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    101 Ways to Recognize People
There has been a long-running debate about incentive plans and whether or not they “work.” It usually centres on one central question: Do incentive plans measurably and positively influence employee behaviour? While many in business assume it’s conventional wisdom that incentive plans have a meaningful impact, some assert otherwise.

These opposing voices challenge the assumptions many business leaders hold regarding human motivation in the workplace. One of the most recent challenges to the value of financial incentives is Daniel H. Pink’s 2011 book Drive (Penguin Group). In his book, Pink contends that taking a “carrot-and-stick” approach to motivation is outdated and ineffective. He argues that employees are influenced more by intrinsic factors than by remuneration. Pink backs up his arguments with decades of scientific research on human motivation. In his book, Pink asserts that by attempting to use financial incentives to drive employee behaviour, a company actually narrows their focus, constricts their minds and impedes their possibilities. He also posits that when a company needs an employee to perform tasks that require creative thinking and innovation, rewards can have the effect of extending the time it takes for that employee to solve the problem. His central thesis is that companies should pay employees adequately and fairly, thereby getting the issue of money off the table, and then give them lots of autonomy so their intrinsic motivations can take over.

Well, guess what? There’s no real disagreement here on any of those points. That said, motivational theory and research are great, but...
how do business leaders apply this approach in the real world, with real people, and with the growth trajectory of the company at stake? What should businesses conclude from this? Should they pay all employees the same? How do they compensate employees who have higher skill levels and are making greater contributions? Do they simply eliminate incentives all together and encourage employees to enjoy the "intrinsic" rewards associated with their jobs? These are practical questions that need to be addressed in a way that respects the legitimacy both of Pink’s (and others’) arguments and of a company’s need to effectively frame the financial partnership it will have with its workforce.

Clearly, ignoring the role and impact of extrinsic rewards is impractical. Instead, the goal of every business leader should be to develop pay strategies that reward superior performance while supporting and nurturing intrinsic motivators. Such an approach assumes the two are not mutually exclusive. They can co-exist. This type of culture is built upon a correct understanding of the role of compensation in general, and incentives specifically, in a total rewards framework. The four quadrants of a total rewards structure are a way of examining the combination of intrinsic and extrinsic factors that influence whether or not premier talent will join an organization, then stay—and how those individuals will perform while there. If any one of these issues doesn’t measure up in the mind of a key person, that employee will leave the organization or not join in the first place. Or they will underperform. Let’s define what each of these factors means.

**1. Compelling Future:** Employees certainly want to feel compelled by where the business is headed. More importantly, however, they need to be able to see themselves as an integral part of making that future a reality; that their unique abilities are needed to have the company realize its full potential. This is strongly rooted in intrinsic factors.

**2. Positive Work Environment:** Great talent wants to enjoy the nature of the work it is doing and with whom it is engaged in that effort. In addition, high performers in particular want to know that the culture supports achievement and success.

**3. Personal and Professional Development:** Growth-oriented companies create an environment where the unique abilities of their key performers can thrive. In such organizations, people with distinctive talent find they are able to accelerate their learning curve and improve more quickly at what they do because of the resources to which they’re exposed. This occurs through a combination of both extrinsic and intrinsic influences.

**4. Financial Rewards:** A company’s compensation philosophy, practices and plans frame the financial partnership an organization has with its employees. When done effectively, they reinforce “what’s important” to the present and future success of the business. Further, they give shape to workforce roles, define successful outcomes and align shareholder and employee interests and vision. Although pay is an extrinsic device, it is most effective when it creates a unified financial vision for growing the business. That appeals to the intrinsic desires high performers have to align themselves with excellence and success.

The ideal environment, then, is one where the Total Rewards Framework is in balance. Otherwise, if the quality of any quadrant is lacking for an employee, he will not perform at his highest level, and probably won’t stay around for long. So while incentives and other forms of financial rewards shouldn’t be viewed as tools of manipulation to influence employee behaviour, their absence can likewise communicate a strategically damaging message to key talent. Pay needs to align with vision, strategy, roles and expectations or there is high potential for underperformance.

