



SIMPLE CHANGES THAT MAKE A BIG IMPACT: RECOGNIZING EMPLOYEES

"People work for money, but go the extra mile for recognition, praise and rewards." – Dale Carnegie

As companies better understand the importance of wellness programs that reward healthy behaviors, businesses will be able to address the rise of preventable, chronic conditions that threaten our country's future.ⁱ Recognition, or appreciating someone for something they have done for you or your organization, can be expressed in many ways, including acknowledgement, approval or expression of gratitude. Recognition can also be formal, informal and day-to-day.ⁱⁱ When it comes to acknowledging employees for their healthy behavior change, recognition is not a one-size-fits-all process. Business owners should be aware of which recognition programs work in their company and which ones do not.ⁱⁱⁱ Workplaces can use these ideas to acknowledge their employees for making healthy behavior changes. Doing so will motivate and empower them to sustain positive changes, benefiting both the employee and the employer.

Tips for giving verbal recognition to employees^{iv}

Follow the "ASAP Cubed" guidelines by Bob Nelson, an employee motivation specialist.

- As Soon – Timing is important, don't delay praise
- As Personal – Do it in person (or with a handwritten note)
- As Sincere – Do it because you're truly appreciative
- As Positive – Don't mix in criticism
- As Specific – Give details of the achievement
- As Proactive – Don't wait for perfect performance

Create an environment of positive encouragement^v

- Focus on strengths and balance the negatives – people tend to focus on what they failed to accomplish instead of the goals they did reach. Instead of measuring how far employees still have to go, measure how far they've come in reaching their health goals
- Support your team – show your employees that you really care by identifying and celebrating incremental goals in an employee's health journey. Help facilitate the change process for employees by showing encouragement and support throughout their behavior change
- Show gratitude – thank your employees for taking interest in their health. Help them understand that they are a valued piece in the organization, and their health and well-being matters

Make the most of your employee recognition system

- Be consistent and fair – if you're going to recognize one employee for losing 20 pounds, make sure you recognize another employee who reached a similar goal
- Write your recognition practices into your workplace policies, when appropriate
- Ensure you use many methods to recognize employees for their healthy behavior, including emails, announcements at meetings, employee "spotlights", material prizes, non-material prizes, etc.

Using this information in the workplace:

Low cost or no cost^{vi}

- Make creative bulletin board listings for healthy incentives or discounts to health clubs
- Send employees personally-signed letters from the CEO/owner/top local executive congratulating their healthy behaviors

- Promote success stories or employees of the month who have displayed exemplary healthy behaviors
- Recognize and/or reward the coordinator of wellness activities for their hard work
- Acknowledge employees' hard work during a staff meeting to congratulate them on healthier changes they are making
- Ask your employees how they would like to be recognized! While one group may like having lunch brought into them, others may like to be recognized through days off from work or financial prizes
- Give a long lunch, extra break or comp time
- If given permission by employee, write about them in a company-wide email
- Feature an employee in the company newsletter
- Let them dress casual for a day
- Post a "thank you" sign in the lobby with their name on it

Planning Your Process:

Step 1 – Identify champion – Who is going to lead the employee recognition program? Is your top management in agreement and willing to participate?

Step 2 – Determine communication strategy – Which method of communication will be most effective? Will you recognize employees through email, verbal praise, monetary prizes, increased privilege, handwritten notes or a mix of all methods?

Step 3 – Develop implementation methodology – Consider the logistics of the program. Do you have the time, talent and resources to develop an effective employee recognition program?

Step 4 – Execute plan – Use the low cost/no cost ideas above, or any other plans you have developed, to start recognizing employees.

Step 5 – Evaluate – Collect feedback from your employees to determine whether program was effective. Are you recognizing them in the appropriate manner? What could you change to bring your program to the next level?

Step 6 – Celebrate success – You've done a great job, time to celebrate!

For more information on this topic or suggestions on potential speakers to bring into your organization, contact the Wellness Council of Indiana Helpline at (317) 264-2168. Stay tuned for more ***Simple Changes that Make a Big Impact.***

ⁱ Wellness. Humana, 1 Jan. 2015. Web. 2015. <<https://www.humana.com/about/public-policy/humana-healthcare-issues/wellness>>.

ⁱⁱ Nelson, Bob. *1501 Ways to Reward Employees*. New York City: Workman Publishing Company, Inc., 2012. Print.

ⁱⁱⁱ "Keeping the Right People." HR Council, n.d. Web. <<http://hrcouncil.ca/hr-toolkit/keeping-people-employee-recognition.cfm>>

^{iv} Nelson, Bob. *1001 Ways to Reward Employees*. New York City: Workman Publishing Company, Inc., 1994. Web.

^v Gottschalk, Marla. "6 Ways to Build a More Positive Workplace." U.S. News & World Report, 29 Apr. 2013. Web.

^{vi} Kruse, Kevin. "25 Low-Cost Ways to Reward Employees." *Forbes*, 1 Mar. 2013. Web.