

No-Cost Recognition That Works

Adapted from Bob Nelson's *Manager's Recognition Kit*, 1997



Image Source: <http://dougshares.blogspot.com/2012/04/divine-recognition.html>

"The Power of I's"

- **Interesting work.** Employees should have at least part of their job be of great interest to them. As management theorist Frederick Herzberg once said, "If you want someone to do a good job, give them a good job to do." While some jobs may be inherently boring, you can provide employees with at least one stimulating task or project. Name them to a suggestion committee that meets weekly, or to some other special group. The increased productivity will more than compensate for the time away from their regular job.
- **Information/communication/feedback.** As previously pointed out, now more than ever employees want information. They crave knowledge about how they are doing in their jobs and how the company is doing in its business. Start telling them how the company makes and spends money. Soon you will have them turning out the lights when they are the last to leave the room.
- **Involvement/ownership in decisions.** Involving employees-especially in decisions that affect them-is both respectful to them and practical. People who are closest to the problem or customer typically have the best insight on how to improve a situation. They know what works and what doesn't, yet they are rarely asked for their opinion. As you involve others, you enhance their commitment and increase the ease in implementing changes.
- **Independence/autonomy/flexibility.** Most employees - especially experienced, top-performing employees - value the freedom to do their job as they see fit. All employees, however, appreciate flexibility in their job. When you provide these characteristics to employees based on desired performance, it increases the likelihood that they will perform as desired. Even with new employees, you can provide work assignments in a way that tells them what needs to be done without dictating exactly how to do it.
- **Increased visibility, opportunity.** For some workers, providing them with visibility is a public way of giving them credit for their work. This can be achieved in many ways, such as copying a letter of praise for others in the organization, having the person stand to be acknowledged at a staff meeting, putting his or her picture on a "wall of fame" in your company and so forth. Likewise, a new assignment or additional responsibilities extended as recognition for past performance also motivates most employees.



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Creative Low-Cost Recognition

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Publicity

- Department newsletter article/picture
- Wall of fame (pictures) in department
- Banner of appreciation hung in main walkway
- Walk of the stars - floor signs recognizing individuals (Hollywood Boulevard-like stars, etc.)

Celebration

- Lunch/breakfast prepared and served by management
- Pizza party
- Potluck luncheon with 'employees are #1' cake
- Reception with family members invited

Humor / Fun

- Computerized certificates, e.g. cool under pressure award (with sharks circling), rude awakening award, painting yourself into a corner, etc.
- 'Purple Ear' customer service award
- Play money recognition - highest amount at end of year gets award
- 'A+ award' note pads

Memento

- Employee appreciation buttons/balloons
- Department award certificates
- Letter/card of appreciation (from management and co-workers)
- Logo pencils/pens
- Plants/flowers for work area

Alternative Sources

- Professional development day that has been described in a development plan with outcomes and measures linked to current or future career goals; creative way to encourage professional development
- Special training/conference opportunity that recognizes exceptional performance and does not give unfair work advantage over co-workers; not for training tied to fundamental position duties

