

Rewards and Recognition/
Employee Engagement

Excellence

ESSENTIALS

» 01.2014

Vol.01 No. 1

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DEVELOPING ROI STRATEGIES

Deb Broderson

ROI
Developing ROI Strategies
By Deb Broderson
For your incentive programs.

ET
Employee Turnover
By Darcy Jacobsen
12 Surefire Tips to Reduce Employee Turnover

CT
Cutting through Cynicism
By Paul White
With authentic appreciation.

EB
Start Building Your 2025 Executives Today
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With effective recognition programs for Generationals.

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Developing ROI

More than ever before, organizations are building accountability processes into their incentive and engagement programs. **PG.10**

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January marks the beginning of another year and for many of us things like -- new year's resolutions, fresh starts, body cleanses, new routines. Just take a look around you. You are surrounded, physically or virtually, by people who are highly motivated, are already 3 weeks into their new exercise regime, as well as people who have already given up on saving for that beach vacation they dreamed of back on New Year's eve. Motivation is certainly a personal thing.

Given this individual nature of motivation what can we, as motivated professionals, do to "help" motivate those around us. Check out Mark Oliver's article on Employee Motivation and Capabilities to learn more. And then pause – even if you think you have no time to pause.

Some colleagues of mine paused and thus was born their own special version of Wellness Week. Definitely not a new concept, but something this group thought would re-engage employees after the holidays and get people not just thinking but doing things to "be well". Of course, once they started planning they knew the challenge was in

part to "help" motivate many different types of individuals: tracking water intake in a friendly competition, seminars on various wellness topics, skating with friends and family.

What I think is most energizing about this story is that this was a group of people who just wanted to "help" their colleagues "be well". What they did was engage hearts and minds in different ways than typically at the office. What they did brought the team together for some fun and good times. What they did contributed to the ongoing journey of building a culture of recognition. And maybe, a culture of wellness as Greg Sheldon talks about.

Wellness Week might not be your organizations employee motivation "help" for 2014. Whatever it is, just do it. Your colleagues will love you for it!



Regards,
Holly Tiessen
VP, Client Success



Employee Motivations and Capabilities



How to best develop them.

By Mark Oliver



It is best to use different approaches for developing motivations (which can be thought of to do with the “heart”) and developing capabilities (which can be thought of to do with the “head”).

Developing Capabilities. If we take the second area first Capabilities can be split into knowledge (such as learning how to use Excel spreadsheeting) and behavioral (such as developing leadership skills). Behavioral capabilities are usually more difficult to develop than knowledge based ones, and it is generally best to use both formal interventions (such as courses) and informal ones (such as learning on the job or work projects) to get the greatest development in either case. If seeking outside assistance it is important to go to training or consultancy organizations that have a very good understanding on human nature and learning, and that use instruments and processes which are validated.

Developing Motivation. The discussion on developing motivations is necessarily more involved than the one on capability. This may be surprising, as at first sight capability seems more important to success than motivation! But look more deeply and you realize that motivation is much more important than capability in the wider context of both professional and personal life. In short this is because:

1. Motivation determines what you do and in many ways it determines the path you take at work (and in life).
2. If you do not have the motivation then your capability becomes largely irrelevant. Not surprisingly then, motivation precedes capability and often underlies capability.

Given this, another question becomes very important: *what can we*

do to increase motivation? To answer this it is important to realize that, perhaps surprisingly again nothing, and no one else, can motivate anyone. The performance coach, Denis Waitley, highlighted;

But things can *help* someone be motivated and we can divide these into *internal* and *external* factors.

“

Everything an individual does, whether positive or negative, intentional or unintentional, is the result of motivation. Everyone is self-motivated. For too long...it has been wrongly assumed that motivation is extraneous (externally driven).”

Internal Factors. The internal factors include a person’s personality (values and beliefs etc.) An important time to look at this is when selecting individuals and it is wise to use good psychometric instruments to help increase the accuracy of your decisions, such as *The Universal Hierarchy of Motivation Professional Report* (see www accuratesurveys.com/UHM), especially as they are so cost effective.

External Factors. A key external factor is the systems and structure of the organization. But to understand how human motivation is affected by these is often hard to predict. Consider the real-life example of a

day-care center that encountered tardy parents at closing time each day.

This situation led to anxious children and frustrated care takers. A solution put in place by ten day-care centers in Haifa, Israel, was to fine parents three dollars for those who were more than ten minutes late. Rather surprisingly, this solution had the opposite effect because the number of late parents more than doubled after the fine was introduced. It turned out that the guilt the parents felt in being late was motivating them to be on time, but now the payment of a small fine assuaged these feelings and they were less motivated to be punctual.

A good model on human motivation is so helpful because it helps you to better predict what the actual outcomes will be. *The Universal Hierarchy of Motivation (UHM)* provides the basis for a complete understanding of human motivation so that you can accurately predict what behaviours will result from system or structural changes. The model is shown in the table below:

UHM Level	UHM Drive	Focus
7	Meaning	Focus on Others
6	Wisdom	
5	Courage	
4	Compassion	
3	Power	Focus on Self
2	Pleasure	
1	Survival	

In this motivational model the higher the motivation the more impactful the drive. Superficially this model appears similar to needs based models such as *Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs* but it is fundamentally different in the way it works. Also it is better to deal at the level of motivation in the psyche rather than needs because needs are too deep to do much about and further away from actual behavior. So let's apply it to the day-care example above. The reason they got this "surprising" behavior from parents is that money is typically a Level One motivator whereas guilt is usually Level Two or Three. So the guilt was a stronger motivator to be on time and payment of a fine assuaged the guilt so only the lower motivation of money was driving parents to be punctual.

Intrinsic Motivation. Edward Deci, an American psychologist,¹ observed that tangible rewards inevitably reduce the intrinsic motivation of individuals. He stated, "The facts are absolutely clear, there is no question that in virtually all circumstances in which people are doing things in order to get rewards, external tangible rewards undermine intrinsic motivation."² This includes the "bonus myth". There is a lot of research that external rewards in the form of bonuses often do not improve productivity or results, and can lead to an individual focussing on trying to get a bonus even when it is at odds with what is best for the organization.³

The UHM helps you to understand human motivation comprehensively and so make the most accurate predictions on what people's motivation (and hence resulting behavior) will be given a set of system or structural changes. Remembering that the higher UHM level we are at then the more impact we have on our own and others' lives. The UHM levels are shown in the table below correlated with the relevant intrinsic motivator and extrinsic behaviour.

	Motivational Drive	Intrinsic Motivator	Extrinsic Behaviour
7	Meaning	Optimism	Grace (<i>courteous good will</i>)
6	Wisdom		Feedback (<i>not criticism</i>)
5	Courage	Empathy	Accountability
4	Compassion	Sympathy	Cooperation
3	Power	Praise (genuine)	Commitment
2	Pleasure	Humor	Involvement
1	Survival	Belief	Satisfaction

How much an employee is "engaged" (feels an emotional bond) to the organization has been shown in many studies across industries to have a direct correlation with productivity. International studies have found that employees who were fully engaged in their work, were almost fifty percent more productive in terms of revenue generation and three hundred percent better at delivering value than their disengaged (disaffected) colleagues. The "extrinsic behaviors" in the table above correspond to increasing levels of positive engagement, going up the table and starting with the lowest one: satisfaction at work.

So to get the best performance (or combination of people's motivation and capability) from those employees you currently have in the organization, it is critical that you provide the structures and systems which will help to motivate them at the higher levels. To be able to understand and predict what this is you have to have a very good model or framework describing human motivation.

Once you have set up the environment in your organization which achieves this, only then is it worth investing time and money in training your employees. If you do it the other way around the risk is that not only will the employees not use the new skills they acquired from their training but also they are more likely to leave the organization, which means someone else is likely to get all the investment you have made in them! **R&E**



Mark Oliver is Managing Director and CEO of MarkTwo Consulting, an international consultancy. He has run leadership development and assessment courses since 1986 in both military and commercial environments. Over the last 20 years he has designed and facilitated both "train-the-trainer" advanced leadership courses as well as "assess-the-assessor" assessment courses. Visit www.MarkTwoConsulting.com.



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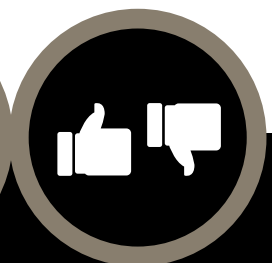
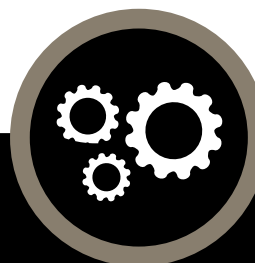


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Canaries in the Culture Mine



5 early warning signs that your culture may becoming toxic.

By John Smith

Before the days of modern technology and sophisticated air sampling equipment, coal miners used canaries. Yes, those cute little yellow birds that love to sing. Mining workers would carry caged canaries down into the mine tunnels with them. If toxic gases such as methane or carbon monoxide leaked into the mine, the gases would kill the canary before killing the miners, thus providing an early warning system to exit the tunnels immediately.

A negative shift in corporate culture can be very similar to the toxic gases in a coal mine, and just like the gases, they are often silent, build up over time and can kill the productivity of your organization. Wouldn't it be great if there were a proverbial canary for your culture, giving you an early warning system that it's time to do something before the damage became life threatening?

These early warning systems do exist. They exist as signs within your workforce, in the individual people, how they are working, and interacting with each other and outsiders. Like the gases in the mines, they don't show up in one big wave, but seep in and build over time. If you pay close attention, you can actually recognize these signs early, in small amounts and do something about them before they become disasters.

Below are the top **five signs that your culture is heading in a toxic direction.**

Direct eye contact – In great cultures people are excited to work with each other. They are proud of where they work and have nothing to hide. They have no discomfort making direct eye contact and then interacting if needed. When people, co-workers, stop looking at each other, smiling and offering a warm greeting it's often because they want to avoid interacting... the first sign that something might not be right.

That sinking feeling on the commute in – We all know what this feels like. It's early in the morning and even though everything went great at home you start to feel that sinking feeling on your way to work. The closer you get (to the office), the more you feel it. This one is interesting because it's a personal warning system.

Increased use of BCC – Blind Carbon Copy (email) has got to be one of the worst things ever invented. BCC is one-way surveillance, and at some point, someone is going to mess up with the surveillance and it will be disclosed. BCC is a secret, which drains energy and diminishes trust.

Avoidance of conflict – Does anyone else see the elephant in the room? You are in a meeting or a work setting and even though several team members know what is being said is less than accurate or ideal, no one steps in to says anything. People refuse to challenge each other. When conflict doesn't happen, people get back together after the meeting and undermine each other. Everyone suffers including the organization. This also indicates a lack of trust.

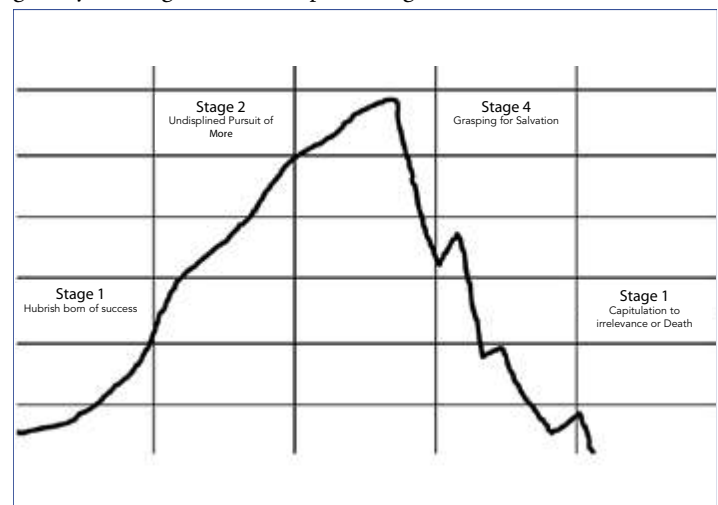
Missing People – Have you ever gone several weeks and then just noticed that someone was missing. When you ask about the person, you just get vague answers. Finally you find out that they are no longer with the organization, but there was no communication, no email and no good byes. When people start going missing like this, there is often a reason and you can be sure it's never an alien abduction.

Change in Language – You will start to notice a different language emerge or at least a different emphasis on the importance of certain

words. You will start to see a rationalization on efficiency, process and rules, with a justification on command and control for just about any reason, typically way beyond logic.

Pretty obvious signs... or are they? With all these great warnings why is it such a norm to see great culture go bad? Why is it so hard to see the early warnings signs and do something about it to correct it before things spiral out of control?

I think Jim Collins explains this in the book, *How the Mighty Fall*. In his book, Collins research shows that there are 5 stages of decline that proceed in a sequence. "You do not visibly fall until Stage 4. Companies can be well into Stage 3 decline and still look and feel great, yet be right on the cusp of a huge fall."



Decline of a great culture happens in the very same way. It is very easy to ignore these early warning signs of a declining culture, due to legacy momentum in others areas. Things like growth and revenue can often hide these warning sign in plain sight. The toxicity builds to a point, and the severity of the situation only becomes transparent at the point where it might be too late to do anything about it. How are you monitoring your culture?

Newer technologies are becoming available to help measure and quantify, in near real-time, the engagement of people and the health of culture. However, we still don't have something as evident as a sweet little bird dying to give us the heads up that something is going wrong. Lastly, by adding some emphasis and acute awareness on these early warning signs and taking some action on them, you can keep your awesome corporate culture doing just fine. **R&E**



John Smith is a seasoned technology focused business entrepreneur and thought leader in the areas of using software to create better corporate cultures and a more engaged workforces. Visit www.breakTheEquation.com. Email john.smith@breaktheequation.com.

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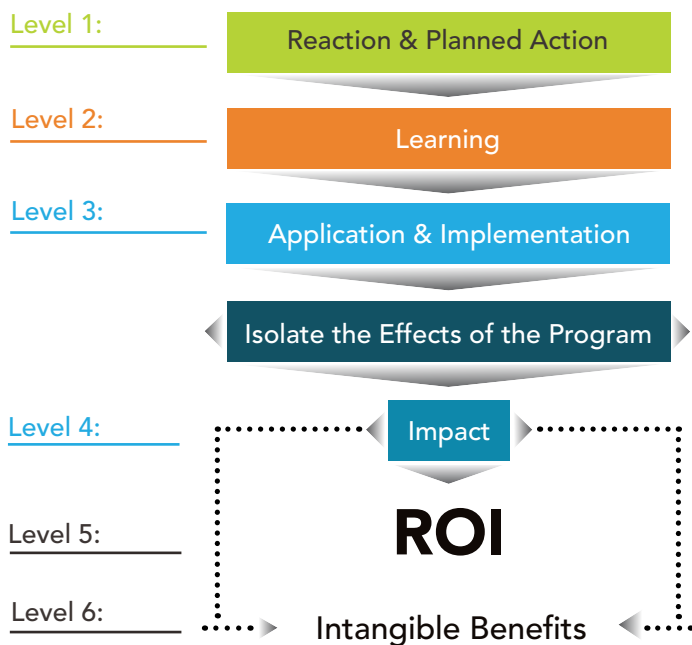
By Deb Broderson

More than ever before, organizations are building accountability processes into their incentive and engagement programs. Stakeholders realize that at some point they will be asked to detail the benefits of their initiative or it may be eliminated. The business climate demands that incentive, engagement, recognition and rewards programs clearly demonstrate both effectiveness and value. While organizations may argue about which metrics provide the best visibility to that information, others struggle with the development of meaningful measures and calculations.

Employee recognition programs, years of service awards, sales incentives, incentive travel, employee engagement programs and motivational events all can use ROI evaluations to show outcomes, results and value of incentive programs.

How to Measure

A credible ROI analysis requires a systematic framework, guiding principles and a process that includes a set of conservative operating standards AND a process for identifying program improvements of six levels of measurement, as shown in the graphic. Collecting data at multiple levels creates a chain that details the business impacts of your program. A positive reaction to your program leads to a high level of learning and understanding of how the program works and the application (use) of the actions learned. For the ROI analysis, and program, to add business value, the chain of impact must exist and not be broken.



Level 1 is about the REACTION AND PLANNED action of your participants. You measure your participants' reaction to the program and then capture their planned action. Without this as your starting point, you will not have a program baseline. If participants don't think the program is relevant, or won't use the skills, it would be best to go back to the drawing board and ensure the program you design is pertinent to your community. Ask questions like:

- Do you perceive the program is relevant to your job?
- Do you believe that the program is relevant to your work?
- Will you use the skills that are referenced in the program?

Level 2 is about LEARNING. Since incentive programs are about influencing, motivating and changing behaviors, there are learning expectations, even without a formal education component. Think about what your participants should know after they complete the program. This step ensures that the program design includes the elements needed for a successful ROI analysis. For example if you are running a Peer-to-Peer recognition program:



- Will they learn to identify behaviors that should be recognized?
- What behaviors should they be able to identify?
- What should they be able to do with that knowledge? Send emails, use social recognition, etc.?

At **Level 3** it's about the APPLICATION or how your participants will use the new skills. Here is where you will be able to measure the changes in knowledge and skill. If we continue with the example of a Peer-to-Peer recognition program, then:

- Can they identify behaviors that support the company values?
- Do they know how to use that knowledge to recognize their peers?

