

Connect Everyone With A Wall Of Pride¹

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THE WALL OF PRIDE

In the many employee surveys I've conducted during my career, people have repeatedly told me how important a "family feeling" is to them while at work. After all, they do spend a major part of their life in the workplace. They want to feel a sense of belonging, a sense of family.

A technique I call *The Wall of Pride* is a very useful way to reinforce that feeling. It is designed to give people a snapshot of an entire organization and the important part each person plays in its success. Although it could be used with larger organizations, it works best with organizations (or Divisions of larger organizations) with fewer than 200 employees, because it is a rather elaborate exercise that involves every employee.

This technique consists of seven steps taken over a period of two days to a week, depending on the size of the organization.

- ◆ Step 1. In this first step, employees are brought together in groups of around 30 people, drawn from different departments. Make sure that the number is an even number, because they will be divided into pairs.

The facilitator, describes the goal of the exercise: to help everyone get to know what people do in other parts of the organization and how it all fits into the organizational mission. He or she goes on to review the organizational mission and presents a brief overview of the parts of the organization.



- ◆ Step 2. The facilitator then divides the group into pairs. The pairs are told that their task is to go to a part of the organization in which they do not work and interview two people working there. They are told to ask two questions of each person:

- "Please tell us what you do here at (name of organization)—describe your job."
- "When you are working at your job, what are you most proud of about what you are doing?"

Step 3. Each pair is then given a clipboard. They are told that one person in each pair should do the interviewing, while the other person takes notes. They are then instructed to go out into a part of the organization different from the one in which they work for one hour to interview two people.



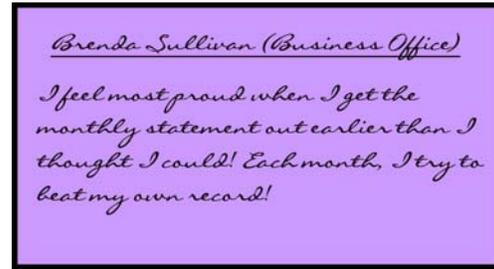
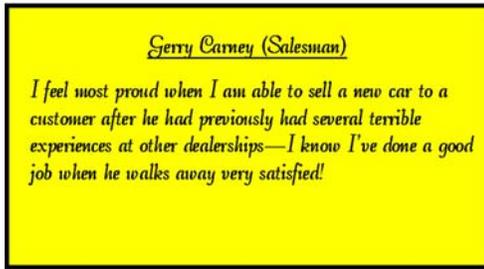
They are further told that once a person is interviewed, he or she is to be given a small, stick-on smiley face with a pleasant message on it, much like the one you see in this drawing to the right, taken in a company by the name of Fairway. This stick-on face signals to another pair looking for someone to interview that the person has already been interviewed. It also spreads a smile throughout the company.

- ◆ Step 4. When all of the pairs have returned to the meeting room, the facilitator solicits results of the interviews from the pairs. Together, the talk about what they learned about other people's jobs and what the people being interviewed felt proud about doing. This discussion begins to give everyone a broader sense of what is happening in their organization.

¹ From: http://www.arniedahlke.com/100630_Connect_Everyone_With_A_Wall_Of_Pride.pdf

—Please take a moment to look at Arnie's site: www.arniedahlke.com

- ◆ **Step 5.** At the end of the discussion, the facilitator gives two brightly multicolored post-its to each pair. Using one colored post-it for each person they interviewed, they are instructed to write the person's name and what the person is most proud of when they work. For example:

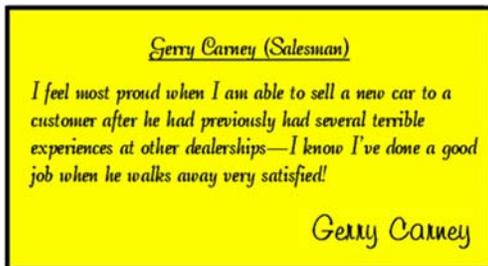


Each pair is then asked to paste the post-it's on the wall of the meeting room. Across the top of the wall, hangs a large banner that says **The Wall Of Pride**.

Groups of employees, mixed from different departments, are brought together until all employees have interviewed other employees. In this way, everyone in the organization gets the opportunity to both interview and be interviewed by other employees. Thus, they all end up with a post-it on **The Wall of Pride**.

At the end of each group session, people are told that they should all come back to the meeting room during the last two hours of Friday (or whatever day is designated) to find their post-it on the wall.

Step 7. When people return to the meeting room during the designated two-hour period, they are instructed to find their post-it on the wall, read what is written on it to make sure it is accurate, and then sign their name on it.



In the process of searching for their own post-it, everyone sees what other people are saying about their jobs and what the kind of pride they take in what they do. This gives people a greater overall sense of what is happening in their organization.

Compiling a Wall Of Pride is a very effective way of building an awareness of the company as a larger team and getting to know something about what other people in the company are doing.

