



This month:
REWARD & RECOGNITION

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Employee reward programs are often established by people who have their heads in the right place, but not their hearts. If your program is geared toward motivating performance but isn't backed up by sincerity, it can actually be unrewarding. The plaques, contests and half-hearted presentations can tend to backfire (although a paper weight is a necessity for anyone whose desk sits on a windswept plain). It's not that they're all bad, but too often they seem like empty gestures supported by upper management, administered by a less-than-enthused middle management, and received by under-whelmed employees. All this when an honest thanks could go further.

In other words, it's the thoughtlessness that counts. A majority of the recognition programs that exist today "do more harm than good," says Curt Coffman, global practice leader at the Gallup Organization. His polls show that 71% of U.S. workers are "disengaged" -- essentially clock-watchers who can't wait to go home. "We're operating at one-quarter of the capacity in terms of managing human capital," he says. "It's alarming." Most people -- 61%, the polls found -- claim they haven't received a meaningful "Waytogo!" in the past year.

What are you doing to reward and recognize your employees? Have fun with your recognition program, but above all else, be sincere in your thanks, recognize appropriate behaviour and accomplishments in a timely way, and share the wealth - recognize improvement, not just top performers!

reward & recognition ideas:

- ☆ "Lifesaver Awards" -- Rolls of decorated Lifesavers candy given to high achievers with e-mail announcement of individuals and their achievements sent to the executive
- ☆ Bouquet of flowers -- give to deserving employee who keeps it for an hour then passes it on to an employee he or she feels deserves it. That employee keeps it for an hour before passing it on. Goes on as long as the flowers stay fresh.
- ☆ Write three things you appreciate about each member of your team and give it to them in a thank you card.
- ☆ Whenever something positive happens, put it in a "smile box" -- read entries once a week -- draw one for a winner (i.e. \$25 gift certificate, movie tickets etc.).
- ☆ Let individual departments set up their own recognition programs!

"Compensation is a right, recognition is a gift"
- Rosabeth Moss Kanter



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"The human spirit is nurtured by praise"
- Mac Anderson, Successories

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Some years ago, I was part of the IT Division of a bank that was faced with one of its biggest challenges ever. We unexpectedly lost the ability to process our checks – up to thirty-five billion dollars worth per day. A group of incredibly dedicated people got us back in business through much personal sacrifice of their own. The bank threw a big party for these employees and their partners. Nice, but the problem was that only about half of the people showed up. Why? The massive problem occurred in the fall but the party wasn't held until February.

Lesson Number One: *If you are going to Reward and Recognize Employees, do it as soon as you possibly can. If you don't, skepticism, cynicism, and mistrust will surely creep in!*

I believe everyone likes to be recognized and rewarded, although you wouldn't know it by some of the responses I get in training sessions. I've had people say, "I don't need recognition or a pat on the back. I'm paid to do a job and I know what's expected of me. I just get it done and so should everyone else." The scary thing is that I often hear this from people in leadership positions! You'd think if there was ever someone that didn't need a pat on the back it would be a member of The Beatles. However, at the height of their fame and fortune in the 1960s, drummer Ringo Starr needed just that. I'll let Ringo tell the story.

"I went to see John Lennon. I said, 'I'm leaving the group because I feel unloved and out of it and you three are really close.'" Paul McCartney also remembered the incident, "We had to kind of reassure Ringo that he was great. I mean, that's what it's like in life. You go through life but you never stop and say 'Hey you know what? I think you're great'. Well I don't think we'd ever done any of that with Ringo. He felt insecure and we had to say, 'You're the best'. He said, 'Thank you'. He was pleased to hear that." Ringo, once again. "I came back into the studio and George Harrison had had it decked out with flowers and John Lennon had sent me telegrams saying 'You're the best rock drummer'. I just felt good about myself again. It was great."



'I JUST FELT GOOD ABOUT MYSELF AGAIN'. Imagine if everyone that you lead said that about themselves as a result of the recognition you gave them in the workplace. Think about what impact that would have on morale, productivity, and results. And the great news is that it costs you virtually nothing and pays such big dividends.

Lesson Number Two: *Recognize All Positive Efforts and Results*

I'm certainly not talking about turning recognition into a meaningless ritual by over-doing it. But regular recognition should be part of your routine as a Leader. Ask yourself these questions right now:

- ☆ What specific action or effort have you recently seen in the workplace that deserves recognition from you?
- ☆ Why is this action or effort worth recognizing?

Once you have the answers to these questions, recognize the people as soon as possible.

Lesson Number Three: *Make sure your Recognition is Specific, Meaningful, Relevant, and Timely*

Every year at Christmas, I used to receive a letter from the CEO telling me that I'd done a great job. And every year, I threw it away. Why? It was not specific to anything that I had done and every employee in the organization received the same letter. Eventually, thankfully, he stopped sending them out.

Lastly, remember that recognition is not just for the workplace. It's for Here, There, And Everywhere.