At this point you will start to isolate the effects of your program, bringing you to **Level 4**, or the BUSINESS IMPACT. Here you measure the implementation, actions, and changes in behavior. Not all impacts will be quantifiable, financially, so some impacts, while important to the program, will be intangible. For example:

- Has there been a decrease in employee turnover during the program period?

- Has there been an increase in Employee Engagement scores?
- Are people staying at your company longer than they were prior to the program?

Level 5 is all about the ROI. At the beginning of your program planning, decide what the acceptable ROI is for this program. In some cases, breakeven would be fine, because there may be a corporate compliance issue, in other cases, a 25% ROI might be considered a failure. When calculating ROI, the steps are:

- Isolate the effects of the program. This step is essential because many factors influence performance improvement. Measuring the effect of each influence is imperative. Without isolation, the results may be overstated and decision makers will question the overall program success. Some examples of isolation techniques are control groups, forecasting models, participant or management estimates or the use of an external expert estimate.
- Convert data to a monetary value using standard values provided by someone within your organization, wage information, historical costs, external databases or expert estimates.

• Identify the intangible benefits. Just because something cannot be converted to dollars, doesn't mean it's not a benefit. Intangible benefits such as teamwork, social responsibility, creativity or networking may be important outcomes of the program.

- Tabulate the program costs. These typically include the initial analysis, project design costs, equipment, materials salaries overhead and evaluation fees.

With a growing emphasis on accountability in organizations of all sizes, and most significantly in the HR organization, more processes and programs are being analyzed at higher standards than in the past. Being able to credibly show the business value that incentive, recognition and motivation programs add to the business will ensure the support and funding continue. **R&E**



Deb Broderson has more than 20 years of experience leading marketing organizations and in program management within the technology industry. Deb has provided strategic direction to Fortune 500 clients, developed and executed global, multi-channel, go-to-market strategies and created worldwide field marketing organizations.

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The Care and Feeding of Your Enterprise Wellness Program.

By Greg Sheldon

In a world where national health care costs have increased about 10% year over year, companies are grasping for ways to reduce health care costs while maintaining a productive and engaged workforce. Many have attempted to provide wellness programs, but struggle to gain participation numbers high enough to make an impact. The facts are that costs continue to climb and people continue to struggle in their desire to change behaviors that would improve their lives, reduce health care expense AND reduce sick days. So, what to do about it?

While wellness programs are essential to help drive down health costs, improve employee engagement and reduce unplanned days off, it is critical to recognize that wellness will not thrive in isolation. It must exist within and around a genuine “culture of wellness” supported by an organization’s senior leadership and with tools and services that will wrap the participant with healthy living support, creating a crucial wellness ecosystem. Some of the time proven elements of this ecosystem should include:



- *Behavior-based plans* such as primary care clinics, incentives programs, premium differentials, etc.
- *Wellness programs* including access to a gym, gym discounts, weight management, smoking cessation classes, fitness challenges and more.
- *Decision support tools* that offer access to nutritionists, a café with nutritional facts or weight and nutrition tools
- *Support services* such as a 24/7 nurse line or disease education.

This wellness ecosystem helps manage the delivery of resources in ways that empower employees to both adopt AND sustain healthful lifestyle habits. The key differentiator from most wellness program models is that a genuine wellness ecosystem can leverage partnerships with other community stakeholders so employees and their dependents are **continuously exposed** to opportunities to make healthy choices; and behavioral nudges are pervasively embedded to prompt and reinforce those choices. Involving outside partners and resources in a wellness ecosystem not only strengthens the efficacy of wellness programming, and distributes the cost of supporting and enhancing the ecosystem. Consider for example, how powerful it could be if area grocery stores, YMCA’s, health-minded restaurants, park & rec-

reation departments, and other stakeholders with a common mission to improve the well-being of your workforce could be seamlessly integrated within your wellness ecosystem!

Wellness programs are a balancing act. Although employees spend approximately one-quarter of their time at work, most wellness programs do not provide support outside the office environment, limiting true engagement with the program. A successful wellness ecosystem will leverage opportunities to engage your workforce at-work, in their home environment and outside of the home, which we’ll call “at large” environment. To succeed in this ecosystem model, we’d challenge wellness practitioners to remove yourself from a tactical HR mind-set, to that of bootstrapping entrepreneur. Why? Because entrepreneurs are adept at finding and capitalizing on untapped and non-obvious ways to create value. Entrepreneurs are also generally very good at getting things done on a shoestring budget, which is often the case in an organization looking to validate wellness programming ROI while competing for limited organization resources.

Wearing your entrepreneur caps think creatively about existing companies or organizations that your company has relationships with; that your employees interact with; and that have a common interest in helping your employees achieve healthier lifestyle habits.



So, how do you get there? Following these six guiding principles is a flexible and reliable means of driving success of your wellness ecosystem.

1. *Socialize* a shared vision for organizational wellness through all possible touch points. Wellness ecosystem touch points can range



from very visible and largely attended events, such as a wellness fairs, to communications posted in common areas such a break rooms, and within the rapidly expanding realm of social media options. The point to remember is to continuously seek out effective ways to keep the wellness message top-of-mind to your audience.

2. Develop a scalable *strategy* that's centered on a "Moving the Middle" mission (i.e., the middle 60-70% of the workforce). This is where the wellness ecosystem is most important. An ecosystem that includes @work, @home and @large elements help support good decision making throughout the day.

3. Ensure you have a means to *measure* what matters. You will be required to justify the costs of a wellness program. A good starting point is assessing current health care costs, absenteeism rates, staff turnover, employee surveys, etc.

4. Embrace pervasive *learning*. Just telling employees that a wellness program is available will not have any impact. The workforce needs to understand the what, when, why and how to establish sustainable behavior change. Training should be established for each behavioral change focus area and incentives provided along each step of the way.

5. Critical to sustained emotional engagement is the *celebration* of success, on all levels (individual, groups, and organization) and to spotlight those successes. These celebrations serve to both recognize the individual's success AND to show other employees that success is possible.

6. Lastly, make a commitment to continuous *improvement*. Assess what is and is not working, your successes and the failures. Gather input from participants and non-participants on a regular basis and use all these metrics to continually fine-tune your wellness program.

In today's world, organizations must take some action. If more

employers decided to implement a wellness ecosystem, we could certainly make an impact on the national healthcare cost trend, as well as develop a strategic advantage over our competitors. Our future as a prosperous and productive society is largely dependent upon organizations to seek and try new and better ways to improve the health and well-being of workers and their families. **R&E**



Greg Sheldon is the Vice President of Incentive Strategies and Solutions at Perks.com. For the past 13 years Greg has been involved in the incentives and recognition management industry, frequently in a consulting capacity. His work has centered on helping large organizations implement points-based incentives programs designed to change targeted behavior such as improving customer service. About three years ago Greg began concentrating on opportunities to bring reward and recognition technologies to the wellness community, with a specific focus on stemming the childhood obesity epidemic in the U.S. and Canada.



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Happy Employees



Does it Matter?

By Susan Adams

Some very knowledgeable people say that it doesn't matter if employees are happy at work. Somehow, that just doesn't sit right with me. There have been interesting studies lately showing that - in some cases - the least productive employees are the happiest. A recent article on the Enterprise Engagement Alliance site, [Engagement: Winning the Battle for Customer and Employee Hearts and Minds: The Spillover Effect](#), notes that "Measuring the success of a business is not as simple as saying 'happy employees equal happy customers.' Happy employees can also be lazy employees." Others point to the recent [Leadership IQ study](#), showing that in 42% of companies, low performers report being more engaged than high performers.

At the same time, though, there are a myriad of articles and research papers showing the connection between employee engagement and profitability and productivity.

So what's going on?



Engagement May Not Equal Happiness

For starters, employee engagement and employee happiness are not the same thing. Being engaged with work means having the right tools to do the job, understanding the path to success, and connecting emotionally to outcomes. This is not necessarily the same thing as loving every minute of it. And if happy means hanging out in the lunch room and surfing the web for most of the afternoon, then that's certainly not engagement either. We can survey the issues around both engagement and happiness, but should not assume that one leads directly to the other.

In interpreting the data, it's important to separate out who's happy and who's productive. If we ask people if they are engaged and find instead that they are happy, but their performance results show that they are directionless or unmotivated, that's critically important to know.

Watch Out for the Slacker, Jerk or Pessimist

There is a place for happiness, even if efficiency, productivity, and profitability are every business' goals. Happy workers improve the ambience of the workplace and unhappy workers can take others down with them. Will Felps was interviewed for [This American Life](#) on NPR. He studies how the attitudes of one person can change the behavior of an entire group of people. He identified three types who can have a negative impact: the slacker, the jerk, and the pessimist. Felps found, "In dozens of trials, over and over, when he (an actor) acted like a bad apple with a group, that group would perform 30% to 40% worse than groups without a bad apple." In fact, Felps stated, "What was eerily surprising was how these team members would start to take on his characteristics."

What is interesting here is that even if you have the tools in place for engagement, bad attitudes can be contagious and have a strong negative effect on productivity.

So perhaps we should be concerned with happiness at work, not from an engagement perspective, but from an environmental one. It might help to turn up the volume on an engagement program if the happiness of the right employees is a part of the equation. Do top performers have what they need and feel appreciated? What do they need to feel supported in their work? What would make them feel that the workplace is fair? How about that ever important middle 60%? What's the mood there? Managers and senior leaders should understand the challenges and achievements of these two groups in order to create room for success.

The Happiness Shift

It's time to shift the happiness from the least productive to the most productive teammates. In every environment, there will always be unhappy or unmotivated people and I agree with Crystal Spraggins on [TLNT](#) that, "happiness is a state of mind that an employer can't really control," when it comes to those employees. There are, however, benefits to considering the happiness of the most productive employees and those who show the potential to improve performance. By addressing the things that are collectively bringing the mood down and by providing a sound engagement program as a roadmap, we can improve retention, reduce absenteeism, and eliminate the negativity and nay-saying that can reduce a team's ability to perform. Let's make sure that top performers are the ones to report that they love their jobs and feel valued. **R&E**



As Director of Engagement, at Dittman Incentive Marketing, **Susan Adams** makes significant contributions to industry thought leadership on recognition and rewards. She was recently elected to the board of the Incentive Marketing Association (IMA) and is currently serving as president of the Recognition Council and on the board of the Performance Improvement Council.

Engagement winning the Battle for customer and employee hearts and minds the spillover effect
Article

New engagement survey metric uncovers more risk for employers who want to keep their top performers according to leadership
Survey

Transcript

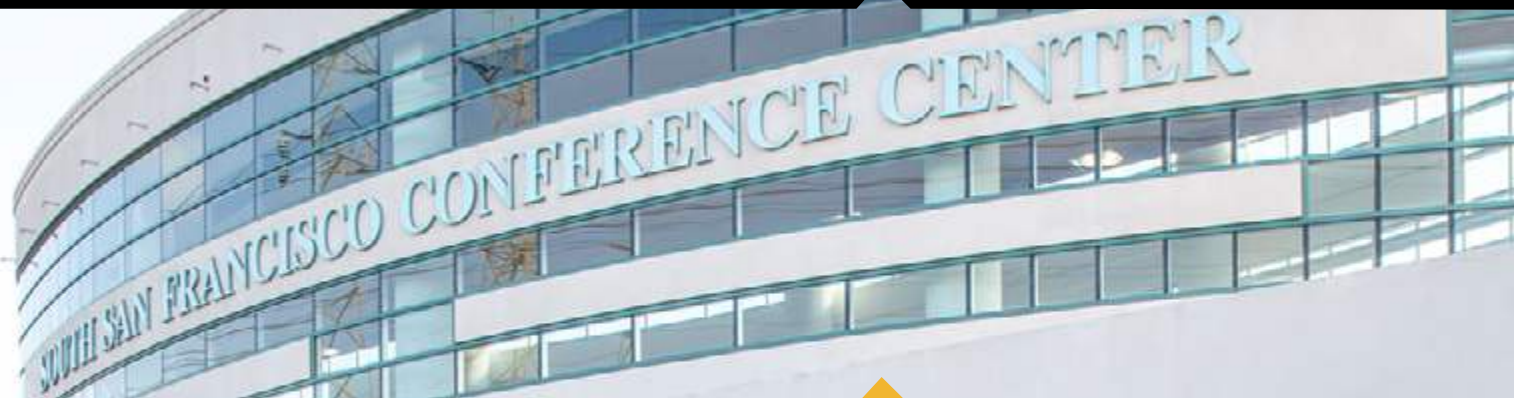
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The TWO Main Ingredients



That Create Team Unity.

By Sean Glaze

New managers or team leaders are always curious to know the secret ingredients that create team unity.

But the secret is that there is no secret.

After working with teams for over 20 years, I have found that team unity is the result of two very important ingredients coming together.

Unity is created when people care about their team's goal

Unity is created when people care about their teammates

That's it.

Just two ingredients.

Now, some people on your team may care more for and appreciate the loyalty or skills of someone they have struggled through a past experience with than they do the particular goal your team has chosen.

Or, someone on your team may be far more motivated by achieving a compelling goal than they are by wanting to please or impress the people around them on your team.

But every team's unity is based on the amount that each individual cares about these two things.

Teams that are dysfunctional and low performing often care very little for either of the two.

Teams that achieve moderate success may care a good bit about one or the other.

But teams that are truly high performing and successful are those who **care a great deal about both.**

The job of a leader is to identify which of these two ingredients is missing or in shortest supply, and then become a catalyst for [team development](#) by providing opportunities for motivation, reflection or interaction that are needed.

I still define Teamwork as *"the coordinated efforts of a cohesive group who contribute diverse skills and resources to accomplish a compelling common goal."*

But teamwork does not happen on its own... like any other skill, it is developed over time and requires both focus and effort.

While most managers are far more comfortable focusing on numbers and metrics and statistics and other measurables, the truly successful ones soon realize that the paperwork portion of their job is easy.

Wisdom is realizing that **THE SOFT STUFF IS THE HARD STUFF!**

Successful managers commit to investing time in building relationships and creating connections with and among their staff – and *team building is often a neglected area of opportunity for increasing team unity.*

Team building is NOT pointless play, or a disorganized leisure experience that provides no lasting improvement.

Team building is a valuable process that uses engaging activities to provide actionable insights for improving group communication, morale, and leadership skills.

Does your team need to invest more time in creating or committing to a compelling common goal and seeing the benefits and rewards for accepting a role as part of that effort?

Or, does your team need to invest more time in building relationships and rapport and establishing a sense of trust, encouragement, loyalty and support?

Perhaps your team needs a good bit of both...

Whatever circumstances our group is currently experiencing, you

CAN create the team unity and culture of cohesive commitment that you desire!

And, no matter how strong and committed your team is now, be aware that everything deteriorates over time if neglected.

Even the most impressive teams need time together to strengthen relationships and to be reminded of the goals and values that brought them together.

If your group needs to care more about a goal, then it is your job to clarify the goal and craft stories to emphasize why the goal is important and how it will benefit each team member.

The more clearly you can see your destination, the more likely you are to reach it.

If your group needs to care more about each other, then it is your job to schedule opportunities for learning about [team personality types](#) and their personal backgrounds, strengths, and struggles.

The more you know about your teammates, the more you will care about them.

Yes, the ship will sail in the direction that the captain points it... but it will sail **far faster and more smoothly through adversity** if the group maintains high levels of awareness and appreciation for these two ingredients.

The time you devote to helping create team unity will deliver a tremendous return on your investment. **R&E**



Sean Glaze is an interactive speaker who delivers motivational team leadership keynotes and facilitates teambuilding events that inspire groups like yours to improve communication skills, boost morale, and become better teammates! Download his report *'Three Powerful Team Activities to Create a More Cohesive Culture'* and receive a bimonthly newsletter with resources and insightful articles to help lead your team!

visit my website for resources and information about team building for teachers, businesses, and athletic groups

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The Secret Recipe



For increasing employee engagement.

By Pi Wen Looi

A powerful seed of wisdom about employee engagement has stayed with me over the years. When I was in college, I visited my cousin in Singapore. She was busy preparing dinner. To my surprise, she asked me to help chop up some vegetables and get the table ready.

What she did was out of the norm. In Asian families, when you have a guest in your home, you don't put your guest to work. She must have seen my surprise and said, "Pi Wen, when your guests help out, they feel part of your group. They are not just sitting there passively watching anymore."

Similarly, when your employees are actively involved in their projects, interacting with their teams, and are engaged with their work, they are in a state of flow. They get satisfaction from solving the challenges, completing the project, and bonding with their teammates. They feel a sense of accomplishment, and that they're part of a winning team. Their energy is high. All these feelings are a result of being intrinsically motivated.

Intrinsic Motivation

Intrinsic motivation is the key ingredient to increasing and sustaining employee engagement. Now of course, the question is, how can you design your job, workplace, and people practices to motivate employees from inside out? Here are some suggestions:

Recruit the right candidates. This sounds like a no-brainer, but recruiting for both the skill fit and cultural fit is critical. At the same time, you want to recruit candidates who can do the job and have the capacity and desire to grow with your organization. Once you've recruited the right candidates, you can harness their enthusiasm and passion to contribute to your company's success.

