelements.com.

