

Best Practices in Workplace Reward Programs

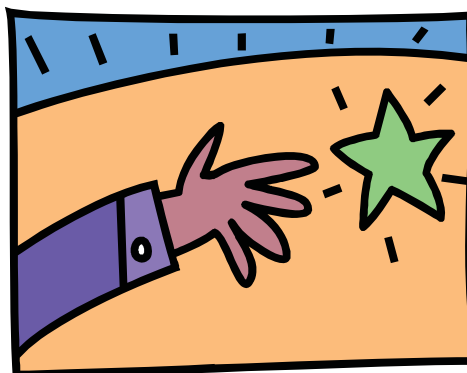
The following article builds on the foundation established in “Human Motivation 101 for Leaders.” In this segment, we will describe criteria for establishing powerful workplace reward programs, including checklists of concrete reward possibilities and online resources.

BE SPECIFIC WHEN DESCRIBING REWARD-WINNING BEHAVIOR

It is essential that everyone (managers and employees) understand exactly what performance is being recognized within your reward program. What are the criteria for winning “Employee of the Month?” Does that award indicate perfect attendance, superior customer service, years of employment, or going “above and beyond” what is expected? If the award is earned by drawing an employee’s name from a hat, you won’t truly incent performance motivation, because the key to winning is luck. In contrast, by clearly targeting a performance metric with your reward program (such as a specific Customer Service Profile’s scorecard result), the award program vastly improves the impact on employee motivation. If an employee wants to win the award, they know precisely how they need to perform (and that is within their control...not just reliant on “luck of the draw.”)

LINK THE REWARD CRITERIA TO THE LARGER PICTURE

Strive for a crystal clear connection between the reward criteria, the company’s goals, and the employee’s behavior. Explain what business issue the award winner addressed (problem resolved, service improved, process enhanced, etc.) This helps advertise the pay-offs and importance of the performance, even to the non-winners.



Best Practices in Reward Programs - continued

LAYER INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE WITH GROUP/TEAM PERFORMANCE

Organizations will always need to reward individual achievement. Frequently, it's also important to recognize the team as a whole. Many people help the "superstars" perform so well: unofficial team leaders, support departments, employees who "cover" for team members, etc. can (and should) also be recognized. Group recognition drives your best to perform even better, and helps under-performing teams learn what's expected of them.

*"Individuals win trophies;
teams win championships."
-- Unknown*



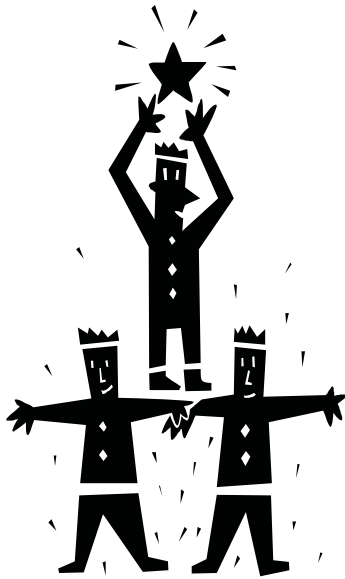
There are many benefits to celebrating team success in public. It encourages all group members to share the credit and pat each other on the back. Hopefully, this lights a fire and the group will start motivating each other day-to-day, instead of relying on management alone to dole out the "gold stars." Bestselling books like "How Full is Your Bucket" (by Tom Rath & Donald Clifton, 2004) demonstrate the power of peer-to-peer recognition programs.

Group recognition is more involved than individual motivation. It takes more planning and decision making. Who should be recognized? What performance should be recognized? Where, when and how should the recognition be done? Would the group prefer a small award for each individual, or something the entire group can enjoy/do together? What extrinsic reward will touch their intrinsic motivators (especially given the variety of interests on a team)? It is appropriate to request the team's input into these considerations.



*"No man is an island, entire of itself;
every man is a piece of a continent."
-- John Donne, 1624*

Best Practices in Reward Programs - continued



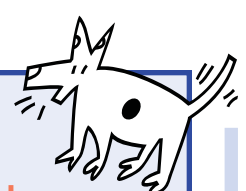
SELECT MEANINGFUL REWARDS

With an understanding of employees' needs and interests, along with some creative thinking, you can develop customized reward programs. These do not have to add a lot to your budget, yet they will mean a lot to employees. In order to appeal to a wide variety of employees, many companies will allow reward-winning employees to select from a list of options. Another option is to create a recognition task force to research and propose the type of reward system that would be most effective in your workplace. A "sunshine committee" could be created with the purpose of identifying opportunities to celebrate and positive results to recognize.

The internet also has a number of resources to help you identify appropriate rewards:

WEB SITES

- www.baudville.com
- www.carrots.com – OC Tanner
- www.givemore.com – receive free daily motivational quotes, video clips
- www.nelson-motivation.com – Bob Nelson, author "1001 Ways to Reward Employees"
- www.officeoxygen.com
- www.positivepromotions.com
- www.recognition.org – National Association for Employee Recognition (NAER)
- www.simpletruths.com – inexpensive video clips and books
- www.successories.com
- www.thanks.com



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