

# Make your personal workplace contribution a memorable one

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Moments are points of time that matter, count and leave a lasting impression — positive or otherwise. Their importance is reinforced when we hear the words: “I remember it vividly” or “How could I forget?” Moments are short, swift and sometimes hard to capture, as an advertisement from the ‘70s highlighted; “another fleeting Kodak moment”. Leaders are often cited for their moments, ranging from moments of difference, moments of contribution or moments of truth that benefit both customers and employees. Either way, how can you ensure the moments you leave behind have a lasting and positive impact?

## Positive moments in corporations

There is nothing more well-received than leaders being human. Leadership is everyone’s business; titles are no longer a prerequisite for leadership. We can all inspire others in good and bad times, if we believe that things can be different and lead to a better future.

One great example here includes the story of a hospital cleaner who knew the patients well, chatting to each and every one while sweeping and mopping around their beds. These customers had time on their hands and the cleaner humanely listened, learnt from them and shared with them. A visiting family member sat at the bedside of his mother, waiting for her to wake. The cleaner seized the moment and said “You must be Alex\*. Your mother has told me all about how much she loves you and your brother and sisters. I think your mother is great — you are lucky to have her.” Forty years later, Alex, now a chief executive himself, still shares the power that moment generated; kudos to that multi-skilling cleaner, demonstrating the power of great moments in leadership.

So bring out the humanity and the moments like this will flow; capture and allow them to speak loudly about the people and culture of the organisation.

## Not-so-positive moments in corporations

1. There is nothing more telling than a leader who claims to be in touch with the team yet the reality indicates otherwise. Public announcements are often required in organisations to spotlight appreciation or to endorse a specific behaviour or achievement. If that announcement really means so much, then why do some leaders get the person’s name wrong, or link the action that deserves accolade to the wrong individual.

A great way to rectify this is to allow the moment to be a real moment. Anyone can prepare and make a statement, such as an employee of the month event, yet this lacks spontaneity and relevance to the time and location. The moment has gone, and pulling it back in time is all too difficult. Great leaders make moments count with individualised rewards and recognition, and delivering “on the spot”. Walk around with your eyes wide open and be surprised by what is there to be discovered.

2. There is nothing that screams “getting it off my list” more than a spur-of-the moment decision. Even worse, when that decision is reactive and based on an interpretation that smacks of misinterpretation in disguise. Much of today’s corporate landscape is ambiguous in nature. Rarely is black and white enough any more, as multiple perspectives offer new ideas. Aim for small wins with small decisions first. When a non-negotiable decision must be taken and requires authoritative decisions, find ways to balance this by taking on the thoughts of your team first. Sometimes the moment we aim for may come when one’s opinion is sought.

Corporate moments can happen anywhere at any time. A recent UK football match marked a milestone for the club, one that deserved public recognition. Not only did the club manager present his prepared speech which gained wild applause, but he also spontaneously recognised the contribution that fans had made over the years. In particular, and on the spur of the moment, he mentioned one fan’s name who he was aware of, yet had never met. At that moment, the fan screamed, and the accolade of being the fan with the highest attendance record followed. Moments all round, wouldn’t you say?

We all spend so much of our time “at work”, regardless of its location, time or structure. It’s an environment in which the potential exists for many positive moments. To be a beneficiary of well-earned moments from your own team members, firstly consider how many you make happen. After all, we reap what we sow. What needs to change in your world to add moments to your legacy?

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