Consequently, as it relates to an intrinsic/extrinsic balance, the core issue is fairness. Fundamentally, incentives are about fulfilling a commitment to reward people fairly (even generously) for helping to fulfill the mission and business model of the organization. When quality people understand and believe in this commitment, the intrinsic desire of quality talent to deliver on the organization’s business plan is reinforced and unleashed.
Building Morale

Regular Employee Recognition Boosts Business Success

Positive experiences boost brain dopamine and boosting brain dopamine has the impact of making people feel better. Feeling better can translate into more energy, which, in the workplace can lead to better productivity, fewer errors, better customer services and better employee relationships.

Unfortunately our brains have a ‘negativity bias’, that means we are predisposed to notice and attend to negative information (part of our evolutionary survival mechanisms). To overcome this you have to make a conscious effort to overcome the unconscious bias.

In a 2012 ‘Canada’s Pulse of Talent’ survey from Ceridian Canada 75% of Canadian employees indicated that feeling valued makes them feel secure in their job, however only 56%, of Canadian employees reported being satisfied with the level of recognition they are receiving at work.

According to research from Carrot Culture, employee recognition by management was a powerful accelerator for success. They asked employees the question ‘My Organization Recognizes Excellence’ and discovered a solid correlation between those who reported that their organization recognized excellence and return on equity (ROE encompasses profitability, asset management and financial leverage), Return on Assets (ROA, fiscal earnings divided by total assets) and Operating Margin (operating income to sales).

It is possible to have too much of a good thing? Yes. Constant praise dulls the impact of the dopamine boosting brain experience. As with everything in life we need to balance our cookies and pizza with yogurt and salad.

The general take away from the data is that spending time offering praise on a weekly basis can be a cost effective way to boost employee’s productivity and it can translate to your bottom line business success.
Thinking Outside the Box
Fun Informal Employee Performance Recognition

Letting employees know how they are doing at work can make them feel valued and secure.

In a 2012 survey of Canadian employees 60% of employees indicated that having a performance review made them feel valued. Regular performance reviews are important because they let employees know where they stand at work.

According to Gallup's Engagement Survey Q12 item, "In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work" makes a 10% to 20% difference in revenue and productivity.

On an ongoing basis, help employees feel valued, recognized and acknowledged with a few simple and inexpensive recognition options.

Create Ongoing Peer-To-Peer and Management-Employee Recognition 'Awards'.

Consider creating mini-awards categories and encouraging everyone to contribute nominations and stories recognizing the contributions of others. Do not select one theme for nomination such that only one type of person is acknowledged.

1) Ask your employees to suggest several criteria or awards options (add a few of your own). Shoot for a list of 10-15 that you can draw from on an ongoing basis.
   • Team player of the week
   • Most helpful to a customer (direct or indirect service)
   • Top On the Spot problem solver (saved time, money or frustration)
   • Best new idea Generator (job task or company culture related)
   • Best utility player (able to step in to many roles as needed when needed)
   • Best communicator or demonstrator of company culture
   • Fastest at something when fast was needed
   • Historian: Best resources for company history or policy information

2) Ask employees/managers to submit nominations or stories each week. If you have an internal social network create a space where the stories can be posted.

3) Create a Manager/Employee team to select different 'winners'. This need not be arduous – schedule 15-20 minutes once a week for the vote (electronic or group meeting). DO NOT OVER THINK. Rotate different team members onto this selection team each month.

4) The acknowledgement is the reward. However, if you want to offer a token 'reward' select something fun with no real monetary value:
   • A trophy to be displayed in their workspace for one week
   • A simple but professional public display, perhaps a copy of their photo in a frame on a wall or on your website
   • Extending their break or lunch by 30 minutes on Friday
   • At the end of each month inviting all the weekly winners to lunch
   • Thank them personally. Have a senior person in your organization contact and thank individual employees. A phone call, a personalized card or showing up can have a positive impact.
   • By varying your options and involving everyone you increase your odds of capturing a broader view of your employees and their performance. At the end of the day you can also use this information, both nominations and winners, as part of your more formal performance review process.
DISENGAGEMENT IS AN EVIL VILLAIN...
RECOGNITION TO THE RESCUE!

