

The Importance of Recognition Programs

At a gut-level I think we all agree that a recognition program can benefit an organization. After all, it feels good when someone says “good job, you are important and make a difference,” right? It is safe to assume that our co-workers and employees also feel good when they know that their contribution is important. The challenge comes in attaching business metrics to this feel-good idea. Answers to questions like, “Who do I recognize?” “What do I recognize?,” “How will it make a difference to my organization?,” are where the rubber meets the road.

In business there are two reasons why starting a recognition program is important to an organization. First, recognition programs keep employees engaged in their work. Let me introduce you to Debbie Downer, she comes to work each day and brings her apathetic attitude with her. She doesn’t actively promote cutting corners but does so when it is convenient. Her work performance is marginal – she is not horrible, but she is also not great. Debbie Downer is a disengaged employee – with one foot in and one foot out. Disengaged workers cost more money to employ and are less productive than engaged employees.

Now let me introduce you to Outstanding Oscar. Oscar has a positive attitude and is always getting things done. He comes up with new ideas and implements them. He occasionally makes mistakes but is, overall, making a big difference to the organization. Outstanding Oscar is an engaged employee – both feet are in! Engaged employees save the organization time and money because they are more productive.

The second reason why starting a recognition program is important is because organizations with effective recognition programs make more money than those without a recognition program. Since employees like Outstanding Oscar are more productive, more engaged, and happier at work, they provide better service to the customer. Therefore, the customer is more likely to buy which increases profitability.

A recognition program reinforces Outstanding Oscar’s performance and takes the spotlight away from Debbie Downer. As a result, a company culture grows based on meaningful contributions from engaged employees. This creates more satisfied customers and the organization makes more money. These benefits can thrive in any organization using a recognition program.

A number of organizations research the effectiveness of employee recognition programs and report their findings. For more detailed research and statistics contact the following organizations:

Forum for People Performance Management and Measurement, Northwestern University, HYPERLINK "http://

www.performanceforum.org"www.performanceforum.org

“Incentive Magazine,” HYPERLINK "http://

www.incentivemag.com"www.incentivemag.com

Recognition Professionals International, HYPERLINK "http://

www.recognition.org"www.recognition.org

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Source: Audra Lehnert is the former marketing director and current copywriter for Crystal D. She is a recognition professional and graduate-level student of marketing. She helped to implement a thriving employee recognition program for the company. Audra’s passion for recognition stems from her belief that selfless actions in the workplace are worthy of public praise.

