RECOGNITION TOOLKIT

OMES
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT
& ENTERPRISE SERVICES

Recognition Toolkit

Employee recognition is key to building a high-performing community that embraces achievements in positive, visible ways. We encourage departments and staff to share experiences and best practices on how they utilize their various recognition programs.

How achievement is acknowledged will vary between departments, but what is most important is that, regardless of the method, recognition of work well done occurs throughout OMES, and employees feel recognized for their accomplishments.

Contents

Why is Employee Recognition Important?

- Respectful treatment of all employees at all levels was rated as very important by 67% of employees in 2015. (Page 6, Top Five Contributors to Employee Job Satisfaction)
- Forty-eight percent of employees reported that management's recognition of employee job performance was very important to their job satisfaction. (Page 29, Management's Recognition of Employee Job Performance)
- Two out of five (40%) employees felt that relationships with co-workers were very important to their job satisfaction. (Page 33, Relationships with Co-workers)

Employee Job Satisfaction and Engagement: Revitalizing a Changing Workforce
https://www.shrm.org/hr-today/trends-and-forecasting/research-and-questionnaires/Documents/2016-Employee-Job-Satisfaction-and-Engagement-Report.pdf

Employee Questionnaire: What form of recognition works best?

- Questionnaire for employees to complete for manager's reference.
- Use to identify which recognition program will work best for your team.

Bank of Department Recognition Programs Ideas

- Identify programs that will best reflect the culture of the department based on questionnaire results.
- Modify program to better suit department values.
- Implement a program that you can maintain consistently and with effectiveness.

Employee Questionnaire

The following is a sample questionnaire which could be used to elicit information from employees to assist in creating employee recognition programs.

Dear Employee,

In an effort to (develop/make improvements to) our employee recognition program, we are requesting your input through a brief questionnaire. The information you provide will assist us in improving the way in which our department recognizes employees. The questionnaire takes approximately 20 minutes to complete, and your responses will be shared with employee recognition team members only.

Once completed, please return the questionnaire to XXXX, by DATE.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact XXXX.

Definitions:

Formal Recognition – structured/scheduled activities or events with specific criteria used to recognize employee contributions (i.e. Premier's Award of Excellence, Minister Awards, and Staff Appreciation Awards).

Informal Recognition – the acknowledgement of day-to-day accomplishments in the workplace through gestures of appreciation, communication and/or feedback (i.e. thank you, verbal compliment at a staff meeting, etc.).

How important is the following to you?
(NI = not important, SI = somewhat important, VI = very important, NS = not sure)
Mark "**X**" on the box you associate with the most.

	NI	SI	VI	NS
Receiving formal recognition for your contributions/achievements				
Receiving informal recognition for your contributions/achievements				
Being recognized by the agency director				
Being recognized by managers/supervisors				
Receiving recognition for individual accomplishments				
Receiving recognition for team accomplishments				
Feeling that your work is valued and appreciated				

In your experience, how well does our (department/division) perform in delivering the following:

(NW = not well, A = average, VW = very well, NS = not sure)

Mark "**X**" on the box you associate with the most.

	NW	A	VW	NS
Giving formal recognition to employees who display department values				
Giving formal recognition to employees who contribute to the achievement of department/division goals and objectives				
Management recognizing employees whose efforts make a difference				
Co-workers and peers recognizing employees whose efforts make a difference				
Recognizing individual team members equally for their efforts				
Building a spirit of teamwork and cooperation among coworkers				
Demonstrating that your work is valued and appreciated				
Providing a supportive work environment where you are given the tools and resources to do your job well				
Communicating department/division business needs (goals and objectives)				

Have you ever received an award while employed with the State of Oklahoma?

Circle one: Yes   No

Describe what award you received (if yes) :

Have you ever nominated a State of Oklahoma employee for an award?

Circle one: Yes   No

Describe what award you nominated the employee for (if yes) :

In your experience, how well does our department/division recognition program perform in delivering each of the following?

(NW = not well, A = average, VW = very well, NS = not sure)

Mark "**X**" on the box you associate with the most.

	NW	A	VW	NS
Recognizing a special project and/or achievement				
Recognizing outstanding achievement by an individual				
Recognizing outstanding achievement by a team				
Recognizing department values				
Recognizing department goals and objectives				

Please rate the importance of the following criteria as qualifications for an award.

(NI = not important, SI = somewhat important, VI= very important, NS = not sure)

Mark "**X**" on the box you associate with the most.

	NI	SI	VI	NS
Contributing to a more supportive work environment				
Excellent performance in the employee's own work or as part of a team				
Excellence in customer service				
Improving safety in the workplace				
Retirement				
Milestones in years of service				
Exceeding performance objectives				
Dependability				
Flexibility				
Initiative to get the job done				
Exceptional spirit				
Initiating productivity enhancements				

Employees have different preferences with respect to the form of recognition they would like to receive for doing a good job. For the next section of the questionnaire, please indicate your preferred form of recognition, in order of preference, with 1 being the highest rating.

___ Verbal thank you.

___ Written thank you.

___ Private praise.

___ Public praise.

___ Team/division event.

___ Department-wide event.

___ Recognition in the form of an award/gift.

Do you like to be recognized: (Rank with 1 being the highest rating.)

___ on a formal basis? (award, letter, ceremony, event)

___ on an informal basis? (verbal thank you, written note)

___ on an individual basis?

___ as part of a team?

Would you prefer to be recognized for your accomplishments by your:

(Rank with 1 being the highest rating.)