THE THREAT OF DISENGAGEMENT
More than 70% of employees don’t feel valued by their employer.¹

Disengagement costs $300 billion per year in lost productivity alone.²

Why Employees Leave:³

- 40% don’t respect the person they report to.
- 50% say they have different values than their employer.
- 60% don’t feel their career goals align with the plans their employers have for them.

$300 Billion
per year is lost in productivity

WHY RECOGNITION?
Companies that regularly recognize their top talent tend to have more engaged and productive workforces. Employee engagement leads to increased customer satisfaction, greater customer loyalty, and ultimately increased bottom-line success for the organization.

employee engagement → customer satisfaction → business success

RECOGNITION WILL POSITIVELY IMPACT:
- Employee Engagement
- Manager-Employee Relationship
- Company Culture
- Shareholder Return
- Retention
- Business Results
- Performance

OPPORTUNITY FOR IMPROVEMENT:
Companies spend $46 billion annually on employee rewards, yet 87% of organizations still use unstructured programs that are detached from employee engagement and business success.⁴

64% of working Americans leave their role because they are not recognized.⁵

Successful managers should recognize their employees at least once per week.

[Image: superhero icon with numbers 1 to 7]
WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU DON'T RECOGNIZE?


The cost of infrequent recognition is a missed opportunity for employers to offer feedback that inspires employees to do their best work.

71% of Americans are not engaged in their current positions. ⁶

32% of employees today plan on leaving their employer, vs. 19% two years ago. ⁴

30% of employees believe they’ll be working somewhere else within 12 months. ¹

Employees should receive feedback or recognition at least once per week, yet only 22% of employees report that regular recognition actually happens. ⁷

Results from an online survey culled responses from workers in North America to find out how employees feel about their jobs: ⁵

- 19% satisfied with their jobs
- 16% somewhat satisfied with their jobs
- 65% unsatisfied with their jobs

Without employee engagement, satisfaction and loyalty, the customer experience is wasted. ⁸

- 43% of customers who leave do so because of service.
- 73% of those who leave because of service blame employee attitudes.
- 83% of those who leave because of service tell others about their experience.

FINANCIAL IMPACT ON RECOGNITION & ENGAGEMENT

Companies with the most engaged employees report revenue growth at a rate two-and-a-half times greater than their competitors with the lowest level of engagement. ¹⁰

Highly engaged workforces saw a 19.2% increase in charge of operating income. ¹¹

Highly engaged organizations have 40% less turnover as a result. ¹²

Engaged employees are 2x more likely to promote their organization. ¹³

SOURCES:
⁴ The Economist: http://www.economist.com/node/21581073

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Many employers offer their employees bonuses for a job well done. But what if employees are on their way to earning the promised bonus and get terminated just before the bonus comes due? Do you still have to pay the bonus after the employee leaves? The answer depends on three things: (1) What, if anything, the employment agreement says; (2) How the bonus is calculated; and (3) When the employee is terminated. Here are two cases where these factors produced opposite rulings.

**Employee Gets Bonus**

**FACTS:**
A senior staff engineer for a petroleum exploration company wrote management a terse and angry note complaining about his computer. Management was none too pleased and decided to fire the engineer a few days before Christmas with no notice or severance pay. Before writing the ill-fated note, the boss had promised the engineer a double bonus of almost $35,000 on December 31st if the company met certain corporate goals. The company did, in fact, meet the goals. But because the engineer was no longer on the payroll, he didn’t get a penny of the money. So he sued the company for the promised bonus and severance.

**DECISION:**
The Alberta Court of Queen’s Bench awarded the engineer a full bonus for this year and next year, and 15 months’ severance pay to boot.

**EXPLANATION:**
*Terms of Employment Contract:* The engineer didn’t have a written employment contract. But he
was still entitled to a bonus because of the oral promise made by his boss.

**Eligibility Requirements:** The petroleum company was obviously unhappy with the engineer when it fired him. So he might not have been entitled to a bonus if it were based on his performance. But the bonus wasn’t based on the engineer’s performance. It was based on the company’s performance. Since everyone at the company was entitled to a bonus regardless of their work performance and attitude, the court granted the bonus to the engineer, too.

