



Recognizing and Rewarding Motivated Employees

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Every person has a different reason for working. The motivating factors are as unique as the individual. Building a positive employee recognition system into the daily workplace is paramount to successful employee motivation. Creating a stimulating work environment that promotes teamwork and builds trust are the most important ingredients in maintaining motivated employees.

Do you have an employee of the month contest? Do you reward the most convenient parking spot directly across from the main entrance to a special employee? Do you allow employees to voice their opinions by voting for special winners? Do you have a suggestion box that is open to all employees? Do you reward the best suggestion each month?

You might already have implemented some of these motivational tactics; however, it is necessary for you to recognize that the route that you used to get there is as important as arriving safely at your final destination. Your initial goal may have been to highlight an inspirational person or reward a job well done, but it is all of the non-winners that can cause the best-laid plans to backfire. Inherently, voted honors are determined by way of a popularity contest, especially when solid criteria for assessment

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have not been established, published or adequately communicated.

The strongest motivating factor in employee recognition, one that should be on everybody's mind, is the ability to show appreciation and respect by saying "thank you." Highlight a specific action that a coworker performed and explain why it is admirable. Taking the time to praise employees' positive efforts on a regular basis will encourage positive repetitious behavior. To provide more formal recognition that will motivate employees and yield greater rewards for all, you might consider implementing some of the following:

- 1. Start your analysis by determining what behaviors you want to recognize in your particular work environment.**
- 2. Once you establish your goal(s), clearly identify and communicate the criteria so that all the employees understand what they need to do to qualify for recognition.**
- 3. Publish the information in as many different places as possible. Repetition breeds recognition, you never know where you will be when a new idea is created.**
- 4. Model the selection process so that it enables all different levels of employees to contribute and be acknowledged.**
- 5. Formally acknowledge the efforts of employees that went above and beyond, by publicly announcing their names during a staff meeting or a luncheon, by placing their names in a newsletter or by sending out a company wide email announcement. A sample certificate of achievement follows at the end of this document.**



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- 6. Whenever feasible, consider offering a monetary reward such as a gift certificate to a coffee shop, a book store or even an electronics store.**

There are many other ways to let your coworkers and employees know how much you value them and their contributions to the company. On a fairly regular basis, make a point of walking through your entire complex and greeting as many employees as possible by name. Familiarize yourself with your coworkers; ask about their family, their weekend hobbies, or any special events that may be occurring in their lives.

Your ability as a representative of management to show genuine interest will cause the people that work for you to feel valued. Schedule quarterly breakfasts or luncheons, and use assigned seating to place people in groups for brainstorming sessions that would not routinely work together. Assign each group a problem to solve and then have them present their solutions. You will be pleasantly surprised by the results of the group dynamic. An exciting new design idea might be born or a waste management problem solved.

Consider creating a Wall of Fame. This is a specially designated area that proudly displays awards, achievements and photographs of employees celebrating both personal and professional milestones. Bring in bagels, pastries, pizza or chocolates for no reason at all. Say "thank you" and show your appreciation for your employees' hard work and contributions. Pay it forward; incorporate some or all of these suggestions, and you are bound to reap the rewards in multiple dividends.



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