

## **Leaders Lead and Appreciate Employees to Create Success**

“A paycheck is what an employee lives on. Recognition and appreciation is what they live for,” according to Mac Anderson, the founder of Successories and Simple Truths. Recognition is fast becoming the buzzword of today’s modern workplace.

Does your leadership roadmap include scheduled rest stops along the way to express appreciation and recognize accomplishment? According to Aberdeen’s 2013 employee engagement survey, “Sixty-seven percent of ‘Best-in-Class’ organizations have a formal recognition program, and believe it is extremely valuable in driving individual performance. They are rapidly embracing recognition as a way to fuel engagement and drive business success.” The study goes on to state that only 37 percent of all organizations have a clearly defined engagement strategy with only 15 percent of them flowing throughout the entire organization. And, only 14 percent of organizations provide managers with tools for reward and recognition.

### **Leadership’s Roadmap to Employee Appreciation – the WHY**

Is that enough to convince you that an employee recognition and appreciation program should be an important part of your long term strategy for success and sustainability? If not here are a few more facts based on a wide variety of recent research that might persuade you:

- Thirty-one percent lower voluntary turnover
- Employee engagement increases by almost 60 percent
- Increases in customer satisfaction
- It’s a great recruiting tool for attracting desirable employees
- It aligns engagement with business objectives and improves performance
- It lowers frustration levels by 28.6 percent
- Peer-to-peer versus manager-only recognition is 35.7 percent more likely to have a positive impact on financial results
- Companies that spend 1 percent or more of payroll on recognition see an 85 percent positive impact on engagement
- It fills a psychological need which provides a strong incentive to perform

### **Leadership’s Roadmap to Employee Appreciation – the HOW**

To be effective, recognition and appreciation cannot be reduced to a popularity contest or mutual admiration society. A successful recognition roadmap must be a thoughtfully crafted, built on TRUST and APPLIED THROUGHOUT the entire organization. Trust

and guaranteed recognition is what fills that psychological need, which in turn fuels employee incentive to increase performance and productivity. A recognition and appreciation reward program is a sophisticated and powerful tool that must have built-in justification to create value and eliminate abuse. It is an even more beneficial tool if you can build into it measurable results through workforce data analysis.

Some of the criteria to explore when setting up your employee recognition program follow:

- Consider two different categories of recognition. One type of recognition should come from leadership and management – the other a more social form of peer-to-peer.
- To create a recognition program that immediately engages the workforce, get them involved in the process of creating it. They will give you an idea of what types of things should be recognized that are above and beyond what is expected as a good employee and who should do the recognizing.
- Let them help you determine what types of recognition would be most valued and how. Money isn't always the end all be all. Sometimes a public thank you in front of their peers will do just fine. This process will build mutual trust, lift morale and build long-term win-win relationships.

These are some of the basic steps to consider in creating or expanding your recognition program. More “how to” information will follow in the next recognition and appreciation article.

Remember, this program is not a win for a few people and a lose for everyone else but rather a commitment to excellence and a way to acknowledge the role the workforce plays in the future of the business. This is the perfect buy-in reinforcement. Employees are your most valuable asset and now they will also learn to appreciate that you are of greater value to them than just a paycheck.

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