

LOW & NO COST EMPLOYEE MOTIVATIONAL PROGRAMS

Did you know that what motivates most people is recognition, not money? You don't need to spend a lot of money, or any at all, to let your employees know how much you appreciate their efforts. Need some inspiration? Here are some great ways to reward your employees for superior performance:

TREAT YOUR TOP EMPLOYEES BEST!

Create and foster an atmosphere of "employees who do the best, receive the best". Positive reinforcement of top performers will return an even greater performance.



ELIMINATE "BUT" FROM YOUR VOCABULARY.

Whether you are counseling an employee, giving them a pat on the back or a combination of both. Your employee will forget everything positive before the BUT and will remember only the negative that comes after this.

FOCUS ON THE TOP. Don't spent 85% of your time giving extra time and attention to the bottom performers, while all but ignoring your top performers. These employees may feel the lack of attention is due to their performance and may negatively alter their work habits. Concentrate on your mid- to upper-level performers. Encourage their growth and development. The bottom performers will likely leave.

CUT YOUR ANCHOR LOOSE! An anchor is a nautical term for a sail that is dragged behind a vessel to slow down or stop forward movement. While this principle works great in sailing, the notion of carrying dead weight will slow down even the best organization, and ultimately cost you both profit and employees. Cut your anchor loose!

TRY TO AVOID CASH REWARDS. Sounds crazy but think of it this way; cash awards go directly into a paycheck. Most employees don't share this information with their coworkers. Instead, present gift certificates for your company (returning the business to your company) and present them with a plaque or another award. A plaque on a wall is a constant reminder to the employee and others that you recognize the top performers.

CHALLENGE EMPLOYEES! Even the best employees need to be challenged. Don't settle for the same performance, same tasks, day in and day out. Challenging employees does two things: (1) it builds confidence and better employee satisfaction as they accomplish more difficult tasks, and (2) it develops future leaders for your organization by challenging them beyond normal levels.

IDEA INCENTIVE PROGRAMS. Reward employees who develop new ideas. For example, a safety program (identify / remove safety hazards).

LOYALTY INCENTIVE. Reward employees for their loyalty to your organization. Celebrate their loyalty at 1 year, 3 years, 5 years, etc.

GUEST COMMENTS & SURVEYS. Create a perk program. Maybe three positive comments equals 4 hours off or a gift certificate?

PERSONALIZE GIFTS. Take the time to hand write a note. This goes a long way in comparison with a computer-generated note. Personalize plaques with their names and include their photos.

INFORMAL AWARDS & RECOGNITION PROGRAMS. "On-the-Spot" awards. The idea is that you don't have to take a vote or hold a meeting. Empower your management to give out on-the-spot awards (time off, company bucks, etc.). When employees know managers have this power and they will rise to the occasion!

PAT-ON-THE-BACK AWARDS. There are the kind of awards that cost nothing and usually return the best results. Pat-on-the-back awards is just that; quick, informal, and are certainly appreciated by employees.

PINS AND BUTTON REWARDS. Pins, buttons, and other trinkets for your employees to wear. Employee of the Month, Best Overall Employee, Best Smile, etc., pins are low cost but will result in high satisfaction, plus your employee shares the award with everyone with whom he or she comes into contact.

GROUP ACTIVITIES. Morale day, employee cookouts, beer bashes, etc. Make it during the normal work day for a double bonus - time off *and* a great party. This has several benefits: it shows that you care, it allows management to socialize with employees, and gives you an opportunity to bond with your employees.

SHOWCASE EMPLOYEES. Have you seen those Wal-Mart commercials featuring employees? Yes those are real employees. They appear in those commercials as a reward for superior performance.

RECOGNIZE YOUR PEOPLE IN PUBLIC. Recognition behind closed doors loses the power of the presentation - an audience remembers recognition!

