

## Employee Recognition Enhances Employee Motivation and Morale

You may be thinking “I pay a good wage, why should I bother to think about employee motivation?” There are many good reasons to ensure that your employees are recognized and appreciated on a regular basis. They all make good business sense by adding to the bottom line.

Research shows that employees who are happy and motivated are much higher driven than employees who are unsure if their contribution is appreciated.

From a budget line perspective, the costs of searching for, training and integrating a new employee until they are up to speed (often a minimum of 6 months or more) is an expensive proposition. So, spending money to keep valuable employees simply makes good business sense.

Employees that don't feel appreciated, may be taking time out of their day to complete job searches, and may actively be undergoing a new job search, looking for the environment that is more inspiring for them. So distract them by showing your appreciation for a job well done.

We are no longer in the times of the loyal employee who continues to work at a company where they are not appreciated. We are in a disposable culture and to an employer, this can mean the employee will soon look for greener pastures if you don't make them feel valued.

In conclusion, the reality is that spending money on a well planned motivation strategy can actually be a cost saving, revenue generating investment.

How do you create a solid, employee appreciation plan?

How you let employees know that they are appreciated can be a bit of a challenge. Depending on the number of employees that you have in your company or your department, it can be overwhelming.

Spending money on employee recognition only works when you pay attention to each employee. Giving a poorly timed or generic gift to all employees can become de-motivating. It is vital to give thought to how to best reward your employees in a manner that is meaningful and effective.

I remember as an employee once receiving a key fob at an annual event, looking at it and feeling insulted. It was the only form of recognition given in our department and I believed that I had worked hard and felt that had they even stopped to say a personal thank you with the “gift” it would have been a more meaningful recognition.

Here are a few tips that you can use to create or revamp your employee recognition process:

- 1) Get to know the employees in your department. What are their personal interests? Keep a list of these in your computer, your blackberry or smart phone. While gifts may be of similar dollar value, it could mean a lot more to give a coupon to their favourite restaurant or to the local hockey game. Also, keep a list of which employees you have recently given rewards to. By keeping track, you can ensure that you are not always rewarding the same person.
- 2) Give individual messages that are clear why they are receiving this acknowledgement. For example, "I noticed that you handled that difficult customer with patience and understanding! You are an excellent example of our high value on great customer service". By linking the behaviour to the company values, you reinforce the values of the company which encourages all employees to act in a manner that is congruent with company values and policy.
- 3) Written notes are now rare and show that you have personally valued the employee by taking your individual time to pen a note. Whether on a sticky memo placed on their desk or in a nice card. Taking your own time when we are all so busy at work really shows individuals that their efforts are noticed and valued. As a supervisor or boss, you have taken your personal time to acknowledge them.

So, take the time to look at your employees' behaviour, notice what they are doing that is on the right track. Then tell them specifically how they are doing a great job and you are likely to notice more motivation, loyalty and creativity in the manner your staff approaches their work.

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