

Ideas and tips for effective recognition

If you are a leader or manager who wants more engaged, motivated team members, focusing on recognition could pay dividends.

Start with you - are you creating a climate where your team members feel valued and appreciated (or do they feel that it doesn't matter how hard they try it will never be good enough?). Dr Robert Holden said, "Leaders create the weather". Your mood (even if you try to hide it) will be felt by others. It's infectious. If you are positive and praise others, it will affect morale.

Here are 3 resources by David Rock, which give a neuroscientific approach to managing others:

- Article – Managing with the Brain in Mind,
<http://www.davidrock.net/files/ManagingWBrainInMind.pdf>
- Learning about the brain Changes everything video < 15 mins
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uDlyxxayNig> –
- SCARF Model - Influencing Others – video 8 mins
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=isiSOeMVJQk>

And if you are curious to know a bit more about how you can personally create the conditions for your team members to thrive and be motivated, here's a link to an article which sets out 10 common examples of assumptions/ thought patterns managers voice and offers some practical ideas.

<http://www.businessballs.com/employeemotivation.htm>

Types of recognition

Recognition can be formal, informal and top down (from managers) or peer-to-peer. Organisations often use a combination of these approaches.

There's a good article, which gives tips for setting up formal recognition programmes here:

<https://www.cleverism.com/how-to-recognize-reward-your-employees/> (scroll down to tips to start a formal employee recognition scheme)

Be aware of tax implications of any rewards/ gifts you offer. It's worth checking with your HR team!

Recognition is most powerful when it is: **genuine, visible** (so that it encourages others) **and personalised to individual preferences and their circumstances** (what suits a person with a young family will be different to others), timely, linked to what matters to you (for you this could be partnering and thought leadership or your organisation values).

How can you get it right? – ask them in their first week or in 1:1 meetings about a time when they felt recognised/ appreciated and what works for them.

Top tips for praise/ appreciation

Catch it in the moment and be specific, descriptive, and measured. People will keep doing things that are praised or rewarded (also those that are not punished!)

- **Be specific about the behaviour** – what the person did
- **Share the impact** – on you/ the team/ on business goals & results (if you link it to sparks/ thought leadership/ partnership with the business and relationships with stakeholders, that will encourage the culture you want to create)
- **Say how it makes you or others feel**

Recognition should match effort and results, or it loses meaning. This is where the complexity lies. It's tempting to have a consistent scheme to be 'fair'. And ironically that may reduce impact and take the spontaneity and tailored nature out of it. You can't get away from the fact that recognition is inherently subjective – so it's important to watch out for your own potential unconscious biases.

Be Authentic, not automatic – you have to mean it and the human touch matters. People smell inauthenticity a mile off and morale will take a dive. One leader I know chose to give spot appreciation by thanking employees and telling them to take their partner/ person of choice out to dinner (with a spend to suit a reasonable restaurant).

Make it personal! Connect with their perception of value – people know when they're valued, and they should have a good idea of their value to the organization. Ask them. Money is appropriate much of the time, but it's not the only – or even the most effective – motivator.

Celebrate more! Focus less on rewarding performance (which has been shown to reduce intrinsic motivation) and start celebrating performance. The aim is to highlight and appreciate spectacular performance. It's fun, energizing and shows people that bosses and peers are seeing their efforts.

Recognition ideas & examples: Keep it fresh & be creative

Here are some interesting ideas I've come across:

Host a Friday "Crush-It" Call - The "Crush-It" Call is Snack Nation's time-honoured tradition. Each Friday afternoon, the entire Snack Nation team huddles together and they go around the room stating 2 things:

1. "Crush" someone on the team whose work they want to recognize and why
2. Something you are grateful for

I really like this one because it combines recognition, appreciation and gives visibility to what everyone is doing (and you could set it up to acknowledge cross functional collaboration).

Frequent Recognition You can't recognize employees only once a year. One organisation selects employees who have exemplified their values. At all team meetings every 2 weeks their names are put in a hat and the winner gets to go out to lunch with a person of their choice on the company.

Make it Personal – one CEO recognizes team members on work anniversaries and birthdays. He writes a hand-written note thanking team members for the hard work they put in each day and highlighting some of their recent achievements.

Keep a Good Book – this is a book of "good stuff" – everyone is encouraged to write in it recognising team members for accomplishments (work and personal) and these are read out at their weekly meetings

Create a "Go The Extra Mile" Programme - At the end of the year, they have four awards that they give out — rookie of the year, going the extra mile, spirit award and living the values. These are all peer-nominated awards, and we even do video recordings of some of the nominations that they show at annual holiday party, where they announce the winners.

Shout out on social media - Employees nominated for awards of honor were profiled on Facebook and they even made the effort to Skype employees into the gala for special



recognition if they couldn't make it. Dedicated employees working late shifts were still justly recognized. Supplement any employee recognition idea with social media.

Gamify with YouEarnedIt – (an app), to create a culture of recognition. Employees give their co-workers gaming “gold” for jobs well done. Down the road, they can cash in their game gold for real-life prizes like Amazon gift cards. Aside from the prizes, recognition from peers makes employees feel just as good, if not better, than recognition from management.

Recognize your team by recognizing their passions - Omelet's employee recognition idea involves recognizing something at the core of every employee: passions. The ad agency has a program they call 60/60, which grants employees two hours every week to work on a project they are passionate about – and it doesn't even have to relate to a client!

Gift custom action figures Round Pegg is in the business of culture and engagement. They know how to keep employee recognition ideas from getting stale within their own walls. They offer every new hire their very own action figure. Two Rivers Marketing has an equally unique, but much more cost-effective idea: They give their employees a personal caricature when they've been at the company for a year. They'll laugh at it, remember it, and most importantly, keep it forever as a token of appreciation.

Spontaneous Applause At a small company called Typeform there's a tradition. Whenever someone does something noteworthy (however big or small) anyone can start a round of applause. The whole office joins in. The beauty is that most people have no idea why they're applauding, but the person receiving the applause does. It's a nice, momentary break for celebration.

Random acts of fun You probably imagine working for a brewery is fun. In the case of Deschutes Brewery, Pat Gerhart, HR Director for the brewery, favours amazingly fun activities that celebrate every single person at the company. If there's snow they might do a snowshoe hike with beer and burritos at the shelter bonfire. In summer they might do a sponsored run/ walk together. It's about creating shared experiences and tapping into things that interest different people.

Forget performance, recognize holistic achievements Ergodyne, a protective work wear manufacturer, incentivizes employees by recognizing them when they reach their own fitness or nutrition goals. This reminds workers that the company is invested in them as people, and not just as contributors to a bottom line.

alyse@eye2eyedev.com

07760 176777

uk.linkedin.com/in/alyseashtoneye2eye

Feel free to print or forward this resource in its entirety, but please ensure you include the Eye 2 Eye Development logos and authorship when doing so. Thank you!

Catalysts for change
www.eye2eyedev.com



Catalysts for change
www.eye2eyedev.com