Articulate the purpose of your organization. Employees who find their jobs meaningful are more likely to be engaged. It's important for you to articulate clearly your company's mission. Connect the dots for your employees—help them see what they do on a day-to-day basis is connected to a greater purpose and meaning. And know that what's meaningful work for an employee may not be meaningful for another. That's where [job crafting](#) comes in handy. When employees craft their own jobs, they begin with their given job descriptions. Then they redefine and reimagine their jobs in personally meaningful ways.

Craft the right job description. Your employees deserve to know their role and their performance expectations. Instead of finding employees or candidates to fit your job descriptions, consider looking at your employees' skills, passion, and preferences, and match employees to the right jobs. This is the idea of job crafting. When you capitalize on employees' strengths and passions, you are more likely to have an engaged workforce.

Recognize and reward the right behaviors. Annual pay increases and anniversary rewards are nice, but spot rewards and project milestone completion rewards are more powerful in telling employees what behaviors are valued at your company. Badges, colleagues' thumbs-up, and increased followers within your company's social network are creative ways to acknowledge and recognize desired behaviors.

Create opportunities for growth. Our work with clients has shown that career development opportunity is a key driver of employee engagement. Having opportunities to learn new skills, try new approaches, and share knowledge with others is intrinsically motivating.

Imagine the joy of learning a new skill and then immediately apply it to solve a problem, or the sense of achievement when an employee is seen as an expert in his/her role. These factors will create sustained employee engagement.

Ensure access to resources. If you want to have sustained employee engagement, counting on employees' passions, strengths, job-match, and high morale is not sufficient. You need to ensure that employees have access to the resources they need to do their jobs well. These resources include supplies, IT systems and equipment, knowledge base, and mentors. In our research, we've seen employee enthusiasm dampened by a lack of necessary resources. These employees are frustrated and feel that their hands are tied. Ensuring employees have access to the resources they need is a must if you want to increase employee engagement.

Communicate with heart and mind. It's a best practice for your company leaders to communicate with employees regularly about company's goals, activities, successes, and lessons learned. While it's important to share facts and figures, to [make your messages stick and change employee behaviors](#), you need to incorporate emotions into your communications. Review your current employee communication contents, channels, and frequency. Consider incorporating more stories and photos in your communication contents in addition to just facts and figures. When your employees understand where your company is heading, how to get there, and how their work can contribute to company success, they are more likely to be on board and engaged.

Foster a collaborative, fun work environment. Fast-growing and innovative companies understand very well how [workplace design](#) impacts employee collaboration and communication. Take a look at your physical work environment. Is it an inspiring place to work in or is it gray and sad? Do you have enough natural light coming into your workspace? Are employees sitting all day at their desks, or do they have access to places for a quick walk, stretch, or meditation? Consider redesigning one section of your workspace to encourage more collaboration and serendipitous conversations and you may be surprised by the increase in employee energy and engagement. Read here for [some inspiring ideas](#).

Serving up high employee engagement is not easy. But, with the above recipe, you can start the process, tweak it to fit your needs, and reap the benefits of a highly engaged workforce. **R&E**



Pi Wen Looi, PhD, is the President and Founder of Novacrea Research Consulting, a San Francisco Bay Area talent management consulting firm. She is an expert in employee engagement, employee survey methodology, and meeting facilitation. Visit novacrearesearch.com

Four things good design can do for you.

 By Shane Morgenstern



Communication design seeks to attract, inspire, create desires, and motivate people to respond to messages, with a view to making a favorable impact to the bottom line. Simply put, design in communication is the process of taking information and translating it into a useful message that inspires some kind of change.

Getting employees engaged in the decisions they need to make is critical to how managers can put more productive processes in place, help people make more responsible choices, and drive more predictable outcomes. But the content of your message is often not enough to get that level of engagement, to create the deeper personal “meaning” that triggers acceptance and response. How you design and deliver the message can make a huge difference in how effective you are. Let’s look at four of the things good design can do for your organization.

1. Helps them notice the message. This is the one most people are familiar with. Good design will make things look great. But there’s more to it than just packaging. Don’t stop just with aesthetics. Your design should help tell the right story to the right people. It should create meaningful experiences that can satisfy all the senses.

Why, you ask, should I have to think about people’s senses? Because sending out your message is not the same as communicating it, if no one pays any attention to it. You need to grab that attention, making your message sound and look compelling enough to get through the everyday noise and distraction we all face.

2. Helps them see what your message says. Good design can bring ideas to life. Designers are able to take concepts and ideas and turn them into something tangible and concrete. It might be by translating the culture behind a company’s internal brand to enhance retention and engagement or by simplifying the complex details of a retirement savings plan through an interactive financial modeler.

Most of the communication you do with employees is aimed at getting them to learn something – from a simple change in a meeting time, to a whole new approach to the business. Design enhances learning, improves clarity, and increases understanding – which leads

to much better outcomes.

3. Helps them respond to the message. Good design gets under people’s skin and creates a connection between the message and their personal lives. Leaders and the employees they lead rarely see things from the same perspective. Seeing the situation from the employees’ point of view and designing it to appeal to them will go a long way in engaging their support.

You can give people all the reasons you can muster for why such-and-such a change, practice, or new habit is a good thing. But unless you can stimulate their desire to act, you’re wasting your time. People are rarely persuaded by reasons alone. They need an emotional buy-in for the message to really register and resonate. It’s an audience-centered approach and it’s the cornerstone of great design.

4. Helps them see themselves changing. Applying the design process – the visual elements of the medium you’re using – to your message can help people “envision” possible futures.

Most organizations seek substantial innovation in their products or services as a strategy for market success. And leaders use a variety of communication strategies to develop a strong culture that puts innovation at the top of every organizational “silo.” Design can be the bridge that connects all lines of businesses to the innovation process to build a shared vision and of possible futures.

Smart organizations are already adopting the idea that design is not a last-minute luxury addition to “pretty things up.” Instead, it is a process and a way of thinking that ought to be embedded in the firm’s business, marketing, innovation, and culture. Design is essential to communicating an integrated, focused and meaningful message that adds significant value. **R&E**



Shane Morgenstern is the National Practice Leader and Creative Director for Buck’s Communications practice. He has over 25 years’ experience designing award-winning interactive and print solutions for many Fortune 500 companies. Visit www.buckconsultants.com.

12 Surefire Tips to Reduce Employee Turnover.

 By Darcy Jacobsen

Tlow would you feel about a higher retention rate in your organization? I don't know about you, but I can't think of a single HR exec I know who would turn that down. In fact, employee retention is without a doubt one of the most intense challenges facing most human resources departments.

Sadly, with the improving economy and the coming talent crunches due to retiring boomers, retention rates promise only to get worse. Already, turnover rates for all industries hover around 13%—and those rates are far higher in the service sector, where the average is 30%, [according to SHRM](#). The retention crisis will undoubtedly intensify as the talent war rages and Millennials (who are notorious for job hopping) become a bigger part of the workforce.

With that in mind, here are a dozen tips on how you can slow down the revolving door at your company. Some may be familiar, some may be new to you, but all should help you inspire long-term loyalty from your best employees.

1. Hire the right people. The best way to ensure employees don't leave you is to make sure you are [hiring the right employees to begin with](#). Define the role clearly—both to yourself and to the candidates. And then be absolutely sure the candidate is a fit not only for it, but for your company culture.

2. Fire people who don't fit. As the old saying goes, “a stitch in time, saves nine.” The same goes for cutting employees loose when necessary. Sometimes even when you follow the advice above, you get an employee who—no matter what you try to do—just doesn't fit. And, no matter how effective they might be at their actual work, an employee who is a bad fit is bad for your culture, and that creates “[culture debt](#).” They will do more damage than good by poisoning the well of your company. [Cut them loose](#).

3. Keep compensation and benefits current. Be sure that you are [paying employees the fair going wage](#) for their work (or better) and offer them competitive benefits, or—really—who can blame them for ditching you? This might seem like a no brainer but you'd be surprised how few companies offer raises that keep up with an employee's development and actual rising worth.

4. Encourage generosity and gratitude. Encourage pro-social behavior in your employees. When they are given the opportunity to connect with one another through acts of [generosity](#) and the [expression of gratitude](#), employees will be healthier, happier, and less likely to fly the coop. And by encouraging them to be on the lookout for good behaviors to commend, you give people a sense of ownership of the company.

5. Recognize and reward employees. Show your employees they are valued and appreciated by offering them [real-time recognition that celebrates their successes and their efforts](#). Make it specific, social and supported by tangible reward, and you, too, will be rewarded—with their loyalty.

6. Offer flexibility. Today's employees crave a [flexible life/work balance](#). That impacts retention directly. In fact, a [Boston College Center for Work & Family study](#) found that 76% of managers and 80% of employees indicated that flexible work arrangements had positive effects on retention. And more and more companies know it. That means, if you're not offering employees flexibility around work

hours and locations, they might easily leave you for someone who will.

7. Pay attention to engagement. This one sounds obvious, but for too many leaders interest in engagement is limited to the results of engagement surveys. It's not enough simply to run an [engagement survey once a year](#). You need save most of your energy to take action based on the results and you need to work to build a culture of engagement in your company all year long.

8. Prioritize employee happiness. Happiness may sound a bit soft and squishy to many execs, but the numbers behind it are anything but. Employee happiness is a key indicator of job satisfaction, absenteeism and alignment with values—just for starters. Investing in the happiness of your employees will pay dividends in engagement, productivity and yes, retention. (Find some [tips for building happiness here](#).)

9. Make opportunities for development and growth. Employees place HUGE value on opportunities for growth. In fact, a [recent Cornerstone survey](#) drew a direct connection between lack of development opportunity and high turnover intentions. If you aren't developing your employees then you aren't investing in them. And if you aren't investing in them, why should they stay with you?

10. Clean up performance reviews. Our [most recent Workforce Mood Tracker survey](#) painted a frankly dismal picture of how employees feel about performance reviews. Only 49 percent of them find reviews to be accurate, and only 47 percent find them to be motivating. Performance reviews offer a prime opportunity for a big win to increase trust and fortify your relationship with employees. Improve performance management [by overhauling reviews](#), and watch employee trust and satisfaction grow.

11. Provide an inclusive vision. One key factor in employee engagement and happiness, according to experts, is to provide them with a sense of [purpose and meaning in their work](#). Offer employees a strong vision and goals for their work and increase their sense of belonging and loyalty to your organization.

12. Demonstrate and cultivate respect. Finally, don't discount respect when it comes to creating a magnetic culture. In fact, in one 2012 study, [respect in the workplace was revealed to be a key factor in voluntary turnover](#). Find ways to [cultivate and nurture respect in your workplace](#) and it will pay off in higher retention.

Use these tips to help build a culture in your organization that will keep your turnover rates low, and your best employees on board and productive for years to come. **R&E**



Darcy Jacobsen is a Writer, sometime pontificator of things Reward & Recognition, and mother of the best little kid in the world.

Employee Engagement Programs



An investment, not an expense.

By Bob Dawson

Beginning in our early childhood developmental and formative years, we are challenged by learning the stories and related behaviors associated with our specific culture. Formal intellectually centered learning in our schools, spiritual education in our religious orders, arts and athletics, and a host of other formal influences help us develop as individuals while maintaining our cultural heritages. As we participate in this developmental process, we are challenged with learning and often rewarded for our efforts as we achieve higher levels of competency.

In education, we receive recognition in the form of diplomas and degrees and perhaps scholarships; in athletics we might receive ribbons, trophies, an article in the newspaper, financial rewards from both institutions and sometimes family members for our achievements and successful outcomes. If your choice is a military life, we are offered a variety of emblems that distinguish our success and rank our achievement.

Thus for the first perhaps twenty-two years of our life we participate in a system of joining, participating, achieving, and then the associated rewards that go hand in hand with our success. Then we join the business world and with the exception of a very few varied examples, we are expected to work hard, excel at our given tasks and do what is expected of us. For that effort, we receive a paycheck that is deposited automatically into our checking account without as much as a thank you. If we are very lucky, we receive an annual review that is delivered by, for the most part, an inexperienced supervisor. Supervisors, in turn, have been taught in the last few years, to be as neutral as possible in the delivery of our reviews so that we do not encounter HR issues if our work performance becomes challenged down the road.

Essential Component of Success

In today's business landscape there is an increasing connection between a company's financial performance and its overall ability to recruit, engage and retain its employees. Innovative companies are driving performance by aligning their external brand with their internal brand: people. No longer is this a "nice to do" equation that factors into business success. It is an essential component of success. Companies across industry sectors are realizing that a product, service or idea is only as strong as the people behind it.

In most organizations, both the challenges of engagement and the remedies to improve it are daunting. But the payoff is enormous, and beyond the bottom line, it is arguable that in the near future, post-recession, beyond the baby-boomer retirements and after the number of companies investing in engagement reaches a tipping point - an engaged workforce will be a matter of survival. After all, who would continue to drag themselves into work every day for a paycheck when they can have the paycheck and be highly engaged in their work at the same time?

Employee Engagement Programs and ROI

Despite reams of research that clearly demonstrate a strong link between employee engagement and customer loyalty, many companies tend to overlook this equation in their strategic planning. Even though both research and common sense strongly suggest that happy, committed employees work more productively and provide better service, corporations have difficulty relating this to profits. Employee engagement programs are an investment, not an expense.



Every investment a company makes carries a degree of risk. The same holds true for any employee engagement program. The difference with an Employee Engagement program based on a measured ROI is your risk is totally under control. The financial risk is associated with any costs that must be incurred to communicate and administer a program. In a typical budget scenario, that amounts to approximately 10% of the overall projected budget. Properly planned and implemented employee engagement programs are designed to create positive change.

Utilizing an investment approach to these valuable programs provides funding through the incremental revenue and savings realized. Program award budgets typically are comprised of 40% of the total net bottom-line incremental change achieved. That means 50% of the net incremental positive result achieved is added to your company's bottom line. What other investment can a business make that offers that type of risk/reward ROI? Not many, if any. **R&E**



Bob is Managing Director of *The Business Group*. He has over twenty years of experience working in the incentive and recognition industry and is a recognized expert in the field of *Return on Investment* delivered by executing powerful incentive and recognition programs. Visit www.businessgroupinc.com.

And I'll work longer!

 By Asif Upadhye

Reading a post in the paper today got us thinking on how people (new employees) in a job might really look at their jobs and work life balance.

The article mentioned that Indian managerial-level employees seem to be rejecting job offers from companies that operate for more than 5 days a week. The proposed logic / findings seem to reveal that people are putting in more hours during the week (and that they don't really mind it) as long as bosses don't give them work on weekends, and that since stress levels are higher than what they used to be, employees need weekends to re-energize themselves. The article also reminds us of studies that show how more and more people are bending towards work life balance (4th among the top 10 factors people consider while choosing a job) and that working smart is the new workplace credo.

Here's the tricky or rather ironic perspective. Studies also show that a higher compensation can tilt the odds when it comes to employees sacrificing their weekends for the organization. **When asked, 90% of freshers were OK working six days a week if the compensation was better than what was normally offered, while only 10% chose jobs that gave them the weekend off.** In short, pay me better and I don't really care about my weekends.

Does this mean that an incremental increase in pay (for four extra Saturdays) is the solution to all your people issues? Have we finally found the key to life-long retention and loyalty? Does this mean that companies and bosses reading this can now rejoice?

The answer is a resounding Nope! Unfortunately (for companies) while employees are OK with working longer if paid well, what one also needs to remember, perhaps more than anything, is that people don't leave companies. They leave the people working there. What employees may not have considered is that companies are in a race to compete and that business pressures may require you to work from home on weekends no matter what your salary. Or Else, there is the pink slip.

So what can a company really do? It's simple really. Invest in building the right culture at your workplace and start building that 'Top Down' rather than the other way. Build a place where managers are trained to respect their colleagues and direct reportees as people first and then a cost center. Build a culture where autonomy and responsibility go hand in hand and employees are given an environment and culture that breeds the entrepreneurial spirit where you are kind if they make mistakes. No matter what the discipline of work, make work fun and interesting. Create an organization where results are more important than what time you came in to work and what time you left. Try this we say. Try this and it will also probably save you that extra 4 days of overtime for the long hours put in as well.

Engaged is as Engaged Does

There comes a time when every business no matter what its size has to look within and ask itself, what is its biggest strength? What is that one thing that keeps the company going no matter the odds. The answer staring right back at you is and will remain 'it's people'. They are the greatest and vital pillars a company can have. And keeping these very employees wilfully engaged at work is, therefore, one of the key priorities for your company.

Listen! My Employees are happy! OK? Well... here's what's cooking?

Today, your workforce wants to be involved in "what's going on" in their company and are constantly on the lookout for channels to establish a dialogue. With the growth of social media and an influx of fresh and young talent, it is but a fact that employees are talking about you more than ever.

Getting through the baggage that an employee tends to carry over the years is a noble but formidable task. For some it's purely about striking the right balance between work and personal life or an attempt to build cohesive teams while for others, it's about making work fun or enhancing their learning curve.

All of these factors have a profound influence on an employee's willingness to learn and perform at work. What you need are measures to ensure employees find the right environment and culture to function effectively.

Does My Company Need This Ingredient?

Well, yes you most certainly do. Here's why:

Research shows that happily engaged employees not only perform better, they also stay with the company longer becoming evangelists, thus positively impacting attrition scores and your company's bottom line. This even helps build a positive public image of the company in the market, thus, attracting fresh talent that is driven and self-motivated.

