Factors to Consider in the Establishment of a Program
Adapted by Chester Elton and Adrian Gostick’s Managing with Carrots, 2001

Before you establish a program to tangibly reward staff on an informal, ongoing basis, consider these issues:

1. Determine why you want to establish a recognition program. You may want to reward some (or all) of the following:
   - Time, work, or money-saving ideas
   - Ongoing or one-time customer compliments for service/satisfaction
   - Solution to a difficult problem
   - Outstanding one-time achievements
   - Outstanding attendance
   - General ongoing contributions that you’d just like to acknowledge
   - Improvement of any kind in an employee’s efforts

2. If you don’t know about employee attitudes about such a program, find out.
   - Would it be positively received?
   - Will you need to overcome cynicism or mistrust of such a program?
   - You might want to conduct a short written survey of your employees and ensure that they can submit it anonymously, and/or you may invite feedback from volunteers in a focus group.
   - One of the attitudes you may uncover is a pervasive belief that only “the usual” employees will receive any sort of recognition. It’s a good idea when you are looking at a recognition program to look at why there may be such a perception.
   - Are those who are recognized frequently truly high performers, or are they perhaps the ones who always seem to receive the “high profile” assignments – and can those types of assignments be given to others in the unit?

3. You may want to get employees involved in the program by forming a volunteer workgroup with the specific charge of program development and implementation.

4. Determine how often awards could be given and who would decide to whom awards would go.
   (For example, “peer-to-peer” recognition could be done at any time and frequently; perpetual awards could be passed around once per quarter or every six months; thank you notes could be given whenever they seem appropriate.)

5. Determine who could give or nominate someone for an award, i.e., peers, staff to supervisors, supervisors, or managers only. Your survey could include a question of how employees might think the program would work most effectively.

6. Determine whether the awards would/could be private, public, or a combination and how frequently they could be given.

7. Make sure you can make it part of your workplace culture and inject some fun into the process.

8. Determine what type of awards to give. LAUSD Ethics office and the Office of the General Counsel may specifically define the types of tangible items that are allowable as rewards, so check with them first. (“Employee recognition awards are meant to be occasional; therefore must be presented to an employee on an infrequent basis...provided within an established recognition program and based on objective criteria”).

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