

10 No Cost Ways To Recognize Employees

Turn on any nightly newscast and you will hear the doom-and-gloom predictions of an economic recession just around the corner. Reactions inside organizations run the gamut from "Things are great. Go Team Go!" to "Stop all spending now!" based on manager leadership styles and their comfort level with potential high-risk changes. One of the first places you will be asked to curtail expenses often affects the very people who keep your business going...Team Members.

The manager who can balance the bottom-line without sacrificing the spirit of the team is the manager who will weather economic highs and lows effectively. Your team members are doing their job and performing well, and it's only human nature for them to want acknowledgment of those efforts. Here are my 10 ideas that don't cost a cent.

10 No-Cost Recognition Ideas

- Use praise. You know this one yet many team leaders find it hard to do in-the-moment. Download a helpful Tip Sheet now.

- Increase team member visibility. Write an article about their contribution, send a group email, let your CEO know, or announce it during a staff meeting.

- Give information. Employees crave accurate information so communicate often and early. It will stop potential rumors and increase their trust in the company direction.

- Increase team member involvement. Create ways to solicit individual opinions on issues facing your organization. Where practical, allow them to have a voice in the final decision.

- Offer interesting work. Create opportunities for the individual to work on a special project team - a plum assignment that encourages their professional development.

- Give feedback on performance. Report back more frequently what you see the team member accomplishing, and how they are meeting your expectations. This may lead to a mentoring relationship.

- Listen, Really Listen! Consciously practice deeper listening to understand and connect with the individual. Pay attention and stay focused to what your employee is saying.

- Allow flexibility. If it's not critical to customers, can you allow the individual freedom in establishing their work hours and time off?

- Recommend independence. Offer in-house training that allows the individual to learn a new skill. After the training, give them a project to use the new skills and allow them the autonomy of how the task should be completed.

- Play. As adults, we aren't often allowed to "play" at work yet it relieves stress and improves morale. Consider lunchtime walks, team stretch breaks, Joke of the Day challenge, Silly Socks Day, or whatever your team brainstorms.

BONUS: 3 Low-Cost Recognition Ideas

1. Recognition Box. Keep box filled with small supplies (cards, colorful post-it notes, smiley paperclips, assorted page flags, stickers, markers, coupons, etc) that an individual can select when you've observed them doing something great for internal or external customers.

2. Certificates of Recognition. Create awards for individual performance - anything from a customer interaction to a hidden talent can be recognized. For more ideas, checkout Baudville and Successories.

3. Celebrations. Acknowledge birthdays, company anniversary, safety milestones, and production goals. You might begin just by eating lunch OUT! There is something satisfying about connecting with others through the sharing of a meal.

It doesn't take much to recognize team members even during harder economic times. It does, however, take consistency for you to get the most impact for your efforts.

Team leadership expert Marjorie Treu, CEO of Team Fusion, works with Fortune 500 companies as well as small businesses to help leaders create collaborative, cohesive, and conscious teams. If you liked this article, you'll love her FREE reports, Leadership Adventures, Coaching, and other resources to help leaders at all levels develop themselves and build ultimate success. When visiting, be sure to sign up for the FREE monthly Tip Sheet downloads and FREE e-

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