Drops in the Desert Campaign Encourages Employees to Share Praise

University Relations - Communications
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When you work at a place as busy as the UA, it can be tough to remember to pause and recognize those around you for the good work that they do. University Relations is reminding employees just how important it is to share positive feedback with one another through a new campaign called Drops in the Desert.

The campaign encourages employees to write supportive comments on paper "drops" or submit "drops" online to share with colleagues. The positive notes are dubbed "drops for your bucket."

"We have very high standards at the University of Arizona and our employees appreciate that, and work very hard to meet those ambitious goals every day," said Teri Lucie Thompson, UA senior vice president for university relations and chief marketing officer. "It's important that we also take time out to acknowledge one another for all the incredible work that goes on here. When we do that, we create a culture that is supportive and encouraging and makes us feel good about coming to work every day."

Drops in the Desert is being piloted in University Relations, which includes employees in Marketing, Communications, Government and Community Relations, Arizona Public Media, the Alumni Association, the Arizona Health Sciences Center Office of Public Affairs and University Relations Phoenix.

However, any department on campus can adapt the initiative for their area. And anyone can send drops online [1] via the Gallup website after registering for a free account [2].

The Drops in the Desert campaign is based on the theory of the dipper and the bucket, developed by late psychologist Donald O. Clifton and his colleagues at Gallup, who found in a survey of 4 million workers that those who received regular recognition and praise had increased productivity, increased engagement with colleagues, fewer accidents on the job and were more likely to stay with an organization longer.

Based on that research, the theory of the dipper and the bucket suggests that each of us has an invisible bucket. When it is full, we have a positive outlook and renewed energy, but when it is empty we feel bad.

According to the theory, each of also has an invisible "dipper," which we can use to fill others' buckets by saying or doing things that increase their feelings of positivity, or to dip from their buckets by saying or doing things that make them feel less positive. When we fill someone else's bucket, we also fill our own, and when we dip from another's bucket, or when someone dips from ours, it hurts us.
"We want to make sure we are adding to people's buckets," Thompson said, "keeping in mind that when we recognize and respect one another individually, we also have a positive impact on the University as a whole."

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