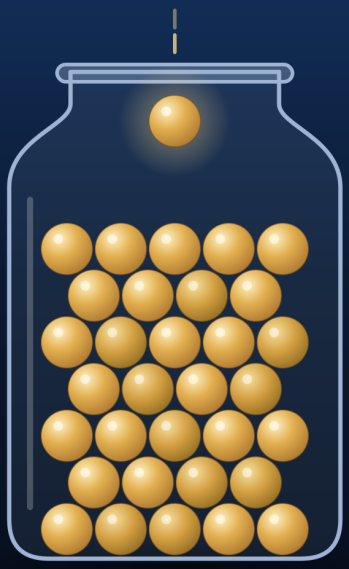
PEOPLE & CULTURE

SMALL WINS EXERCISE

The best workdays are the ones that move something forward

BOAZ STRATEGIC



76%

of people's best days at work included progress

Make progress visible with the Small Wins Exercise.

"Who dares despise the day of small things…" — Zechariah 4:10

At Boaz Strategic, we help leaders build teams that make progress visible.

Small wins, *big momentum.*

> *People do their best work when they can see it moving forward.*

Ask a leader what motivates people and you will hear about pay, recognition, incentives and perks. Ask people what made their best days at work and you will hear something quieter: they got somewhere.

The research is striking.

Teresa Amabile and Steven Kramer had 238 people on 26 teams in seven companies keep daily work diaries, nearly 12,000 in all. The most important contributor to a positive inner work life was simply making progress in meaningful work. Setbacks, they found, hurt two to three times more than progress helps.

The irony is what leaders believe. When 669 leaders ranked five employee motivators, they put progress last. Only 5 percent ranked it first.

Make progress visible.

Progress does not have to be large. A finished draft, a resolved customer issue, a stubborn problem finally understood: small wins count, so long as the work matters to the person doing it. Your job is to clear the path and notice, out loud, when someone moves forward.

Amabile and Kramer describe two levers: catalysts that support the work, such as clear goals, autonomy and resources, and nourishers that support the person, such as respect, encouragement and recognition.

Try it this week with the **Small Wins Exercise**: end each Friday with two questions for your team. What moved forward? What is in the way? Then remove one obstacle and name one win.

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Amabile & Kramer, HBR, May 2011 and The Progress Principle, 2011; Zechariah 4:10 (NIV)

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