**Date of Termination:** The engineer was fired before his bonus became due. But the court determined that the termination was without cause and ordered his employer to pay 15-months’ salary as payment in lieu of notice. When the court added this notice period to the termination date, it found that the engineer would have been working on December 31st of the year he was fired and the year afterward. Since all other employees were entitled to bonuses in both of those years, the court said the engineer should get them too.


**Employee Doesn’t Get Bonus**

**FACTS:**
The president of a large pharmaceutical retailer was fired without cause as a result of corporate restructuring. The company gave him 15 weeks’ severance pay, as required by his employment contract. But it didn’t give him his bonus, which would have amounted to over $100,000.

According to his contract, all the president had to do to earn the bonus was work a continuous 12-month period during the contract’s term. Even though he renegotiated his agreement each year, he had actually worked for the company for three years. So he sued for the full amount of the bonus.

**DECISION:**
The Manitoba Court of Queen’s Bench ruled that the president wasn’t entitled to a bonus and threw out the lawsuit.

**EXPLANATION:**

**Terms of Employment Contract:** The employment contract gave the employer the right to terminate the president without cause, as long as it paid 15 weeks’ salary as severance pay. And it expressly said that this pay was “without bonus of any kind.” The president took an active role in negotiating the contract and should have recognized that the contract expressly stated that he wouldn’t get a bonus after termination, the court said.

**Eligibility Requirements and Date of Termination:**
The president wasn’t eligible for the bonus because he hadn’t put in the time necessary to earn the bonus stipulated in the contract.

**Date of Termination:** The contract required the president to work for 12 continuous months “during the term of this Agreement” to earn the bonus. Since he entered into a new agreement each time he renegotiated the terms of his employment, the court said he was bound to the date his most recent agreement was signed, which was—unfortunately for him—only a few months before his termination. His prior years of service didn’t count because they were provided under different agreements.


**CASE STUDY:**

**Discontinuing Bonuses = Constructive Dismissal Even in Hard Times**

A masonry foreman claimed constructive dismissal because he didn’t get bonuses for completing his last 2 projects the way he had in the past. Hey, times are tough, the employer countered. But the court found constructive dismissal anyway. Even though the written contract didn’t say anything about bonuses, bonus payments were a big part of the foreman’s compensation since at least 2005. And while tough times may warrant renegotiation, they don’t give employers the right to impose major pay changes unilaterally [*Piron v. Dominion Masonry Ltd.*, [2012] B.C.J. No. 1511, July 18, 2012].
Employee 
Acknowledgement

Recognition and Reward

A well-designed recognition and reward policy, that creates a work environment where employees feel appreciated for their efforts and contribution, serves to attract, retain and motivate employees.

Establishing your policy and process
When establishing your policy and process, consider the following aspects of recognition and reward:

Recognition and reward should be aligned to organization values
Clearly identify what you want to reward, such as:

- Ongoing excellence in performance
- Performance over and above job requirements
- Client compliments on service
- Outstanding one-time achievement
- Contribution to team effectiveness

Recognition and reward should become part of the organization’s culture
How will you foster informal and formal recognition and reward?

- Encourage supervisors and peers to say thank you – one of the easiest and most underused recognition tools
- Encourage informal recognition on the job, at meetings, etc.
- Establish formal recognition programs, based on a specific organizational goal or value

Determine the most effective types of recognition and reward.
Recognition is as simple as saying thank-you or as elaborate as a formal presentation at a company event

- Ask employees what kinds of rewards they would appreciate (within the limits of the organization's budget) – possibly provide a “suite” of rewards that employees can choose from
- Rewards can be cash or non-cash
- Establish a budget for rewards (preferably allocated quarterly, so achievement early in the year doesn’t get over-rewarded compared to achievement late in the year)

Who makes the recognition and reward decision? And how?