The sense of loyalty and trust that engaged employees have for the company is a major positive for companies functioning in a competitive environment.

An engaged employee is aware of the business perspectives and works well with co-workers to advance performance within the job for the benefit of the enterprise. They are eager to know what the employer expects from them given their assigned role and wants to fulfill them. Such employees desire to use their talents and strengths.

They are passionate about what they do and always try to find out innovative ways to help their organization progress.

How and Where Does One Begin?

Walk the talk. Be at the forefront. Make engagement a priority. Monitor initiatives closely and ensure to keep accountability and responsibility at the heart of what you do. Sometimes all it takes is a fresh perspective. The first step, though, is to 'listen' to your employees. Try learning about your employees' interests, goals and things that matter to them.

Providing variety also helps. Tedious repetitive tasks can cause burnout and lead to boredom after a period of time. Introducing diversity by rotating duties and changing areas of responsibility can help break this monotony.

Make work fun and interesting. Allow your people to express and lead the change. Be with them all the way even when they are looking at pursuing their hobbies. Help them achieve a clear sense of work life balance.

Link engagement to your employee life cycle and you will see that it not only helps during recruitment (hiring someone who is a cultural fit) but also positively impacts retention scores.

Build dialogue and communicate. Start by explaining clearly to the employees what their organization expects from them. Elaborate on the organization's vision, priorities and success measures and facilitate SKIP level meetings. That should kick things off. **So is this enough?**

Here's the thing. **Employee engagement is not just about a one-time event**, initiative, off-site or having a town hall! It is not just about the annual bonus or the gifts around the festive season. Instead, it is about the culture one creates in an organization and how you can make an employee feel up to coming to work every day.

There is no one size fits all when it comes to building an engagement strategy, simply because your company cannot have an exact replica. What works for some may not work for others.

Monitor progress. Keep a close watch on engagement scores

and ensure you have follow-ups to take corrective action if needed. Remember making mistakes is not the issue. But not taking action... well... that's some food for thought. **R&E**




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What, Olympic Gold Medals are not Solid Gold?

Spend less and impact many more employees.

 By Trevor Norcross



The Olympics ... the pinnacle of hard work, talent and the competitive spirit. While making an Olympic team is an achievement in and of itself, the lucky few who are on the podium with their medals savor a moment that must be beyond incredible. Except these medals are not all that they seem. Alas, Olympic medals are not solid gold, silver, or bronze.

You might be thinking, "What do you mean a gold medal winner does not get a solid gold metal after all the work they put into winning? Isn't this their reward for being the best?"

Real Glory

Do you really think an Olympic athlete is trying to win because of the medal value of the award? Do you think they are planning to melt it down or sell it for its elemental value? Olympic medal winners wouldn't care if the awards were made out of lead and plated in gold, silver, or bronze. This is because the value of the award is personal and worth much more than the actual value of the base material.

For them, achieving the win – tasting sweet victory – is why they spend countless hours on the track or in the gym, sacrificing it all to be the very best they can be, which might also mean being the very best in the world.

Think about your days in your childhood sport. Did you ever think because the winning trophy was made of plastic that you wouldn't participate or try to win? The award is symbolic with an intrinsic value far greater than the actual value.

This same principal holds true for recognition awards. Why spend more than \$100 on a desk monument when you can spend much less on an award that can have much more cultural meaning and be able to afford to impact many more employees?

Think about it ... If you can create a recognition platform with awards that are made to connect to each other – to motivate employees to earn more – and this also happen to cost a fraction of the cost of the standard desk monument, would you hesitate to implement this type of program? If you could also reach out to 5 to 10 times more employees isn't that a better use of limited resources?

Move Away from One Winner Programs

While the Olympics provide a great analogy when talking about the intrinsic vs. extrinsic value of awards it creates a misleading view

into individual competition. When an individual steps up to the Olympic medal platform to accept their award they are not alone. Behind each of them stands a team of coaches, nutritionist, sport physiologists, doctors, and physical therapists to name a few. To use them as an example to promote recognition programs that create one or limited number of winners is a misnomer. Think of the individual Olympic athlete as the CEO of their company accepting an award based on the combined input and success of the company and not as an individual employee competing against his/her peers within a company.

Let's continue with this analogy. Olympic athletes are always looking for a training regime, nutrition program, and sport psychology approach that will give them an advantage. When they find something that works for them are they going to share it with their competition? In the words of the Magic 8-Ball, not likely. This is the same effect you get inside a company that uses one winner recognition programs. If Hilary has a unique way of doing something and is competing with Liam for an employee recognition award it is unlikely that she will share her secret. As a company this is the last thing you want when your ultimate goal is to compete with your external competition. You don't want your most successful employees keeping secrets to their success. What you really want is to design recognition programs that motivate employees to share their secrets to higher performance.

Think about this analogy further. We have already talked about how Hilary and Liam are in a heated battle to win the recognition award but what is happening to the rest of the team? Shawn and Shelly haven't even attempted to improve their performance because they don't believe they have a chance to beat either Hilary or Liam and Katie and Will began to compete but soon realized they also did not stand a chance and gave up.

So why do companies still implement these types of one or limited winner programs? Much of it may be because they just have not thought through the unintended consequences or are following a program they heard someone else was running.

How to Design a Better Program

It's simple really, just set a performance level and anyone that achieves it wins. If you want to follow the Olympic medal tiers set three levels and differentiate the awards for each tier. Just don't limit the number of winners, remember your ultimate goal is to compete with your external competition.

But wait some will say, this means I can't afford to give out that one big prize. Yes, but is the goal of the program to improve performance or give you a platform to hand out a big award? The trick is in creating a culture that values the intrinsic value of the award that is bigger than the extrinsic value.

Remember during this year's Olympics that the medal winners are

not operating as individuals but are standing on the shoulders of a team behind them. Think of them more as the CEO's of their company accepting their award on behalf of that company. Think about the objectives of the recognition programs you run in parallel to the Olympics to drive performance, what do you really want to get out of them? When you are looking at what other companies are doing use it as inspiration but don't blindly follow. As always,

Innovate Don't Replicate! **R&E**



Trevor Norcross, President, Integrated Rewards Consulting Group has over 20 years as a leader in Total Rewards with two granted patents and a third patent pending. Visit www.integrated-rewards.com.

Recognition Comes In Many Sizes



And it's vital to engaging and retaining top talent.

By Beverly Kaye and Sharon Jordan-Evans

In this tight labor market it's a known fact that employees demand more than just money as recognition for work well done to want to stay at a company. Yet many companies still provide recognition in only monetary terms. And although the research suggests you need to pay fairly to keep your good people, money alone won't keep them.

It is not the major motivator. We double-checked this research with our own, and it proved true. When employees across the country answered the question, "What kept you?", no group had "dollars" in the top five reasons. So, money alone will not guarantee that talented employees will stay. What else can HR professionals do to help keep these employees?

First and foremost, HR professionals have to get the word out to the managers that they hold the key to engaging and retaining their top talent. Secondly, they must remind managers that *personal praise is the easiest way* for them to recognize employees and the one universal reward that works for everyone. Regardless of individual differences, virtually all employees want to hear how valuable and important they are.

Managers Should Show Appreciation

In addition to praising employees, managers should also SHOW their appreciation. Below is a list of creative ways managers could show that appreciation.

- **Time:** Give an outstanding employee the afternoon off. Allow another to sleep late. Thank a whole team by giving them a day off. Let them decide when to use their gift of time. *One boss created a days-off bank. He put 25 days in the bank and then used those days to reward individuals and teams for outstanding performance.*

- **Toys:** Give valuable employees unique and meaningful toys. Perhaps a cappuccino machine, a dart board in the lounge? Or even tickets to the movies? *Alan was so proud. He completed a set of last-minute specifications, stayed late, and in general went above and beyond. To thank him, his boss gave him a \$150 check and told him to spend it on a "toy." Alan bought one of those miniature air-ball tables and proudly brought it home. His kids were excited, and when they asked why the gift, he answered, "It's not a gift for you. It's for me, from my company, for doing a great job." The kids were impressed.*

- **Trophies and Trinkets:** Present hard working employees with meaningful small mementos or trophies. It could be a customized plaque, a coffee cup inscribed with a personal thank-you note, or a refrigerator magnet with the perfect message. Often these forms of recognition bring bragging rights and give people a chance to say, "I

was recognized because . . .," and that very public opportunity means a great deal to some people. *Simple observation suggests that most of us are trinket freaks—if they represent a genuine thanks for a genuine assist.* —Tom Peters, author and management consultant

- **Fun:** Allow dedicated employees to have some fun. How about an outing on company time? Leave work early to play ball or to take a hike together? Go to a movie? Have a spontaneous pizza party in the office some afternoon? *The team had been working long hours and even weekends. The boss suggested that we rent a limousine, buy some great food and wine, and go to an outdoor concert. He picked up the tab. We felt so pampered and rewarded for all the effort and our outstanding results.*

- **Favors:** Give exceptional employees a career development opportunity they might want. Perhaps the chance to be part of a steering committee or give a presentation to the senior management team? Or the choice about the next project or chance to learn something new? Or even a paid training on company time of the person's choosing?

- **Freedom:** Give precious employees certain freedoms. Perhaps flextime or the freedom to work from home, to dress casually, to change the way they do some of the work? Freedom to work without supervision? Freedom to manage a budget?

What If Money Matters More?

Give little amounts of "small" money (\$50 – 150) to employees who pull through on a project with extra hours and "last minute miracles." This discretionary, on-the-spot cash award is sometimes more deeply appreciated. Also, find out who of your talented employees is truly motivated by "big" money. Think about where you can stretch your budget to reward with money when it is warranted and desired. If your hands are tied, tell them the truth! Then inquire what else your employee might want other than dollars.

The key to giving the best rewards and recognition is that they must match with the employee's needs and wants. So when deciding on the type of recognition to provide an employee, simply ask them what they most appreciate. By using this creative and tailored approach to show your appreciation, as well as assessing your pay scale too be sure it's fair, you will increase the odds of keeping your most talented employees. **R&E**



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Early Recognition Programs



How valuable are they?

By Cord Himmelstein

Early recognition programs have been struggling to find their way in an overarching recognition and rewards strategy. In a recent survey conducted by human capital advisors Accelir, an overwhelming majority of organizations (91 percent) said they utilize reward and recognition programs to honor tenure-based awards, however, only 12 percent include an Early Recognition element.

This is surprising, given the alarmingly low retention rate of employees, especially within the first five years of service. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported in 2012 that the average job tenure of American workers across all industries was 4.6 years. The highest levels of retention occurred in the public sector (7.8 years) and the lowest in Leisure and Hospitality services (2.4 years).

Still, organizations have been unwilling to commit to a long-term Early Recognition program because of the unknowns surrounding overall impact on retention.

Does Early Recognition Help Retention?

It's generally not easy to trace an increase in retention rates back to a single factor. More often than not, healthy retention rates are affected by a combination of workplace elements that engage employees. A recent study by Bersin & Associates shows that nearly two-thirds of HR respondents do not think that HR effectively enables recognition in their organizations, a key factor in the success of a recognition initiative. To help increase retention, all recognition elements, including Early Recognition programs, must be used as building blocks within an overarching recognition strategy – properly enabled by HR and senior leaders. In other words, recognition success relies heavily on the buy-in of program stakeholders and senior leadership to give it meaning and strategic value.

What many organizations don't realize is that their existing programs can be easily leveraged to support an Early Recognition initiative with little impact to overall budget.

Highly Effective Programs

Here are best practice examples of how to create a highly effective Early Recognition program:

1. Have a plan. Most onboarding initiatives only focus on the first 30 days of service. An effective Early Recognition program executed over a longer period of time with multiple touch-points demonstrates a larger commitment to the employee's onboarding experience. A 6 to 12 month Early Recognition period is recommended to provide enough time to set benchmarks, track progress, and implement a development strategy.

2. Reward employees early. Nearly 70 percent of HR Professionals surveyed in Accelir's Rewards & Recognition 2014 Trends Report feel that employees should be recognized for their first year of service at the very least. Providing some form of meaningful service recognition early in an employee's career acclimates them to the recognition culture quickly, and seeing it happen for all new hires has a residual positive effect on the rest of the workforce.

3. Provide praise and supportive feedback. Employees need more than tangible rewards to feel engaged and connected to the organization. Gifts, free lunches, and volunteering for coffee runs only go so far – they also need to feel that their work and contributions are respected. Take every opportunity to praise new hires for their good work in front of peers, and be sure to offer regular positive feedback

as you track the employee's progress. If the corporate attitude is one of supportive recognition from the top down, the culture will fall in line and new employees will take note.

4. Encourage mentoring. The power of coaching cannot be understated when it comes to engaging new employees. An Early Recognition program is only as effective as the time investment from senior managers devoted to coaching and development. Set individual goals, see the results, and continually coach the employee to develop his or her strengths and interests within the organization. The benefits are twofold: the new employee feels valued by senior leadership, and they are driven to grow their skill set and contributions, adding value back to the organization.

5. Enable peer-to-peer recognition. New employees will engage with the corporate culture much quicker if they know they will be working in a supportive environment. If you have an achievement-based award system in place, enable your employees to recognize each other through peer-to-peer nominations. An award certificate related to your core values or a simple "welcome aboard" message sent across a social recognition platform from a colleague are simple, cost-effective methods for getting new employees involved in the recognition culture and connected to the organization.

6. Create a personal connection. Provide automated tools that enable your workforce to easily recognize one another is helpful. However, a culture of recognition cannot persist on technology alone. Be sure your managers are taking the time to walk across the office and engage new employees on a personal level. New employees always have questions and reservations, and the sooner they are put to rest, the sooner they will be engaged in their work. A small amount of personal attention will go a long way in making them feel comfortable.

7. Get senior leaders on board. Recognition programs have a greater impact on employee engagement when senior leaders participate in the programs. Gather your senior leaders together and make a presentation on the Early Recognition initiative, ensuring that everyone is on the same page about the goals and methodology. Then actively involve senior leaders in the program by having them send introductory emails, make office visits to introduce themselves, and take an interest in what's happening throughout the Early Recognition period. A high level of senior leader involvement will demonstrate to new employees that the organization is serious about retaining and developing talent.

The Bottom Line

Research has shown that successful recognition programs can help improve productivity, employee turnover, profit, and customer satisfaction ratings. However, no single component of a recognition program can singularly deliver these results. Recognition is not automatic and every program requires strong follow-through to reach its full potential. Early Recognition is an impactful and cost-effective tool to combat low retention rates, but it can only reap benefits when supported by a salient recognition strategy that ensures the program remains valued by employees. [R&E](#)



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Cutting through Cynicism



With authentic appreciation.

By Paul White

As I've worked with companies and organizations across the country, it's become evident that a large number of employees have a very cynical reaction to any discussion of positive communication from their supervisors, and sometimes, even their co-workers. The lack of genuineness in communicating appreciation may be the single biggest barrier to positive workplace relationships.

One of the contributing factors to these underlying attitudes of cynicism has to do with performance-based recognition programs. There are fundamental differences between recognition and appreciation, and that is why most employee recognition programs are not working. Two problematic themes of recognition programs have become clear: (1) the resentment of only being valued when one performs well; and (2) a distrust of the genuineness of any positive messages sent by supervisors to their team members.

While the concept of authenticity is not that difficult to understand, there are some deeper questions that raise important issues regarding perceived inauthenticity: Who determines authenticity? Is authenticity based in reality or perception? What causes people not to believe others are genuine?

Common Reactions

Some work settings seem to just “ooze” cynicism, sarcasm, and a lack of trust. Probably the most intense cynical environments I've experienced recently are medical settings and hospitals, public schools, and government agencies. Why might this be? It appears that leadership in many of these institutions have tried to communicate recognition and praise, or have done training on “How to build a positive team”, and it has been largely done through a program-based approach. This leads to a perceived belief of insincerity on the part of the participants.

When employees do not believe that others are genuine in their communication of appreciation, a full range of emotional and negative reactions occur. These include:

- cynicism and sarcasm;
- lack of trust and disbelief;
- “I've heard it before” and “Wait and see” attitudes;
- Defensiveness, resentment and even anger.

Why do people have these responses? Largely because they have not been communicated to with genuine appreciation. Unfortunately, although well intentioned, many characteristics of employee recognition programs undermine perceived genuineness. (These issues are addressed in our Appreciation at Work training).

Potential Causes of Perceived Inauthenticity

From my discussions with numerous groups, I've compiled many reasons why people question others' sincerity of communication. Let me list just some of them:

- Tone of voice does not match what they are saying.
- Non-verbal cues are incongruent with the message.
- Demonstration of new and different behavior than in the past.
- Acting differently in front of others in contrast to private behavior.
- Inconsistent verbal messages across time.
- Lack of consistency between what they are saying and how they treat you.
- Not addressing current (or past) conflict, acting as if it didn't happen.
- Questioning the motivation of others.

These reasons, and more, are all potentially valid reasons for questioning the genuineness of the actions from others in the workplace. The challenge is how to overcome perceived inauthenticity.

Getting Past Perceived Inauthenticity

You can never fully “prove” your authentic appreciation for a person and you can't “make” someone believe you. At the same time, there *are* practical steps that can be taken that can help get past challenges of being perceived as not genuinely valuing your colleagues.

