

How to Start a Recognition Program – Case Study

As an employee of an awards manufacturer, I know what it takes to create a dynamite recognition award. But I also know what it takes to create a dynamite recognition program. I have been part of this process at Crystal D since its inception eight years ago.

Starting a recognition program that will keep employees engaged in their work and increase profitability requires forethought and planning. The most important component for success is the objective of the program. The objective, or purpose, must be measurable and relevant to the organization. It also must be specific. After the objective has been set detailed planning can take place and awards chosen.

The Crystal D recognition program began as a small trickle and has become a large rushing river. Our goal is to bring “*The WOW Effect*”® to life for our employees through our recognition program. We continually honor employees who align with our corporate values and core purpose. It all started eight years ago with a simple golf outing on a summer afternoon. This tradition has been growing stronger ever since.

The key to a recognition program is to start small and then build your program in a stepwise fashion. Look for ways to reinforce the objective of the program. We created WOW Day as the next step in our program. This is one day that is set apart to honor the individuals that exemplify the Crystal D values. The event is held off-site and includes a keynote address by the president and presentations by each manager. In 2010, 15 awards were given to deserving employees who exemplify our corporate values on a daily basis. The award recipients were all chosen by their peers.

In addition to the Annual Golf Outing and WOW Day, employees are recognized in small ways throughout the year. For example, each quarter five individuals are selected as WOW Champs. A WOW Champ is an employee who has been identified by his or her peers as representing a corporate value on a quarterly basis. Every employee receives a birthday card on his or her birthday and every employee receives a certificate to commemorate the anniversary of his or her start date each year. Employees also participate in various special events throughout the year, including a company-wide barbeque, community service events, and other special celebrations.

All of the recognition occasions at Crystal D are an opportunity to celebrate and honor individuals that exemplify our corporate core purpose and values. Without this solid foundation, our recognition program would not be as effective or meaningful as it is today.

Starting a recognition program does not have to be difficult or expensive. Simply build a foundation using your corporate core purpose and values. Then reward your employees when they do something to embody those values. When your employees understand how the daily activities of their job relate to the organization and its goals they will be more productive. As your organization grows, so will your recognition program.

If you would like more information on starting a recognition program visit the Crystal D website and log in to the secure area. Here you’ll find a number of “How-To Guides” and other resources – www.crystal-d.com.

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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.