- Organizations usually encourage informal recognition to be given by anyone at any level in the company, peer-to-peer, supervisor-to-subordinate, subordinate-to-supervisor.
- In order to manage costs and ensure equitable and objective decision making, organizations should establish specific processes for nominating and awarding individuals or teams for rewards; nominations can also be peer-to-peer, supervisor-to-subordinate, subordinate-to-supervisor, etc. but final approval, particularly for rewards of significant value, is usually done by a reward and recognition committee or senior management.

Rewards and tax implications
Rewards with a monetary value may be considered a taxable benefit by the Canada Revenue Agency. Your organization needs to decide if you will top up the reward to mitigate tax implications, or not. In either case, you need to inform employees when the rewards they receive are taxable benefits.
How Well Do You Know Your Employees?

What Incentives Do Employees Want the Most?

Hard incentives aren’t necessarily the best way to make employees happy - but they certainly help. Here are what employees say will make them happy, and what employers think will make their employees happy:

### What Employees SAY They Want
(*#1 is most important, #10 is least important*)

1. Full appreciation for work done
2. Feeling “in” on things
3. Sympathetic help on personal problems
4. Job security
5. Good wages
6. Interesting work
7. Promotion/growth opportunities
8. Personal loyalty to workers
9. Good working conditions
10. Tactful discipline

### What Employers THINK Their Employees Want

1. Good wages
2. Job security
3. Promotion/growth opportunities
4. Good working conditions
5. Interesting work
6. Personal loyalty to workers
7. Tactful discipline
8. Full appreciation for work done
9. Sympathetic help with personal problems
10. Feeling “in” on things
Engaging Employees
Do They Know They Really Matter? Motivating Your Employees

Workplaces where management gets the best performance from their employees are usually workplaces where someone understands how to effectively motivate employees on an ongoing and consistent basis. This is not always an easy task as what motivated a person today may not be what motivates that person tomorrow.

**Motivation and Your Employees**
Motivation is what moves people to take action. A sense of motivation activates, directs and sustains our goal driven behaviours, from a basic act such as obtaining food to a more sophisticated act such as obtaining a job or seeking a promotion at work.

At their core your employees, like all people, are motivated by biological/physiological, social, emotional and cognitive needs. Initially and frequently our biological needs motivate us before our emotional, social and cognitive needs.

But as our biological needs are met and we begin to gain experiences and form bonds with other people we are motivated by other factors. Without a full range of motivations it would be difficult for people to sustain personal relationships or excel in most work settings. As we build our life’s experiences we add more factors into the motivation puzzle, which is why people are fascinating and frustrating all at the same time.

Your employees are complex and while providing them with the financial resources can be a viable motivational factor it is generally not enough to consistently gain their top level of performance. If money is the only motivation you are employing it is easy to lose a performer to someone with more money.

If money alone is not enough the question then becomes what can you do to motivate employees on a consistent basis. Depending on each
employee’s different circumstances there will be variations in what motivates them on a given day and over time and to what degree something motivates them. That is why being agile and understanding core motivational factors is useful when trying to motivate people.

Satisfying Employees’ Needs

We are familiar with the idea of using a reward system, such as a financial reward, to motivate people. But when you motivate people only to receive rewards then when the rewards become common or if the reward stops or fails to grow the motivation can stop. Money is a blunt instrument and is often unsustainable, often leading to winners and losers and an ever-increasing need to increase the reward. If you are providing your employees with appropriate financial compensation then using additional financial rewards can have an impact but it is not enough. Rewards motivate people to work towards the rewards where you want employees to work because you want them to meet the needs of your customers/clients or your organization. Research does show us that in a workplace people are motivated by more than money and demonstrates to us that when you show people that you value them they can be motivated to work for you and your business more consistently and strongly compared to when money is the only motivating factor.

People Are Often Motivated When They Feel Valued

Once basic needs are met most people are more motivated by social, emotional and cognitive factors over basic biological ones. Motivations can be sophisticated in their nuances but often they do come back to a desire to fit in, be accepted and avoid being alone (social), to avoid fear, sadness and to be satisfied and happy (emotional) and to learn, challenge oneself, become adept and masterful at something (cognitive). Employees that feel valued are more likely to work hard and work happy.