Only communicate appreciation when it is true. It is not helpful to try to “fake it.” People have good “radar” for communication that isn't true.

Acknowledge the interfering causes. Statements like, “I know I haven't communicated much (if any) appreciation to you in the past...” or “I know we've had our conflicts and differences in the past...” and even, “I know you may think I'm saying this just because we've had the training on communicating appreciation...”

State your desire to be viewed as genuine. The more specific you can be about what the person does or the character quality you value, the greater probability that you'll be viewed as honest (rather than some vague, general statement -- “I'm glad you're part of the team.”)

Be consistent over time. If you communicate one message of appreciation every six months, the likelihood of being perceived as being genuine is low. Similarly, if you only communicate positive messages in ways or settings where it is evident to others (especially your supervisor), that also will lead to a perception of your doing the actions just “for show.”

Don't focus solely on performance or on situations that benefit you directly. A nice way to communicate authentic communication is to identify non-work related skills that are positive (for example, their cheerfulness or how they treat others kindly) can be very impactful.

Communicate appreciation consistently over time. I believe the only true way to get past other's perceptions of whether our actions or statements are not “real” is to communicate them repeatedly over long periods of time (months) and potentially in different ways and different settings. It is especially difficult for a recipient to argue that you are not being genuine when you try to find out the ways in which they are encouraged and seek to consistently and repeatedly communicate to them through those actions that are important to them.

Is the lack of perceived genuineness of recognition, appreciation and encouragement an issue in the workplace? Absolutely. Is it a deserved concern? Most probably. Can it be addressed and resolved? In most cases. Is it worth the time and effort? Most definitely.

When employees and staff members truly feel valued and appreciated good things happen. And being forthright, if your appreciation is viewed as authentic, you will “stick out” from your competitors. Genuine encouragement is, unfortunately, the exception rather than the rule and authentic appreciation is a powerful tool to cut through the fog of a negative work environment characterized by cynicism, sarcasm and a lack of trust. **R&E**




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Mentoring and Recognition



Use them to further staff engagement.

 By Stephen Hobbs

Whether you are a seasoned manager-leader, new to your position and/or aspiring to management-leadership work, it's important to weave mentoring and recognition into your managing-leading approach.

During the past 40 years, the last twenty in particular, there has been a gradual shift in how manager-leaders perceive their involvement in the organization of work. And with the out-flow of boomers and the in flow of millennials during the up-coming 20 years, the next ten in particular, there will be monumental shift in how manager-leaders engage their staff in the organization of work.

Adding to this generational mix is how manager-leaders will support staff learning and development. Instead of supporting staff via online and offline training and instructing in the required organizational knowledge and skills (considered push programming), manager-leaders will integrate more mentoring, coaching and facilitating.

This integration will result in the creation, use and capture of new experience-based knowledge and skill (considered pull programming.) The key concept is pulling a rope is more efficient, effective and relevant than pushing a rope.

Instead of thinking of yourself and your staff as islands where you occasionally bump into others on the island, you and especially your staff will openly ask for assistance from someone more knowledgeable and/or skilled. These requests result in mind shifts and commitments to move from the smaller island to a bigger island and/or to the mainland.

Mentoring

Asking for assistance has been and continues to be an informal practice. Yet, when so much learning occurs through doing, who better to learn from than someone who is competently doing the work. Today, asking a mentor (or mentors) to guide your journey is a respected requirement for achieving personal ambitions and accomplishing group goals.

Mentors share what they know with someone willing to listen and ask great questions. This sharing relationship allows the learner to tap into what the mentor has experienced. And together, they improve their craft.

In order for mentors to support their learners (or mentees, protégés) they must be knowledgeable about - not necessarily skilled in - facilitating and coaching.

- Facilitators draw what people know or come to know in response to a question. The facilitator provides a supportive situation through which what needs to be shared is said and/or the necessary connections made to further working together.
- Coaches urge people to use what they know and do already to meet the competent levels required and requested by the organization. Through coaching people continue to share their experience and in the process learn more from their accountabilities based on the decisions they made.

Recognition

When you include recognition with mentoring you help your staff stay on track. The two working together are the two guidrails of engagement. Every concerted effort you give to mentoring and recognition counters the alarming disengagement statistics currently found in organizations.

Here are three important tenets upon which to frame your use of

mentoring and recognition in your managing-leading.

1) Manager-Leaders who are self-confident to establish high expectations of themselves and those of their staff, expand the work. Your expectations, however, must be realistic and achievable in a stretch by everyone involved. In working from high expectations, you and your staff are linked in the *reciprocal organization of work*. As a result, when your staffs speak of you, they say you bring the best out in them. They cite the importance of the mentoring and recognition they received for a job well done.

As your staff experience mentoring and recognition, there is a better chance of increasing your and their competence and advancing everyone's capacities to do great work. No longer will you have to push the organization of work. Instead, you become *adept at adapting and adopting* to the pull requests of your staff. This approach is called "experience-based management-leadership." It's when and where your staff experience a customized managing-leading service tailored for each staff member's engagement.

2) Manager-Leaders who recruit the person for the position rather than create a position for the person move the paradigm of entitlement to that of meritocracy. That is, people advance because of their competence.

Therefore, your observance and actions for educating and re-educating staff for the correct positions becomes an important aspect of your managing-leading. Supporting the staff in finding the appropriate mentors and giving recognition for the education/re-education, and then application are the cornerstones of the new work. Which means you are using an experience-based management-leadership approach. In addition, consider that letting someone go, to become successful elsewhere, is a viable option. Fitness begets engagement. Otherwise, you're pushing string up a hill to no one's benefit.

3) Manager-Leaders who connect performance with rewards and recognition balance the requirements and requests of the organization with the requirements and requests of the staff. Such a connection is made through your appropriate *feed-back* (past into present), *feed-forward* (present into the future) and *feed-fromward* (from the future into the present). This balance bridges the work of your staff with what they and the organization need.

When you make rewards available collectively and recognize personally, you acknowledge, align and encourage staff to do their best. It's helpful when rewards can accumulate (e.g., to obtain something from a catalogue) and recognition is given immediately (e.g., to connect the meaning among activities, behavior and consequences). Consequently, they become aware of the influence they have in groups and the influence groups have on them.

Therefore, it's important for your staff to have a say in the selected reward and recognition system. Their awareness of connection between reward and recognition guides their agreement in the value and use of the system. It's important they experience:

- a. The reward (formal) elements of the system connect the staff with the organization values through offerings such as clear pay and bonuses, catalogue of products, training and instructing opportunities, etc.
- b. The recognition (informal) elements of the system connect with a person's value system through assistances such as setting a stretch

challenge, participating while simply listening, a “thank you” in public and/or private, etc.

As a mentor you guide the learner to participate in the organization quest, expedition, grand journey. Add recognition, and you help each other further engagement, retention, performance improvement and personal development as the preferred outcomes of your organization of work. Therefore, in conscious combination of mentoring and recognition you share hope, and expressions of gratitude and enthusiasm for moving forward.

There is a caveat surrounding recognition. It's important to recognize

your staff doing the correct and relevant things at the time they are doing it without weakening the giving and receiving of the appreciation. There is an art to giving and receiving kudos. Too little, people are left wandering. Too much and people are left wondering. **R&E**



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Strategic Recognition and Incentive Systems



ROI is the ultimate test of success or failure.

By Bob Saunders

Incentive and recognition programs are shifting and the pendulum is more of a strategic approach towards culture, behavior, and measurement with a focus on a return on investment. Using technology, Customer Relationship Management (CRMs) can give us leading indicators on all data and form the metrics to make decisions. Understanding these metrics gives us specific information on the marketplace, the client and how to tailor towards demographics.

This real-time information now changes the landscape of incentive programs and shifts from one goal – service award programs – to an umbrella approach that encompasses the entire organization in various initiatives; a process called Strategic Recognition Systems.

Incentive programs exist throughout an organization to enhance the culture and drive employee behaviors towards a demonstrated return (i.e. customer satisfaction, enhanced client loyalty, streamlined processes or increased revenue). Every employee plays a role, and every employee should benefit from the recognition and incentive processes. The Forum for People Performance Management and measurement's current research states that properly constructed incentive programs can increase performance by as much as 44 percent.

Elevating Culture is non-measurable on paper but is the heart of any organization. The culture involves the vision level and expectations of the organization and the engagement of management and the employees. Elevate the entire organization through constant communications of the company's vision and managers' engagement to elevate the employee's morale. Communication of achievement throughout all levels of the organization is critical and must be endorsed by senior management.

Behaviors involve the day-to-day actions taken to improve personal and team performance. Establish goals and measurements focusing on the correct habits, education, and team synergy. Behaviors must be recognized upon the completion of their good deeds to have them multiply.

Measurement, or Return on Investment (ROI), is the ultimate test in measuring the success or failure of a performance-incentive strategy. This return on investment is stated as a ratio measuring the incremental increase in benefit divided by the amount invested to secure the increase. Measurements can indicate individual per-

formance, wellness, safety, innovative thinking, customer satisfaction and any initiative that complements the overall growth strategy of the organization. What gets measured gets done, and what gets celebrated gets done well.

Three Phases of a Rewards Program

Phase one: brand equity

The branding of the incentive program should clarify the business needs and identify the needs and the requirements through initial marketing, setting the platform for success and creating the excitement to excel. This is an internal “Branding” of the organization's vision, creativity, and commitment. For example, FEDEX makes the “Purple Promise” – a branding of above and beyond service.

Ingersoll Rand shows “Inspiring Progress” as staying one step ahead and encouraging others to do the same. By “turning the phrase into action,” every employee has the opportunity to build the brand.

Phase two: incentive performance program

Cash – Cash can be viewed as an entitlement with little emotional involvement and does not provide lasting satisfaction. *Wirthlin Worldwide Research* studies demonstrated 47 percent of employees that received cash either paid bills or do not remember how they spend their incentive. Only nine percent spent the monetary incentive on personal use.

Tangible awards – *World at Work* (formerly American Compensation Associations) found that non-cash awards achieve three times the return on investment compared to cash. Tangible awards are extrinsic and intrinsic motivators and provide a strong emotional appeal to recipients' personal wants and needs, having the family involved in the selection multiplies that emotional value. Point-based programs, similar to frequent flyer miles, are very popular, designed to reward employees for excellence every day and are universally accepted.

Phase three: honor clubs

Honor Clubs recognize benchmarks of achievement that acknowledge cumulative success and provide an incentive for future triumphs. This is a symbolic award that holds strong intrinsic value that cannot be measured. It is the reason that financially independent athletes with great careers continue to play. They want to earn the most prestigious symbol in athletics (the gold medal or the championship ring). In business this would be the Chairman's award. Have levels to recognize your employees, a career path of recognition from onboarding to every recognition touch point, all achieved in one platform. A symbol of achievement serves as an encouragement for others to follow. A well thought out symbolic recognition program pays for itself in employee loyalty and retention.

Most of us have spent our professional career putting band-aids

on incentive and recognition programs and not embracing an approach of communication, measurement, training, and reinforcement. While employees bask in the glory of recognition, it is the organization that reaps the true benefits. Richard Bolton, author of “The Value Code,” states, “Celebration makes the spirit of the organization visible.” If we are going to improve corporate culture in the long term, we need to address the issues and solve the problems in a

systematical process. **R&E**



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Recognition, Reward, Celebration



The ROI is productivity, retention and engagement.

By Dick Daniels

When considering how to retain engaged, persistent, and successful teams and team members, The menu includes the following options:

- Words spoken publicly.
- Words that are written privately.
- Gifts that always express appreciation.
- Perks that acknowledge the extra sacrifices made.
- Time that compensates for the additional effort invested.
- Flexibility of when, where, and how their work gets completed.
- Events that tell the bigger story while recognizing the contributors

Recognition

The *Law of Recognition* states that someone is watching, noticing, remembering, and taking action. Identify the exceptional contributors, confirm the details of their stories, and creatively share their examples and accomplishments.

Every organization needs “watchers” who notice two things about team members: *behavior* (positive attitude and incredible work ethic) and *results* (exceptional outcomes). Recognition clarifies what *behavior* and *results* the organization highly values. Recognition answers the follower’s assumption that leaders privately take credit themselves for outcomes unless they publicly give credit to their teams for those outcomes.

The Return on Investment for Recognition is productivity and job satisfaction.

Reward

The *Law of Reward* indicates that these are given privately to individuals who exceed expectations. *Privately* - so as not to embarrass the recipient or those not receiving this acknowledgement. *Individuals* - to identify the organization’s high potential employees.

Exceed - to celebrate their achievement and contribution that consistently surpasses job expectations.

Reward individuals according to their unique motivation which will vary from one person to another. Be sure the criteria for selection are applied fairly to every team member being considered.

The Return on Investment for Rewards is productivity and retention.

Celebration

The *Law of Celebration* declares that this is done publicly for teams who have successfully completed projects and surpassed goals. Take advantage of these formal and informal celebrations to tell the or-

ganization’s story. Tie the accomplishments of a team to the vision, mission, values, and strategy of the company. *Publicly* - to model the vision in action.

Teams - to recognize that the whole is more than the sum of its parts by demonstrating what a collaborative group can accomplish together. *Successful* – to celebrate the work that is being done daily across typical workplace boundaries to meet goals, outperform the competition, and satisfy the customer. Be sure to incorporate the following elements of celebration:

- It’s festive.
- It’s positive.
- It’s memorable.
- It’s built on stories.
- It includes a moment of humor.
- It recognizes teams not individuals.
- It keeps everyone on their feet and keeping it short.

The Return on Investment for Celebration is productivity and engagement.


Leadership Debrief

Look for excuses to celebrate what your team members are accomplishing. Keep it simple, do it often, and do it differently each time. These are memory making moments with an ROI that always surpasses the costs of time or supplies. Do it during lunch or a morning/afternoon break. Serve something to eat and drink. Buy it, make it, and serve it with a smile. Forever and always say, *Thank You!* **R&E**



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Rewards strategies for changing career patterns.

 By Beverly Kaye, Kathryn McKee & Robert Greene

In the 20th century, career management was a critical staffing strategy. College recruitment of high-potentials, assessment centers, cross-functional project teams and leadership development programs were tools for succession planning. “Upward mobility” was the basis for career management strategies.

But right now, expectations about work and careers are changing. Corporate America is realizing employee desires and motivations are varied and complex. Individual attitudes and organizational realities have made “upward climb” no longer synonymous with “successful career.”

As a result, employees seem ready to consider alternatives to the traditional American dream of continually moving up the organizational ladder. This means organizations need to adopt career management strategies that do not rely on vertical movement to reward employees for their competence and contributions, and aid in retention of top talent.

However, corporate cultures and individual values are exceedingly slow to change. Traditional hierarchical and promotional patterns remain intact. Many organizations reward through “pay-for-promotion” and supporting only upward career moves. If organizations seek optimization of human capital in the face of change, they must find ways to modify those values.

The belief that “What you measure and reward you will get more of” is certainly true here. No organizational tool is as powerful in changing values as its reward system. Intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, can provide great motivation, but only if there is a link between pay and performance.

Organizations considered alternative approaches to rewarding performance, both to gain employee acceptance and better align people costs with revenues/resources. Yet, reward practices remain geared toward incenting upward movement. It is essential that HR leaders work with executive colleagues to consider ways to reward people who increase their contributions to organizational success, even if they stay in the same job.

New Values, New Career Moves

Growing in the current job. Organizations realize their pool of intellectual capital is key to being competitive and successful. That pool should include individuals who expand their personal knowledge and skills, even though they choose to remain as individual contributors in their occupations.

This group can grow and increase in their value to the organization in two ways. First, they can expand the *variety* of their skills and knowledge by becoming competent in more things. Second, they can develop the *depth* of their skills and knowledge so they are competent to handle more complex work in their current discipline. These employees are valuable contributors and may be some of the most satisfied and productive workers. HR can design compensation strategies to reward this talented group for professional growth.

Lateral Moves. Employees can also broaden their experience by making lateral moves across functional areas. They can learn new skills while remaining in the same functional area. Lateral moves provide intrinsic rewards such as opportunities for new learning, a more in-depth understanding of the business, which may lead to upward mobility in the future and a chance to work with new col-

leagues. The new work environment is attractive to many who may feel stifled in their current job.

Job Enrichment. Jobs can be “enriched” through: (1) increasing skills used; (2) opportunities to work on projects from beginning to end; (3) understanding the impact a job has on the organization; (4) increasing responsibility, independence and discretion in work procedures; and (5) establishing feedback from the job itself and co-workers and/or managers.

Enrichment also often delivers an opportunity to acquire a mentor, or to be a mentor. This is a powerful tool for personal growth and development.

Rewarding Employees

Person-based pay. In order to motivate employees to expand their capabilities, appropriate rewards should be offered. Rewarding acquisition and use of new competencies can provide a powerful incentive and expand one’s intellectual capital. Two common “person based” approaches to rewards are skill-based pay and knowledge-based pay.

1. **Skill-based pay systems** reward employees for becoming capable of performing required tasks. A machine operator learns skills associated with setting the machine up for production runs. This eliminates lost time created while the operator waits for a setup person. If the “operator/setup” role pays more, there is a financial motivation to learn the additional skills.

