

CREATING A CULTURE OF POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT

Critical Elements of an Effective Organization:

- High degree of information sharing, including business, financial, competitive, performance and planning information
- General sense of employment security
- Mechanism for involving employees in meeting business objectives
- Reward system that rewards for performance
- Behaviorally based plan design – “behavior is a function of its consequences”

EMPLOYEE MOTIVATION

Key Points:

Research and observations show that well-motivated employees are more productive and creative.

Job performance = f(ability)(motivation)●

Motivation is the process that causes behavior to be energized, directed and sustained.

Behavior is normally energized or aroused by an unfulfilled need or desire.

Behavior must be directed in some way by making sure the effort is channeled where it is needed or desired.

Desired behavior is sustained through rewards and feedback.

Pay should provide a fair return on employees' investment of their time, skills and energy but ideally is not the real reason they come to work each day.

A manager cannot motivate people – can set an example and create a work environment/climate that is conducive to motivation.

In a March 2004 survey by Robert Half on reasons employees left organizations, 88% left for reasons other than money. Top three reasons were:

- limited opportunity for advancement (39%)
- unhappiness with management (23%)
- lack of recognition (17%)

*Reward
Managers*

*Simple
English*

*Exit, Voice +
Loyalty*

Twelve Easy Questions

Motivators:

Cash is low on the list as a motivator when the assumption is that employees are presently being fairly compensated. Money is a deficiency need – motivates only when a person feels deficient in it.

Being recognized for a job well done is the most often mentioned motivator to do a better job.

Nature of the work itself – interesting, meaningful, challenging

Sense of accomplishment – task achievement

Personal growth – realize potential, empowerment

Opportunity for development and advancement – training, education, more responsibility, more autonomy, cross-training, mentoring, job rotation

Sense of belonging to an admirable organization – proud to work for the organization

Relationships – supervisor, coworkers

Communication – information sharing, larger context is shared, knowing their opinions matter

Work/life balance

COMPONENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE RECOGNITION SYSTEM

An effective recognition system should reinforce the behaviors an organization wants repeated and reward results. A recognition plan honors outstanding performance after the fact and is designed for awareness, role modeling and retention of recipients.

System Components:

- Reflects the University's values and business strategy
 - link behaviors that are to be recognized to the organizational mission
- Employee participation in the development and execution of the recognition program
- Fairness and consistency
- Cash and non-cash rewards

- Formal and informal (more spontaneous) types of recognition
 - power of informal rewards comes from knowledge that someone took the time to notice the achievement, seek out person responsible and deliver praise
- Meaningfulness of rewards varies
 - match the reward to the person
 - match the reward to the achievement
 - attach some symbolism to the award
- Highly public and visible
 - communicate the program's existence
- Timely and specific
 - as soon as possible after the achievement
 - provide a context for the achievement
- Managers accountable for effectively recognizing employees
 - educate/train all levels of management
- Peer option – selection by peers can be more meaningful than recognition from management
- Short-life span so change rewards frequently
- Evaluate the program's effectiveness

“What Makes a Good Reward” – SMART (Jim Brintnall):

- **Sincere.** Above all else, a good reward should reflect a genuine expression of appreciation. Token acknowledgements leave something to be desired.
- **Meaningful.** To endure as a motivating influence, rewards should be aligned with the values, goals and priorities that matter the most.
- **Adaptable.** The diverse workplace demands alternatives. No single reward format works for everyone all the time.
- **Relevant.** Some personal dimension is essential to a good reward. The relevance of any recognition will be improved with personal touch and should be provided by someone of significance to the receiver.
- **Timely.** It is important that rewards respond to the behavior they are intending to reinforce. Don't let too much time pass or the reward may be devalued and credibility eroded.

Types of Non-monetary Awards:

- Social Reinforcers
- Merchandise Awards
- Learning and Development
- Travel
- Symbolic
- Earned time off
- Flexible work schedules
- Interesting work
- Visibility
- Independence
- Feedback on performance
- Involvement
- Increased responsibility

References:

1001 Ways To Reward Employees by Bob Nelson
The Compensation Handbook “Non-monetary Rewards: Cash Equivalents and Tangible Awards” by Jerry McAdams
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Understanding Organization Behavior by Denis Umstot
“Science of Motivation” by Teresa Daniel & Gary Metcalf, SHRM White Paper May 2005