5 Strategies for employee motivation

- Keep ‘Rewards’ to a minimum: Certainly you can provide some rewards and incentives but in addition to financial rewards consider recognition and opportunity. Enable people to gain skills, knowledge and mastery, send them on a course, train them and help them grow as an employee.
- Emotionally engage them in the business: Share information and invite involvement. Allow them to make a contribution to the challenges of the organization.
- Focus on the present and then future: Performance reviews focus on the past. Let employees see how they can have an impact on their teams/departments and the organization’s growth and future opportunities.
- Listen and Talk: Ask for their suggestions and provide them with opportunities to hear what is going on. Let them play a role in shaping the business and taking ownership of their contributions and understanding where they fit in.
- Be An Agile Leader: By definition Individuals are not alike and what motivates them changes. Re-evaluate your messages, actions and options regularly to identify what motivating factors may be more engaging to your employees.

Valuing and engaging your employees and letting them see this can go a long way towards motivation during times when you cannot provide financial rewards and incentives and can contribute to a happier and higher performing workforce.
Show Your Appreciation

101 Ways to Recognize People

In tight financial times, ongoing, meaningful rewards and recognition provide an effective, low cost way of raising morale and encouraging higher levels of performance. Here are 101 ideas to help you embed employee recognition into your everyday work.