2. **Knowledge-based pay systems** reward employees for increasing their competence, usually in a professional field. Engineers and accountants are often classified into job families. A principal engineer is capable of more complex and/or varied work than a senior engineer thereby justifying a higher job grade and pay range. The level in which the job is classified determines the pay range... how well the person performs at that level determines the individual pay rate.

Finding the Right Path

Exploration. Career development options encouraging exploration motivate employees to consider other areas of the organization without committing to a move in a particular direction. It involves researching, interviewing and testing out opportunities so that a future decision about moving to another function or field of interest can be made. The information gathered provides the basis for sound career conversations and better decisions about a job move.

Exploration lets the individual test the fit between his/her interests and abilities and the job. This is accomplished via job rotation, project work and temporary task force participation, which can be in addition to one’s regular work. These all provide a short-term hiatus from one’s regular work. Employees pursuing exploration should have the “freedom to fail” and be able to “debrief” their experience with a manager or mentor.

Developmental assignments can ready the individual for potential vertical moves as well as increasing their value. Interviews with individuals who have made lateral moves report that their organizational “lens” widens and they gain a broader understanding of its capabilities.

Rewards also can be structured for exploration in areas that support learning—such as attendance at conferences, enrollment in seminars or tuition reimbursement. Organizational compensation systems can accommodate exploring by holding the employee’s salary constant



during the period of exploration. One-off performance bonuses can be an option when warranted.

Moving Down. Changing value systems and limited promotional opportunities has legitimized the idea of choosing to return to an earlier position. Finding a career move was a mistake takes courage to admit. Many individuals reported learning quickly and blossoming in a new area of work, setting the stage to develop even further than they might have on their former career path.

Generally, downward moves have meant “demotion” in pay, status, authority and esteem. Compensation implications are generally determined on a case-by-case basis. Policies might prescribe no cut in base pay or a gradual lowering of salary. But they might also provide for incentive awards, continuing education support or recognition available to those who make “over and above” contributions.

Dual Ladders. One of the mistakes organizations make is promoting people performing well in one capacity (Software Programmer) to a different type of role (Software Programming Manager). Someone superb at technical or administrative work may fail as a manager.

There are alternative approaches to moving into management. “Dual ladder” systems are widely used for scientific, technical and creative professionals, affording equivalent earnings and status for exceptional individual contributors who otherwise are forced into a management ladder to gain these benefits.

Keep the Back Door Open.

One choice is leaving the organization. Perhaps the organization simply does not meet his/her needs or offer assignments utilizing skills or developmental opportunities. Organizations using a “revolving door” approach to recruitment and retention find they avoid underutilization of personnel and associated economic and morale costs. Silicon Valley is an “ecosystem” that views appropriate movement across organizations as a way to optimize a pool of scarce talent. Companies with “alumni” organizations keep in touch with employees who have moved on, letting them know when they have new opportunities.

Employees leaving because the “grass is greener” elsewhere may find it to be an illusion and having the option to return brings them back wiser and more realistic. Some organizations hold the pay level “sacred” for one year.

Where to From Here?

Individuals and organizations may place a higher value on depth/breadth of experience than how fast one climbs the corporate ladder. Employees seem more concerned with personal development and satisfaction. This often means seeking personal growth in the present job.

It also means evaluating job opportunities (up, down or over moves) in light of conflicts they may create with personal values like balancing work and family. It could result in turning down opportunities in favor of individual values. C-Suite members - including HR- must review the organization’s values relating to what constitutes job and role success. If up is not the only way, then skill and knowledge acquisition must be encouraged and rewarded. Total rewards policies must encourage this exploration.

This is the roadmap for review of corporate values, discussing what changes in value statements and behaviors the organization wishes to make. Next, they must examine compensation philosophies to see if changes are necessary to fit the revised values.

These shifts may lead to changes in compensation and development programs that encourage and reward growing in place, lateral or even downward career moves that heretofore have not been part of career dialogue. **R&E**



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Revitalize Your Recognition Program



Four ways to keep it fresh and exciting.

By Mike Byam



Recognition is possibly one of the world's simplest and most amazing universal concepts. As people, we are willing and even eager to give our best when our efforts are recognized and appreciated by those we respect. Psychologist and Philosopher William James wrote, "The deepest principle in human nature is the craving to be appreciated."

When we put that principle into practice in the workplace, it can be one of the most refreshing and rewarding experiences to be a part of. As with just about any initiative, it's helpful to take a step back from time to time and take a mental inventory—is this program making as much of an impact on our employees as it can, and is it continuing to move our organization in a positive direction?

The New Year marks an ideal time to take a look back and get a sense of the overall impact that your recognition program has had on your employees and your organization as a whole the year prior. In order to keep a recognition program fresh and exciting means having all components working in harmony. From time to time this process can take some 'fine tuning'. Based upon our experiences working with many different organizations and many different program situations, we've outlined 4 specific ways we've seen organizations breathe new life into their recognition programs.

1. Reshape Management's View of Recognition.

The outdated approach is to think of recognition as a nice thing to do. Of course it's true that you would be hard pressed to find an employee who doesn't appreciate being recognized for his or her contributions, but the bigger picture is that companies can't afford *not* to recognize their employees. In order to revitalize recognition in an organization, the first step is reshape managers' view of recognition and to educate "what's in it for them" to support a culture of recognition within their team.

Most businesses work to get their management teams into this frame of mind through training. The key takeaway for managers to

internalize is that recognition is one of the most effective ways to communicate goals and objectives and to reinforce positive behaviors that lead to success. Employees who contribute at a high level thrive on recognition and are less likely to seek other jobs if they feel like their contributions are appreciated.

It is also important to help managers understand what employees expectations are for feedback and recognition. Many managers simply don't realize how frequently their people need to hear positive feedback. According to [Business Insider](#), in order to keep employees engaged, they should be getting some form of recognition at least *once per week*. Now the pushback you're likely to get from managers is that they are far too busy to be giving that level of recognition on a regular basis, and to some extent, it's a fair objection.

What does this step look like in practice? We've worked with organizations who handle it any number of ways. Terryberry has an entire division devoted to giving private group training sessions for managers. Consider including training on your recognition program and managers' roles as part of the orientation process for new managers. Performance reviews are another opportunity for self-check and to reinforce the importance of recognition skills and emotional intelligence. We work with organizations who give people a recognition guidebook and toolkit when they are promoted into a manager role. Finally, give managers a business case for recognition, make it simple to do, and in many businesses you'll see an immediate impact.

2. Re-Align with Corporate Objectives.

From time to time, we run into recognition programs that have struggled because the objectives which had been outlined in the recognition program have not kept up with the changing objectives of the organization. To survive over time, it is important to review your recognition program periodically and ensure that the goals employees are being asked to achieve line up with what is important

to your business today.

Furthermore, what we see missing is the essential piece connecting the dots between the achievements employees are being recognized for and how those achievements support the mission, vision and values of the organization. This is vital to a successful recognition program and is often overlooked. When employees are given recognition, it is essential to connect the recognition to a specific attitude, behavior, or contribution that the individual has demonstrated. Second, connect that attitude, behavior or contribution to why it is important to the success of the business.

Recognition is a powerful opportunity to reinforce your competitive advantages and your corporate mission with every employee interaction. Too often, one or both of these pieces are missing. If you give your people an understanding of how they can impact the success of the business-- and sincere appreciation when they do-- you are miles down the road to a vital recognition culture.



3. Ramp Up Communication.

The communication of the program can be a great opportunity to make a strong connection with employees. The way employees are invited to participate in the recognition program is perhaps one of the more frequently underutilized aspects of a recognition strategy.

The outdated approach to program communication is a one-time program launch. I often see one of two things happening: First, quite simply, the information about the program just doesn't make it to employees. For instance, the leadership team creates this wonderful recognition program, congratulate themselves, shoots an email out to all their employees, and finally, checks it off the list. Even more often, what happens is the program has been in place for a while, maybe a couple of years, and the leadership team assumes everyone knows about the details. Second, what can happen is the doldrums.

Sometimes the communication materials that are dispersed to the employees can be somewhat bland in their look and feel. Recognition communications are our opportunity to break loose with some fun and exciting communication materials. Get your thinking caps on!

The new method of communication involves weaving recognition into the regular ongoing messaging with your participant group. Each time that the program is communicated to employees is an opportunity to make a connection. Remember it takes 11.3 impressions for your message to stick with your audience. If you feel like you've told the story about your recognition program a hundred times, you've probably done about half as much as you need to. Communicate with a purpose. Use your program overview materials for more than just the logistic information. Highlight an employee's milestone or achieve-

ment on a poster or company newsletter. Start every staff meeting with recognition for a new hire or individual accomplishment. Harness the power of social media. Use images of recognition recipients or events. The snowball effect of social recognition keeps your message fresh, relevant and personal. With promotion materials such as these, you accomplish many goals; you tell the story about why recognition is important and how to participate, and you demonstrate how employees can earn recognition.

4. Refine the Process.

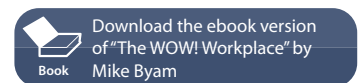
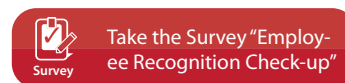
We can't outsource appreciation to a computer and we wouldn't want to. Recognition is by definition a personal human interaction. Technology's role is to replace complicated processes and improve simplicity in order to enable more and better personal interaction. As we mentioned, it becomes easy for recognition opportunities to be overlooked or pushed to the backburner on the priority list when the process is daunting and time-consuming. In order to bridge this gap, many organizations have found success reducing these inconsistencies across departments by creating a centralized framework to provide reminders for managers that removes unnecessary steps in the fulfillment process. This lets managers focus their recognition efforts on the face-to-face interaction with their people, instead of navigating paperwork. Introduce technology to make recognition easier, more flexible and more frequent. According to a recent article in [Business News Daily](#), Bersin & Associates have researched that organizations that effectively use technology in their employee recognition strategy are "three times more likely to be in the top quartile of business performance." Platforms such as Terryberry's [360 Recognition](#) utilize a centralized administration dashboard that allows organizations to manage all of their employee recognition initiatives such as service awards, peer recognition, and sales awards from one roof. When technology is used properly, it guards against overlooked opportunities and enables more achievements to be highlighted.

Although recognition can be one of the world's most simple and worldwide concepts, it's known to get put on the backburner from time to time in the everyday shuffle. Taking a step back and evaluating the impact your recognition program is having on your employees and organization, might be the best step in the right direction. Is your leadership team supporting a culture of recognition and is your program aligned with your organization's mission, vision and values?

How can you increase the communication of your recognition program's message and what steps could you take in refining the process, ensuring that no recognition opportunity is overlooked in future. After all, your employees are "craving to be appreciated." **R&E**



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“Sales Rep” Engagement



Why it's important too.

By Mike Ryan



The phrase “employee engagement” has captured the attention of business executives for some time now. Rightly so. Workers who are engaged are worth more to the companies that employ them. They drive better business results, are more productive, please customers more often and they tend to stay with their employers longer. That stability and loyalty cements company-to-customer relationships, secures organizational knowledge and provides a sustainable source for long-term leadership. Engagement’s byproducts produce growth year-over-year; and it’s what helps companies outperform rivals—existing or emerging—across every conceivable financial metric.

But as companies contemplate how and where they can be strengthening engagement levels with the people who *work* for them, do they consider the people who *sell* for them? Or to pose the question a different way: Why are sales people sometimes left out of the employee engagement conversation?

The failure to address sales rep engagement is an expensive oversight when you consider what’s at stake. Engagement is as important to revenue producing personnel as it is with the rank and file. Understanding the connection between engagement and superior business outcomes has become instinctual for most business leaders. Yet, many have been surprisingly slow to embrace the connection between sales rep engagement and the sales performance they seek.

Do engaged sales people do better because they are engaged or are they engaged because they have had better results? That’s a question that can be debated all day, but one thing is certain—Engaged sellers outperform all others and are more efficient in doing so. Consider

this: Top-performing sales people are twice as likely to be “engaged” in their work and there is a strong statistical correlation between an engaged representative’s confidence in their company and their sales results. Engaged reps produce new revenue at almost double the pace than those who are not as emotionally vested. They tend to display a deeper and more empathetic understanding of their customers’ needs and their customers respond by spending more than others. Engaged reps generate more money while relying less on supporting resources (like subject matter experts, price discounting or other promotions). The chicken or egg premise is moot. It’s really a very black and white argument. In the data-driven world of sales and marketing analysis, engaged sales people do a better job of producing customers with higher net life-time values against lower acquisition costs.

More money is *not* the engagement trigger. So why are most companies looking past their sales forces when they draw up their engagement plans? The reason may be the mistaken belief that sales people are motivated more by money than any of the working conditions that foster engagement with other employees; like understanding (and buying into) assigned objectives, feeling aligned with the organization’s mission and values, having good working relationships with managers and co-workers, and feeling appreciated not just for what they do, but how they do.

For decades sales people have been described as “coin operated” meaning that they are thought to be motivated solely by money. But in a new study entitled appropriately enough, “For Optimal Sales Performance Pay is Not Enough”, authors from Towers Watson

contend that the traditional ways of looking at sales compensation (i.e. an overreliance on cash) are indeed shortsighted. They write that, “contrary to conventional wisdom other factors besides pay are just as—or even more—important to maintaining a highly engaged sales force.” They go on to point out that the same cultural conditions and interpersonal working relationships that ignite higher levels of engagement within other employee segments have the same effect on sales people. So why aren’t companies including sales people in their employee engagement planning efforts? More interestingly, why aren’t sales operations or sales compensation executives—both of whom have a vested interest in sales success—taking the lead here?

Who should own the discussion? Every business needs to get more from its sales force. That’s a given in today’s economy. But as competition for customers intensifies, the collective contribution of sales teams in any organization has been more likely to fall short of expectations than to impress—and that’s got executives everywhere searching for answers. The smartest companies have already implemented structural changes designed to help streamline sales planning and administrative functions and to sharpen the force’s focus on desired outcomes. For some time now, sales operations departments have been charged with maintaining their sales team’s alignment. They match incentive offerings to the prevailing needs of the corporate forecast and they work to grow aggregate production by incentivizing *and rewarding* “core” performers—not just top producers. They effort to do *more* with the resources they have.

The goal of making both cash and non-cash compensation *more* relevant and *more* motivating has resulted in new positions being formed within the sales management suite. Recently, an article in World at Work’s, Workspan Magazine talked about “The Emergence of The Global Sales Compensation Manager”, and suggested that their mission would be to configure sales compensation plans that better serve the people within their business units—and in doing so—to leverage and modify existing programs so they more effectively address the unique challenges and opportunities their groups face. Both sales ops and sales compensation share a common calling—to find more ways to make the investment in sales talent more efficient and impactful. To that end, neither should look past the potential their existing non-cash sales incentive initiatives can have in elevating higher levels of engagement across all sales employees.

The potential power of non-cash awards. Simply defined, non-cash awards are any form of compensation that is *not* administered through a paycheck. They can include elaborate group trips, individual travel experiences, catalogue merchandise, gift and debit cards or a simple “thank you” from an appreciative manager or coworker.

Over the years noted thought leaders including the Harvard Business Review, McKinsey and Aberdeen have all suggested that *non-cash awards—offered in the right situations and under the right circumstances—can be a more appealing* to sales people than cash alone. Several academic studies have also reinforced non-cash’s motivational value. One from Northeastern College found that when employees had a hypothetical choice between the two, they consistently said they wanted more cash in their pockets. But when non-cash award choices were identified and presented reps were actually motivated more by the non-cash award choices put before them. That power to motivate is *the* reason why non-cash awards have had an increased role in driving everyday business results—including sales performance.

Within the various pay-for-performance frameworks that define sales compensation, non-cash awards represent a more cost-effective way to reinforce a sales person’s desired performance, while also

strengthening their emotional and intellectual commitment to the company they work for. The use of pay-for-performance dominate sales compensation plans, yet the majority of companies have felt for some time now that they are not getting the rate of return they need from variable cash payouts.

Combine that disappointment with non-cash’s proven inability to muster engagement, the disparity opens a window for sales ops and compensation managers to inject more non-cash rewards into the mix. The next edition of Performance Perspectives will explain how and when to do so while leveraging many of the core components that are already in place across most sales incentive platforms.

Workers who are engaged are worth more to their firms. They produce consistently and the companies that have more of them outperform rivals across every measure. Executives know that employee engagement is important. So why aren’t sales employees a bigger part of that conversation? A strong sense of sales rep engagement is just as important to their performance as it is to any other employee group. Engaged sellers outperform all others. They out produce peers and their customers are more profitable.

Why do most companies look past them? A big reason is the inaccurate notion that sales people are motivated more by money than anything else; that their need to feel aligned with the organization’s mission or have good working relationships with managers and coworkers is secondary. But new research suggests that the same conditions that ignite higher levels of engagement with all other employees apply to sales people as well. That’s something that sales ops or sales compensation executives should pay close attention to. After all, their goals are to make the total compensation structure *more* relevant and *more* motivating for sellers. Non-cash awards do a better job of focusing reps on behaviors and outcomes that support growth and they do more to shape the organization’s culture. Tapping into existing non-cash sales incentive initiatives can help sales ops and compensation professionals promote higher levels of engagement across all sales employees just like it does for all others. **R&E**



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Things to consider when launching one.

 By Riaz Resh

The desire to be recognized and appreciated regularly is a fundamental human need, so the size and sector of your business shouldn't be a consideration. The benefits of employee recognition are well documented in many studies. The first step is to identify your objectives. As with most other tasks in business, you need to be aware of what the long-term goals of your incentive scheme are.

Talk to your staff about the program mechanics – this will enable you to set up an incentive scheme that will encourage them to be enthusiastic about its inception and results. This is especially important now that the millennial generation is entering adulthood, the influence of this demographic of 16 to 29 year olds has to be considered and addressed. At 80 million strong in the U.S. alone, millennial employees have plenty of leverage to shift the course of future events and have a very different mindset from earlier generations. This process will also help you to find out what incentives your employees value most.



Make sure the incentive consists of a **combination of monetary and non monetary awards**. An emerging trend is the increased use of corporate social media platforms where achievements are recognized and shared via live feeds to the entire organization. In this way, corporate values come to life as recognitions can be clearly linked to behaviors and celebrated in real-time regardless of the country or location of the employee.

Reward budgets should be calculated on the assumption that as a

minimum, 50% of the work force is recognized or rewarded at least once every year. Remember recognition doesn't always have to involve monetary-based rewards. As employee and performance levels improve, this figure should rise to between 70 and 80%.

All incentive schemes need a **clear start and end date** so that participants know how long they have to achieve their goals – these timelines need to be communicated prior to the scheme's beginning. The length of the scheme is dependent on the objectives that were initially defined, but to get the best results incentive schemes that relate to changes in behavior require a sustained campaign.

In a global context, providing a good selection of **local and culturally meaningful** rewards for the recipient to choose from is essential, and gift cards can be a perfect solution. They bridge the gap between knowing what your employee wants and does not want. Essentially, you would be empowering your employees to choose their own rewards, which is very powerful and ultimately, your employees are much more likely to remember what they received as a result of their good performance.

Managing a global reward or incentive program can be a real challenge, specifically with regard to the cost and logistics of fulfilling rewards around the world. Often the biggest difficulty when planning international incentive campaign is choosing rewards that are not only desirable but able to transcend any cultural and demographic differences. Luckily there are plenty of organizations such as Ovation Incentives that have a fantastic range of gift cards with global reach.

Digital gift cards are particularly well suited for international program as costly postage fees and the possibility of lost post is eliminated altogether. The trend here indicates that digital gift cards will continue grow and be more widely available globally.

Ensure that any gift cards offered are denominated in the local currency to maximize the impact of the rewards e.g. recipients in France should receive rewards denominated in Euros and recipients and Denmark should receive rewards in Danish Kroner. The same reward value in one country may also have a completely different value in another, so take this into account. Equity between the different countries involved in the scheme is essential. Finally, ensure that full customer support and aftercare services are available internationally, as considerations here relate to differences in time zones and languages. **R&E**



Riaz Resh is the Sales and Marketing manager at Ovation Incentives. Ovation provides global SaaS and mobile solutions that influence, recognize and reward the desired behaviors of employees, channels or customers to drive engagement and deliver returns.



Before introducing or improving recognition programs.

 By Roy Saunderson

When I phone overseas to my Dad who lives in the South of England, I will often ask him how he is doing. His standard reply for many years has been, “I’m fine...it’s the others.”

Recognition giving can follow a similar pattern to my father’s response to life. You can actually give genuine recognition to someone for their demonstrated actions or results. But, does the recognition you give to one person have any impact, positively or negatively, on other employees who work with the recipient of recognition?

Many managers have commented to me that one of the reasons they don’t give recognition to people is because if they give recognition to one person what will others around them think who have not been acknowledged?

Fair question. My general response has been if everyone is being acknowledged on a regular basis, then singling out an individual for recognition should not be negatively perceived by others.

Well, some interesting research emerging from Belgium looks at the responses of coworkers when someone at work receives recognition. Drs. Marjolein Feys, Frederik Anseel and Bart Wille, from Ghent University suggest there is an essential factor that affects the perception of coworker recognition by their peers.

This has significant implications when looking at introducing or improving recognition programs as it requires some essential groundwork in establishing the right culture and work environment first to make recognition programs more effective.

The researchers’ focus was to determine when coworkers received recognition if it impacted two types of responses in their colleagues, namely, people’s feelings, whether positive or negative emotions, and one’s intentions to display interpersonal counter-productive behavior towards the recipient.

What was interesting from this study was the discovery of how the quality of the relationship between peers impacted feelings and behaviors when someone was recognized.

Let’s take a closer look at the study’s outcomes.

Take the scenario where you have a positive relationship with a colleague and they are praised or recognized by your supervisor or manager. In this case, the research found you would most likely hold positive feelings towards the recognition given to your coworker and less likelihood of displaying interpersonal counter-productive behaviors.

Conversely, if you do not regard the colleague highly or in a positive manner you would negate the value of the praise and regard the recognition negatively. You would also have a higher chance of intending to demonstrate interpersonal counter-productive behaviors towards the recognition recipient.

So much for trying to do the right things. It seems one’s emotional perceptions of the peers around us can affect how we also regard the quality of recognition programs used by our supervisors and managers.

Recognition Significance

Let’s examine the significance of these research findings and how we can apply them.

It is always important to tease out recognition practices from recognition programs. Managers, supervisors, as well as peers, need to be expressing and acknowledging of praise and recognition face-to-face before any program can have any real impact. Programs are simply a

tool and another vehicle for acknowledging people.

Used wisely and effectively recognition programs play a vital role in sustaining recognition initiatives in any organization and make alignment with achieving business objectives easier to measure.

However, what Feys, Anseel and Wille highlight for us in their research is the need for positive relationships between peers to be present first in order for recognition programs to have a positive emotional and behavioral impact on coworkers.

The authors of this study suggest their own implications for us to be mindful of. Here are three things they recommend that managers should remember:

Recognition programs do not guarantee positive responses from employees. Managers must be mindful of the morale, workplace environment and attitudes of employees towards one another. If these emotional factors are not in a positive state then no recognition program is going to be fully successful. This appears to mirror Herzberg’s Hygiene Factors of having to make sure any dissatisfiers are addressed first before any motivators can possibly have a positive impact.

Mindfulness of managers for how and where recognition is given. Managers should consider how and where recognition programs are used and whether the recognition given should be a private versus a public presentation. This goes for social media feeds of recognition being private or publicly displayed. If employees are not receiving positive feedback and praise on a regular and appropriate basis, then coworkers will likely react negatively to a colleague being recognized. This applies to receiving critical feedback too. Some actions are best given behind closed doors or one-on-one.

Relationship building between employees is an important strategy. Managers should strive to know the feelings of employees towards one another. It is not often we intervene quickly enough on uncertain feelings between employees. Managers should look for opportunities to help build positive relationships between employees through work projects, trust building exercises, serving together in community service projects, and even social events that provide chances to interact in a meaningful way. Positive connections happen through working together and chances to communicate and learn more about each other.

These insights on the social-behavioral impact of employee recognition programs on employees should help us in doing a better job of preparation. Before expecting success from simply the plug-and-play operation of installing a recognition program, the key should always be to focus on your people first. **R&E**



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Through the effective use of recognition.

By George Chewning and Eileen Flynn

HR professionals, are you tired of seeing employee morale survey results that say your employees don't feel recognized? Are you looking for ideas on specific actions you can share with your leaders to turn those low scores around? Do you need to increase overall employee engagement within your company? If the answer to these questions is yes, then this is the article for you.

Research shows that an alarming 71% of employees are not engaged in their jobs and this is leading to a significant impact on productivity and operating income within most organizations. HR professionals are faced with a dilemma of understanding why this is happening so they can appropriately coach their leaders on what can be done about it.

People come to work with a pocketful of discretionary effort, just like loose change. It's up to them if they want to spend it or not. They decide if they are going to go the extra mile or do the minimum daily requirements, collect a paycheck, and go home. The issue is that of motivation and it is directly related to accomplishing business results. To beat the competition, you need to engage your employees for them to give you this discretionary effort.

You may have heard this statement before: *those things that get rewarded get done!* That is the law of behavior at work. It is just as real as the law of gravity. It governs the universe and happens millions of times a day. It is important to understand this law is always at work.

Connect it to employee performance for the success of your company. The law of behavior has proven that properly used recognition can have a dramatic influence on employee performance.

There are two important principles of behavior:

1. Every behavior is followed by a consequence.
2. Future behaviors are a function of those consequences.

A simple example: if a baby touches a hot stove and he/she gets burned, it does not take long for the baby to learn not to touch it again! Or said differently, people do what they do because of what happens to them when they do it. It's as simple as ABC:

(A) It all starts with an antecedent, the situation like the hot stove;

(B) the behavior follows; and

(C) then the consequence, what happens as a result of the behavior. Based on the consequence, positive or negative, it will trigger a response. So what happens if there is no consequence? For example, an employee works very hard on something and the manager does not respond? The employee may wonder if it is worth it to put in all that effort so may only do minimum daily requirements. Eventually he/she may stop all together. Have you ever stopped exercising and you find that your muscles get weak? That is atrophy. Something stops working.

Since discretionary effort is given when employees are engaged, leaders need to understand that their role in driving engagement is critical.

Two key behaviors for leaders are:

- 1) Manage the employee's connection to the business and
- 2) Manage the employee's work and performance.

Leaders help employees gain clarity regarding how their work effort fits, so employees can in turn articulate what they are going to do and why they are doing it. Leaders should be aware that it's not enough to communicate goals and objectives and provide all the right

resources. How they *respond* when they see positive movement in the right direction is equally important.

Effective recognition is a series of activities that acknowledge results and critical behaviors along the way. Goals set with interim milestones allow quick wins to be celebrated, and how the work gets done can also be recognized. Have you ever noticed that managers focus on mistakes? It always seems to be about "areas for improvement" that get the attention. Aubrey Daniels in his book "Bringing Out the Best in People" says to write faults in the sand and write accomplishments in stone.



Delivering recognition is most effective when it is: Sincere, Specific, Immediate and Personal (SSIP); a new acronym for you to remember. Sincere recognition is specific in nature and means that employees are told precisely what was appreciated about their behavior or results. Recognizing someone immediately following their performance is more effective than saying thank you later, when an employee is already demotivated for being overlooked. Finally, the best recognition is personal. Deliver recognition face-to-face where possible, or, if working remotely, use the phone and then follow-up in writing.

Recognition means different things to different people. There is no one-size-fits-all; be sensitive to employees who like public acknowledgement of their work versus those who prefer to be thanked privately. The responsibility for delivering recognition at all levels (up, down and sideways) is everyone's job. Thank your boss today and you may just ignite a spark that keeps recognition going throughout your organization!

There are three basic forms of recognition: natural, social and tangible. Let's look at each one separately:

1. Natural: Comes from the behaviors and accomplishments themselves. The best recognition comes in the form of meaningful work. Remember the two roles of leaders (help connect the employee's work to what is happening in the company and explain how they can make a difference). Think back to a project or some work you delivered that you loved doing and took pride in; the work was its own reward, right?

2. Social: Consists of what you “say” to people (interactions). This form is essential to pay attention to and is the most important one, comprising 80 - 90% of recognition opportunities. Social recognition helps avoid atrophy and keeps the performance going! But remember to deliver it using SSIP.

3. Tangible: Requires out-of-pocket money. While only 10-20 % of the recognition actions are tangible actions, they can facilitate the social actions and serve as a symbol of the accomplishment. Certainly tangible recognition is optional, but it can have significant impact and can help incentivize employees, especially if you want to engage your entire organization. People do love prizes!

The best way to keep recognition going is to really get specific on what happened. Give employees bragging rights to tell the story and celebrate the success. That alone is recognition! Allow others to learn and keep it going.

As an HR professional, enhance your own skills by delivering recognition to your co-workers, manager, and clients. The value of an immediate, on-the-spot “thank you” cannot be underestimated in the work world -- or anywhere, for that matter. To BRING OUT

THE BEST IN PEOPLE, anyone, manager or colleague need only look for someone doing something right.

Here’s an action plan to help you get started: 1) go back to basics and internalize the ABC’s and the law of behavior; 2) ensure employee recognition is part of your company culture, values, and engagement practices; 3) coach your leaders; and 4) continue to learn more so you can DO more. **R&E**



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A Culture of Volunteerism

Why it makes everyone feel good.

By Jennifer Vecchi



Company culture is a driving force behind every organization. When it is intentionally planted, this concept is often articulated by formal value or mission statements, preaching the core focus of a company and offering specific vocabulary to support that approach. Despite these efforts, many organizations encounter a creeping up of organic culture – even counterculture – based on leadership, protocols and everyday communication.

Any way you cut it, an underlying attitude of *something* ends up dominating interactions in the workplace, in both physical offices and through virtual touchpoints like email. That concept or attitude can make or break your company, and cultivating a relevant and positive culture within an organization can be a challenge, no matter the size of your business or industry.

Are you looking to rally the troops? One way to promote a team-building and cooperative work environment is to depart from the regular demands of your company and put the focus on an external need. It can be as simple as picking a local charity that falls in line with your business goals or participating in a 5k benefit race connected personally to one of your employees; or you can choose a more complex commitment, such as a national cause that relates to your industry or supporting the relief efforts for those affected by a catastrophic event (i.e. typhoon, hurricane, earthquake, etc.).

Whether you choose to support a goal on a micro or macrocosmic scale, a culture of volunteerism brings with it the inherently positive attitude of helping others; an attitude that has the potential to reverberate throughout your office halls. In addition, a selfless task that requires physical participation – running a race, building a house, manning a soup kitchen – levels the playing field of organizational hierarchy and offers your staff a social opportunity to connect as human beings separate from titles. Seeing the CEO or VP of Sales building a fence alongside an entry-level employee offers a unique

chance to relate and encourage thoughtful communication.

Although the personal interaction is slightly less immediate, donation-based causes, such as food drives and financial matches, are also a helpful way to bring your staff together around a single goal under company leadership.

No matter the specifics, supporting a charitable initiative has the potential to refocus your team and bring those good vibes back into the workplace, resulting in a stronger organization and a culture of cooperation. Plus, the goodwill you promote in your greater community or industry will have a positive effect on your brand and the impression you give to your clients and customers. A win-win!


Here are some key tips to make your charitable involvement a success:

- **Choose Wisely** – Select a cause that is relevant to your employees and/or your industry to encourage maximum involvement and enhance the value of your branded participation.
- **Plan Ahead** – While some events, like reactionary donation campaigns, can operate slightly more off-the-cuff, be sure to take your financial commitment seriously and participate at a level that makes sense for your company. Sponsorships can add up and employee time has value.
- **Picked Your Cause? Own It!** – Once you’ve identified a cause or event that fits your organization, spread the word! Make sure your employees understand how to get involved. Plus, it’s extremely helpful when senior leadership is onboard in a big way.
- **Consistency is Key** – Beware the “one and dones.” If volunteerism is going to be an important part of your culture, it has to reappear often to be a success. Think about balancing ongoing campaigns with individual events and consider developing a CSR program to manage your commitments. **R&E**



Jennifer Vecchi is Director of Meetings, Incentives, Conventions & Events at Atlas Travel. A Certified Recognition Professional, she is also responsible for supporting her clients’ recognition programs and sales incentives, and structuring successful promotion communication campaigns. Call 508-488-1119

Five useful tips to keep them productive and profitable.

 By Dianne Durkin

Keeping employees motivated has never been more important than today. With reduced workforces, employees need to work at optimal levels to ensure increased productivity and profitability. Now more than ever, organizations must be proactive and have the right strategies in place to ensure employees feel valued and motivated. Below are five strategies that have proven to be effective:

Communicate, communicate, communicate. During fast moving, changing times, leaders must communicate more frequently with clear, concise and consistent messages about:

- The present and future vision of the organization
- How the company plans to reach this new strategic direction
- How the organization will redefine itself to sustain revenues and outperform competitors
- How each employee's roles and responsibilities add to the organization's success

Employees appreciate being “in the know” and will contribute to improvements and future success. Once they understand the reasoning behind decisions, and have faith in management's strategies, fears are alleviated and employee energy is channeled into helping the organization reach its goals.

Value individual contributions. Leaders must ensure that employees understand how their individual efforts contribute to the organizations overall strategy and direction. People want to be part of a winning team and they want to know their efforts are appreciated. Employees will take pride and be engaged in their work if they understand how their efforts impact the organization.

Provide employee training. Training is the new 401(k)! It will ensure employees productivity particularly, if they have assumed new responsibilities due to restructuring and/or changing strategies. Continuous learning is one of the best employee motivators.

Investing in employees helps, continuously increase employee engagement and commitment to the organization. Investing in Leadership Training builds great people – Many managers have never had to lead under continually changing and challenging circumstances. They need guidance and direction on how to coach, motivate and reward their employees, particularly during a period of change. Leaders must engage and empower employees to stay focused and use their creative minds to develop.

Mentor. Mentoring can be valuable for employees seeking a “sounding board” for challenges they may be facing. You can support mentoring internally or encourage employees to join outside groups. These types of groups can help individuals feel supported and more capable of dealing with tough issues.

Ask questions and listen to answers. Employees want to see their organization succeed. Working on the front lines, they have first-hand knowledge of what works and what doesn't. Many have excellent ideas, ranging from money saving to operational improvements and streamlining processes. Leaders must take time to ask and listen to suggestions not only to make employees feel valued but also for the sake of their businesses. Asking questions can help develop critical innovative thinking and a call to action across the organization. Some great questions to ask:

- What are the present strengths of the organization that need

to be preserved?