1. Create a Hall of Fame wall with photos of outstanding employees.
2. Give employees time off to give blood.
3. Arrange for a team to present the results of its efforts to upper management.
4. Encourage, enable and empower staff to excel.
5. **Plan a surprise picnic.**
6. Answer your assistant’s telephone for a day.
7. Encourage and recognize staff who pursue continuing education.
8. Post a thank you note on an employee’s door.
9. Wash the employee’s car in the parking lot during the lunch hour.
10. Create and post an “Employee Honour Roll” in reception area.
11. Acknowledge individual achievements by using employee’s name when preparing a status report.
12. Make a photo collage about a successful project that shows the people that worked on it, its stage of development and its completion and presentation.
13. Bring an employee bagged lunches for a week.
14. Find out the person’s hobby and buy an appropriate gift.
15. Make a thank-you card by hand.
16. Cover the person’s desk with balloons.
17. Make and deliver a fruit basket.
18. Inscript a favourite boot as a gift.
19. Establish a place to display memos, posters, photos and so on, recognizing progress towards goals and thanking individual employees for their help.
20. **Swap a task with an employee for a day – his/her choice.**
21. Establish a “Behind the Scenes” award specifically for those whose actions are not usually in the limelight.
22. Give the person a copy of the latest best-selling management or business book or a subscription to a trade magazine.
23. Nominate the employee for a formal award program (UMatter or Workplace Award).
24. Keep in mind that managers should serve as coaches to indirectly influence rather than demand desired behaviour.
25. Take time to explain to new employees the norms and culture of your department.
26. Give special assignments to people who show initiative.
27. Give out Felix and Oscar awards to people with the neatest and messiest desks.
28. Design a “Stress Support Kit” that includes aspirin, a comedy cassette, wind up toys and a stress ball – or design your own.
29. Present “State of the Department” reports periodically to your employees acknowledging the work and contributions of individuals and teams.
30. At a monthly staff meeting, award an Employee of the Month and have everyone at the meeting stand up and say why that person is deserving of the award.
31. Set up a miniature golf course in your office, using whatever materials you have on hand. Set aside an afternoon or evening to hold a mini golf tournament. Have each area design their own “hole” and give a prize.
32. If your team is under pressure, bring a bag of marbles to work and take a break to have a contest – a sure stress reliever.
33. Serve ice cream sundaes to all of your employees at the end of a project.
34. **Once a year, have a “Staff Appreciation Day” where the managers supply, cook and serve food.**
35. Recognize employees who actively serve the community.
36. Serve a team a hero party sandwich at the end of an assignment, for a job well done.
37. Give employees an extra long lunch break.
38. Have staff vote for top manager, supervisor, employee and rookie of the year.
39. Name a continuing recognition award after an outstanding employee.
40. Include an employee in a “special” meeting.
41. Give a shiny new penny for a thought that has been shared.
42. Send flowers to an employee’s home as a thank you.
43. Allow employees to attend meetings in your place when you are not available.
44. Purchase a unique pin to serve as a memento for a task well done.
45. Wear colour coded name tags in a staff meeting to indicate significant achievements – such as length of service, successful project completion, etc.
46. Create an Above and Beyond the Call of Duty (ABCD) Award.
47. Hold informal retreats to foster communication and set goals.
48. Ask your boss to attend a meeting with your employees during which you thank individuals and groups for their specific contributions.
49. Pop in at the first meeting of a special project team and express your appreciation for their involvement.
50. Provide a lunch for project teams once they have made interim findings. Express your appreciation.
51. Send a letter to all team members at the conclusion of a project, thanking them for their participation.
52. Start an employee recognition program. Give points for attendance, punctuality, teamwork, etc.
Provide gift certificates to employees who reach certain point goals.
53. Find ways to reward department-specific performance.
54. Give a personalized coffee cup.
55. Plan a surprise achievement celebration for an employee or group of employees.
56. Start a suggestion program.
57. Give Mr. Goodbar (candy bar) Awards
58. Recognize employee’s personal needs and challenges.
59. Give an employee a blue ribbon for achievement.
60. Write a letter of praise recognizing specific contributions and accomplishments. Send a copy to senior management and the employee’s personnel file.
61. When you hear a positive remark about someone, repeat it to that person as soon as possible (Face-to-face is best, e-mail or voice mail are good in a pinch).
62. Call an employee to your office to thank them (don’t discuss any other issue).
63. If you have a department newsletter, publish a “kudos” column and ask for nominations throughout the department.
64. Publicly recognize the positive impact on operations of the solutions employees devise for problems.
65. Acknowledge individual achievements by using employee names in status reports.
66. Video tape a special event and share copies with participants.
67. Express an interest in employee’s career development goals.
68. Post a large “celebration calendar” in your work area. Tack on notes of recognition to specific dates.
69. Design and give magnets with appropriate messages.
70. Create and string a banner across the work area.
71. Give a deserving employee a mug filled with treats.
72. Give a framed poem (poster or card) as a thank you.
73. Greet employees by name.
74. Practice positive non-verbal behaviours that demonstrate appreciation.
75. Support “flex-friendly” schedules.
76. **Encourage employees to identify specific areas of interest in job-related skills. Then arrange for them to spend a day with an in-house “expert” to learn more about the topic.**
77. Encourage employees to participate in community volunteer efforts.
78. Share verbal accolades – forward positive voice mail messages.
79. Actively listen to co-workers, especially when discussing their accomplishments and contributions.
80. Use 3x5 cards to write “You’re special because…” statements. People can collect the cards and refer to them when things aren’t going perfectly.
81. Have a recognition event created by a peer group that decides what they will give and why they will give it.
82. Keep a supply of appropriately funny notes that can be given as immediate rewards. Keep the supply visible – in a basket or box in your office.
83. **Widely publicize suggestions used and their positive impact on your department.**
84. When someone has spent long hours at work, send a letter of thanks to his/her home.
85. Throw a pizza lunch party for your unit.
86. Acknowledge and celebrate birthdays.
87. Give a note reading, “Thank you. You are a ______!” Attach a roll of Lifesavers.
88. Make a necklace of lifesavers and give it to someone “For being the “lifesaver of __________.”
89. Serve popcorn and lemonade on Friday (especially after a particularly hard week).
90. Allow an employee to choose his/her next assignment.
91. At an employee meeting, randomly tape gift certificates to the bottom of chairs (for the first time, choose chairs only in the front row).
92. Recognize a team accomplishment by designating that team as consultants to other teams.
93. Give a puzzle as an award to a problem solver.
94. Recognize those committed to personal health and wellness.
95. Have weekly breakfasts with groups of employees.
96. Treat an employee to lunch.
97. Give out gold coins for a job well done.
98. Bake a gift (cookies, bread, etc.) for an outstanding employee or team.
99. Send birthday cards to employees’ homes, signed by dean or director.
100. Have an outstanding employee spend a day with a dean or director.
101. Smile. It’s contagious.
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