- What areas does the organization need to improve upon?
- What is one thing this organization needs to stop doing?
- What do you personally need to improve your efficiency and effectiveness?



Engage employees in solving business issues. Once new ideas are identified, engage a cross-functional team to develop solutions. Individuals focused on business success use their energies to focus on improvements vs. worrying. The following questions will develop some real solutions:

- What is the present state of affairs for the business issue that needs to be resolved?
- What is the ideal state of our company?
- What processes should the organization engage in to achieve the desired results?
- What is the estimated time frame?
- What are the costs with making these improvements?

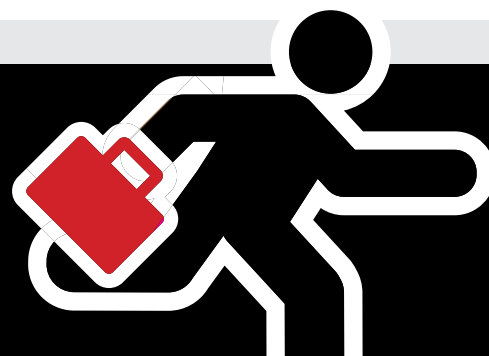
Recognize effort and praise employees. Over the last few years employees have taken on additional responsibilities. It's important for managers to recognize these increased efforts. Simple words like, “Thank You” or “Great Job” or “Really Appreciate Your Effort” go a long way. These meaningful words acknowledge effort, build loyalty and encourage people to work even harder.

In summary, employees want to be assured that management is in control, that they've analyzed key information prior to taking action and that they are taking action. These are the things that motivate employees. Motivated employees are efficient, creative and can help increase overall profitability and bottom-line results. **R&E**



Dianne Durkin is founder and president of Loyalty Factor, LLC an internationally recognized specialized training and consulting firm with focus on Building Employee Loyalty, Customer Loyalty and Brand Loyalty. Call 603-334-3401 Visit www.loyaltyfactor.com.

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With effective recognition programs for Generationals.

 By Paul Gordon

By 2025, Generation Y will make up 75% of the workforce. This has forced employers to look for new and unique ways to retain their top young talent so they can grow and develop within the company, making them fully immersed and proficient by the time they reach senior level positions. The main concern with this issue is how do you attract and retain this talent in an ever changing environment?

Employee incentive and recognition programs show a promising future for all employees, but especially among the generationals. Generationals possess an entirely new way of communicating with each other than past generations. Technology has given them a special gift. Living in the now. On average 18-25 year olds send out 3,853 texts a month, upload 72 hours worth of videos to YouTube every minute, share 3,600 photos on Instagram and attain 2 million hits on Google. The culture they experience through technology is organically influencing them in the workplace.

75% of HR professionals feel their company is behind the curve when embracing and implementing internal and external **networking technology**. With the continuing enthusiasm by virtually everyone to engage in social media and networking sites such as LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook, one of the latest trends in making employee recognition meaningful is to leverage those very same social media platforms to enhance the power of employee recognition. A well-implemented and strategic communication plan can broadcast recognition within, an organization, and also encourage employees to post announcements of their recognition to their personal and professional networks. **Peer to Peer recognition** is extremely important to this generation and human resource professionals are seeing the importance of adding this element into their incentive and recognition programs. This new generation publicizes everything online, giving them the choice of sharing recognition if it's meaningful to them. This new medium, when used effectively, can dramatically increase the usage of recognition programs by generationals. This gives the generationals a sense of accomplishment and being able to share this with colleagues, family and friends gives them an incentive to remain focused and efficient in the workplace.

Time sensitive recognition is something companies will need to reconsider. Previous recognition programs only celebrate "Milestone" anniversaries such as 5,10,20,30 etc. years of service. This is extremely discouraging to the generationals due to their **constant need of feedback and appreciation**. Make sure service awards start early and include informal recognition at each anniversary. Whether it is 2 years or 12 years. Additionally on-the-spot recognition programs are gaining in popularity to feed into the instant feedback need of this generation. This ensures that employees at all levels have a chance to be recognized on a consistent basis, boosting morale and filling the need for praise.

Generational recognition programs **should be employee driven**, not management driven. Managers of the baby boom generations express being over-whelmed or over burdened by time consumption spent on recognizing employees. This stress can be eased by implementing peer to peer recognition to engage employees in the recognition process. The theory behind peer to peer recognition is that it satisfies two major qualms the generationals have, one being

able to have their voice heard and two the need for constant praise. Implementing a peer to peer program can satisfy both by giving the generationals an opportunity to speak up and reward each other, while also accepting the praise from colleagues. The recognition program also provides a form of feedback to guarantee that people are getting things done right while providing an apparatus to ensure that what gets recognized gets repeated.

Point system recognition programs show the highest level of success with Gen X and Y. Organizations that want to recognize their generational employees must remember that these employees want not only the recognition but also the **ability to choose their reward**. Recognition programs need to include several forms of awards due to the simple fact that what is recognition for one worker will not necessarily be the same for every worker across the board.

Within point based programs, employees are rewarded with points based on a variety of different factors determined by the specifics of a company's program. This can be peer to peer recognition and/or C level execs and management rewarding lower level employees. These points are then redeemed for goods. The success factor of the program is based on the ability to **strategically place popular brands and goods** that are enticing for the generationals in your rewards program. Do Gen X and Y want cookware? Figurines? No, they want the hottest new electronics devices and luxury products from brands such as Mophie, Skullcandy, Roku, Versace, Furla and Michael Kors. Think tablets, flat screen TVs, designer jewelry and handbags. When shopping around for a loyalty marketing organization to partner with, be sure to request a list of brands they offer so you can better entice your Gen X and Y employees.

Generationals possess a **whole new outlook** on the culture of the workplace. Rewards and social recognition programs are proven methods that can drive employee engagement. These programs must change to keep up with new times and new attitudes. Treat employees as the customers that they are or at least approach them with the same strategic plan as you would customers whose loyalty you want to gain and retain. **R&E**



Paul Gordon is Vice President of Sales at Rymax Marketing Services, a full-service loyalty marketing provider and leader in rewards and incentives. Visit www.rymaxinc.com.

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How to develop an effective retention strategy.

 By Kim Benedict

A recent North American engagement survey conducted by Gallup found that 70 percent of the work force is actively or passively disengaged. Only 41 percent of employees clearly understand what makes their employers' brands more unique than the competition. Combine the high costs of training and hiring, then factor in lost revenue and productivity, and it's no wonder retention keeps business owners awake at night.



There is a high correlation between how your employees feel and what your customers think about you. What if your organization discovered that seven out of 10 customers were a potential flight risk? A lot of companies make the mistake of focusing too much on employees walking out the door and not enough on what keeps them engaged. Understanding how to motivate people to perform at their best is the key to developing retention strategies that drive results. The most effective organizations – and ultimately the most profitable – are those that closely align the aspirations of their employees with the goals of the business.

Employment Value Proposition (EVP)

Retention is not just about points, pizza lunches and holiday parties. High-impact programs are tied directly to a company's overall employment value proposition, or EVP, which is the sum of all the reasons employees join, perform and stay.

An effective EVP clearly articulates the unique characteristics that make your employment offering attractive beyond the pay cheque. Elements such as culture, values, work environment, leadership and organizational behaviour are critical "selling" features that are prized by your target audience: employees and people who should be but don't know it yet.

The best companies to work for, [according to Great Place to Work](#), typically outperform the general market by two times and experience half the voluntary turnover of competitors. These organizations are offering employees perks such as unlimited vacation pay, concierge services, catered lunches and environmental subsidies to purchase hybrid vehicles. Sabbaticals, project work and travel opportunities are also part of the total rewards offered by some of the most admired companies.

An EVP can be an especially powerful tool for small to medium-sized organizations. Leveraged effectively, your EVP is your best strategy for competing against higher-paying competitors or "sexier" brands that may provide more financial stability. It can be even more important – and therefore attractive – to new generations, who often refuse to leave their values at the door.

Developing Retention Strategies That Stick

So how can organizations get started on developing retention strategies that stick?

Go direct to the source: your employees. The process of *eliciting your EVP* is different from traditional engagement programs because it draws on employee experience, it's not just a "pulse" against global standards. Your EVP already exists within your organization – it cannot be created, it must be discovered. Ask your employees what's really important in their daily work experience, what keeps them happy, and what needs to be improved to make sure they stay. The information gathered will help you prioritize and plan your HR agenda in the short and long term.

Recognition plays a valuable part in retention. Once you have discovered your company's EVP, map the core themes to your vision and values. Start by asking "how do we identify with these values?" "What are the action statements that can be witnessed and therefore recognized and rewarded to reinforce the employee experience?"

Your ability as an organization to *tell stories* that provide proof of your promise is more powerful than words on walls or handbooks. Don't claim to be something you're not. Failing to live up to your employment promise is a sure-fire way to damage trust and ultimately results in high turnover. And in today's market, sites such as Glassdoor.ca – a website that gives access to employee reviews of companies – make it easier than ever for employees to report their version of the truth. What works for your organization must be exclusive to *what makes you special*. If keeping top talent is leading to sleepless nights, ask yourself: "Why should they stay? What are we offering that is unique that they can't readily get somewhere else?"

To build sustainable programs that can be measured and tied to better business results, companies must think beyond traditional and often transactional retention schemes. The best organizations take time to uncover their unique EVP to develop programs that are intuitively aligned to what matters most to their employees. **R&E**



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Results



Innovation. Quality. Industry-leading results.

By Heather McArthur

The O.C. Tanner Institute presents 6 Recognition Insights from 2013.



In a continual quest for excellence, the standards Norton Healthcare sets are high. Standards met daily by 12,000 employees ready to provide the highest levels of care.

A nationally recognized health care system, this Louisville, Kentucky-based organization has a reputation as a market leader. In the midst of a changing, competitive landscape, it continues to win quality awards and is known for the personal investment and engagement its staff demonstrates.

“We know that 50 percent of folks in the Louisville metropolitan area choose Norton Healthcare,” explains Russell F. Cox, President and Chief Operating Officer. “A very key component for them is to trust not just a name, but the people who provide that health care on a regular basis. They can tell when employees are engaged and have bought in. They can tell when employees care about what they’re doing on a daily basis and view it as more than just a job.”

With a 91 percent nursing retention rate, this is an organization that takes engaging the best of the best very seriously. Each month it receives 16,000 applications and invests in integrated onboarding, training, and recognition programs.

“Our philosophy,” adds Tony Bohn, System Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer, “is to grow owners who are committed to our organization. That means bringing the right talent in, building ownership, creating an engaged environment, and continuing to invest in our people for the future.”

That also means creating ways for peers and leaders to recognize those who go above and beyond. It means putting in place programs that celebrate career achievement—from day one right through retirement. It means investing in someone’s career development growth opportunities. And, it means providing support through continual training, communication, and leader tools.

The result: A culture of appreciation where people feel valued for making a difference. Appreciation, the organization sees, that makes a direct impact on quality care, patient satisfaction, and employee engagement.

“We analyzed leaders who frequently recognize their

employees and the impact that recognition has on their departments,” explains Jason Coffey, Director of Employee Experience. “We actually found that not only did leadership indexes go up, but these areas also have lower turnover, better HCAHPS (Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems) scores, Press Ganey scores, and patient comments.”

“If you have employees who are actively engaged, who feel appreciated for the work that they do and the value that they bring,” points out Jacinta Nelson, Associate Vice President of Human Resources, “then they are much more engaged in helping us drive quality improvement or what’s best for the patient.”

“One of the physicians I work with had a patient on the table that was critically ill. The turnaround time had to be almost instantaneous,” explains Derrek Duncan, Special Procedures Technician. “We got it done. When I received the recognition, it really made me want to continue doing a good job, or an even better job. It’s just so motivating.”

FOCUS ON ENGAGEMENT

Norton Healthcare’s journey started several years ago when Cox challenged the leadership teams to implement retention strategies focused on moving employees from being satisfied to fully engaged. Following a series of surveys and focus groups, an Employee Experience team was created.

Partnering with O.C. Tanner, this new team worked with employee feedback to identify areas for improvement and set top priorities. The goal: Bring everything together into an integrated system that directly aligned with Norton Healthcare’s values and standards. Engage leaders in the cause and make appreciation pervasive at all levels.

First up, an enhancement to career awards to include recognition of that critical first year. An initiative to appreciate great work was then launched system-wide, enabling peer-to-peer and leader-to-staff recognition. This powerful tool was further extended offline with custom buttons and appreciation stations. At launch, leaders received training on why appreciation is important, how to do it effectively, and the impact it can have on their departments. Training was further

sustained through regular leadership communications, coaching around recognizing behaviors leaders would want to see repeated.

In 2011, onboarding received a full makeover to better connect employees to their role in living the organization’s mission, while fully engaging them in their roles. Now people get initiated into the culture before day one and receive touch points at the critical 30-, 60-, and 90-day periods.

“We’ve created more opportunities to check in and resolve issues along the way. It all comes together to give our employees a great experience during the first year and beyond,” explains John Hess, Onboarding Coordinator.

Then last year, leader checkbooks were introduced for on-the-spot recognition of great work. Vouchers employees can redeem for lunch or Norton Healthcare logo items.

“Everything we do is based on reinforcing our values. They are not just on the wall—they are values that our employees live by daily, values we recognize and celebrate,” Nelson says.

The key learning for Nelson was integration at all levels: “With our onboarding program we talk about recognition. With our recognition programs, we embed some of the onboarding concepts. It just comes full circle. Without integration, anything can become just a program of the day.”



LISTENING TO LEARN

Throughout this journey, employee feedback continues to generate innovative ideas and provide guidance. Each new initiative is reviewed, launched, measured, and continually improved.

“Who better knows what needs to be changed, what needs to be updated, than those who are right there on the front line?” asks Angela Jette, Program Coordinator of Employee Experience. “We started an employee resource committee made up of people from across our organization. We implement their ideas into our initiatives to make the workplace even better.”

Beyond formal programs and awards, recognition is extended with an employee appreciation week and branded gifts, special meals served by the leadership team, service award banquets, talent contests, holiday celebrations, and a host of community outreach events.

“We want our employees to know we’re invested in creating great experiences for them,” Coffey adds. “Whatever we initiate, we make sure that it resonates with the staff and has meaning and purpose.”

SPOTLIGHT SUCCESS

Having a centralized system that rewards—and then reports on—great work gives the leadership team visibility into the daily victories and heroic acts happening throughout the organization. How do these stories of great work get communicated to inspire

further cycles of excellence? The last few years have seen a close alignment between the Marketing and Communications teams and the Employee Experience team.

Video testimonials of staff making a difference with “remarkable moments” are featured on the recognition site. Daily e-blasts are sent throughout the system and a newsletter is mailed to employees’ homes every other month. And, each year a report to employees features the great stories captured through the recognition site.

“Employees appreciate seeing their coworkers in those publications,” Jette explains. “They’ll point to a picture and say, ‘I work with this person. This is important to me because this shows me I could be in this publication; I too can be recognized for creating remarkable moments.’”

LIVING THE BRAND

Ask any Norton Healthcare employee what the culture is like, and “remarkable” comes into the conversation—a credit due to the time and energy spent reinforcing Norton Healthcare’s brand promise. Employees believe it, live it, and are appreciated for it.

Last year Norton Healthcare’s 12,000 employees experienced 14,197 recognition moments and 3,358 Career Achievement celebrations, as well as countless personalized notes and thank you cards.

It’s this celebration of remarkable care that is winning awards and creating an engaging environment. In 2011, Norton Healthcare was awarded both the National Quality Healthcare Award and the Kentucky Hospital Association Quality Award. This year, they received the innovation award for best practices in employee onboarding from Avatar Solutions. First year turnover has decreased by 51 percent and engagement dimensions are high above the national norm.

What’s the impact on employees?

“When we first started going down the recognition journey, one of our lowest scoring items that we had was, ‘I look forward to coming to work each day,’” Coffey explains. “It’s now one of the best scores we have. And from a national standpoint, it’s considered close to best-in-class.”

“We did a survey that asked, ‘Is this resonating with you, are you feeling rewarded, do the values match who we say we are?’” Nelson adds. “We had a great response and positive comments on how recognition is really driving them to do great work.”

“They want you to succeed, so they offer all these different things,” says Lydia Mendez, RN “You feel valued in so many different ways. It’s a great place to start your career, to end your career, to just be here.”

“What sets us apart,” Bohn explains, “is creating that environment where people feel they’re an owner, that they are committed, that they have the opportunity to really make a difference each and every day when they come to work.”

For Cox, engagement is equipping the organization for what lies ahead.

“The one thing we all have to understand in health care is that change is happening. We have a choice. We can either resist that change, or we can be part of defining that change. Having an engaged workforce is certainly part of what is going to help us be a leader in the change in health care over the next few years.” **R&E**



Heather McArthur is passionate about reporting on recognition’s ability to transform corporate cultures and lives. As O.C Tanner’s (link to octanner.com) Director of Content and Managing Editor, she publishes Kudos magazine, celebrating people and organization that make a difference. Growing up and living abroad, Heather now resides in the U.S., after working and writing in publishing, organizational development and advertising.