___ agency director?

___ immediate supervisor?

___ colleague?

___ customer?

If you were to design a recognition program for the department/ division, what features would you include?

(Rank all that apply, with 1 being the highest rating.)

___ Verbal thank you

___ Written thank you

___ Awards

___ Bulletin board/Bragging wall

___ Staff Appreciation Day

___ Special luncheon or dinner

___ Employee of the month

___ Special evening events

___ Other ideas – please specify below:

Specify other ideas:

Bank of Recognition Ideas

1. **Keep a Good Book.**
   The "G-Book" is a book of "Good Stuff" that all employees are encouraged to write in, recognizing team members for accomplishments – whether personal or work-related. Every week at an all company meeting we read aloud the past week's G-Book entries.

   It's a great way to call out employee accomplishments that otherwise may go unnoticed, and it also empowers employees to recognize each other for accomplishments, as opposed to management being the only ones providing recognition.

   Implementation:

   1. Purchase a scrapbook and materials.
   2. Present concept to team
        a. Present selection criteria with examples of why someone would be recognized. (Teamwork, dependability, going the extra mile…etc.).
   3. Recognition committee starts it off with some examples like "Bobby hit it out of the ball park at our last team meeting" with a picture of a baseball bat and baseball…
   4. If there are not any reoccurring staff meetings, committee can periodically send out an email recognizing new entries in the G-Book.

2. **Try random acts of fun: Amazingly fun activities that celebrate every single person at the company.**
   First gather information about each employee to plan fun activities. Keep an "Awesome Binder" of all this information available for all employees. As the opportunity to acknowledge someone's awesomeness arises, go to the binder.

Name.	Favorite pastime.
Birthday.	Favorite color.
Favorite drink.	Favorite ice cream.
Favorite snack.	Fitness goals.
Favorite sports team.	Favorite sports team.

   Examples:
   - Hold a birthday party for everyone in the month (example: all January birthdays… all February birthdays…etc.).
   - Allow employees to use the Awesome Binder as needed (example: Joe is outstanding at handling a customer complaint, so I can look in the binder and get him his favorite drink that day, OR get someone's favorite snack when they need encouragement, etc.).
   - Game Day: People can play board games for designated amounts of time.

3. **Forget performance, recognize holistic achievements**.
   Set up rewards for when personal goals are reached (fitness, nutrition, school goals, new babies, etc.). This reminds workers that the company is invested in them as people, and not just as contributors to a bottom line.
   o Gather information from the Awesome Binder questionnaire.

4. **Set up a peer-to-peer system.**
   Have a box of thank you cards and pins, certificates, materials to create thank you cards, etc., and other goodies people can hand out to co-workers. When someone receives a "thank you" from the box, they are also entered to win a gift card OR prime parking spot. Design the cards in a way where folks are proud to display them.

5. **Company scrapbook.**
   Create a scrapbook as your company grows over time. Each month, start off a scrapbook page with the employee you're recognizing. Their names will be part of history, literally.

6. **The morphing trophy.**
   Get a big trophy (this can be anything, like a phone or a toy, something meaningful to the department) and give it to the employee you are recognizing for the week. At the end of the week, they must return the trophy but they need to add one thing to it (you would be shocked how many things can stick to a trophy). Then next week give it to the next winner. At the end of the year, you'll have a trophy with 52 items stuck to it that looks hysterical and has lots of memories. Retire the trophy and put it in your reception area. Do it every year.

7. **Secret pal.**
   Have everyone in the office/organization/division write his/her name, address, phone number, birth date, and a short list of things they like (such as flowers, sports, chocolate, funny hats, exotic postcards, music, etc.). Fold and put slips in a hat. Then each person picks a slip—making sure that no one has picked their own name (if so, all slips go back in and try again). Once all slips are distributed and everyone has someone else's name, the fun begins.

   You are the secret pal to the person whose name you've picked. Over the course of the secret pal experience (we recommend at least three months), your mission is to anonymously do creative, spontaneous and fun things for your partner. You might send flowers to her/her home; leave a note on her desk about how much you enjoy working together or admire her professional competence or appreciate his contributions to the organization; or perhaps simply send a Valentine's card in September with a note that you just couldn't wait until February to send your admiration.

The important thing is to make it fun and uplifting—and impossible for your partner to guess who their secret pal is. And of course, the extra special fun is that while you are being a secret pal to your lucky partner, someone else in the group is *your* secret pal and is doing fun things for you. At the end of the predetermined time span, have a public event where secret pals are revealed.

8. **Contest.**
   Baby pictures; giant bubbles; decorated elbows or feet; golf course that goes through everyone's office; look-alikes; non-toxic joke laugh-a-day challenge (the department where the most people participate wins); Nerf volleyball or Koosh ball for break time; snowman building; paper airplane messages. These are just a few ideas.

9. **Laugh.**
   Create laugh books where people write in funny anecdotes and non-toxic jokes, bind them and distribute at the end of the quarter or year; cartoon corner; jokes/cartoons on memos and newsletters; smile more; cartoon treasuries or funny magazines in waiting areas and bathrooms; laughter cart; a laughter room; comedy library of books, audio and videotapes are some examples.

10. **Special days.**
    Assistant's Day celebrations; *Family Day:* Bring in photos or bring in the family for lunch, have a lunch out; special office picnic day; *Gopher Day:* Delegate things to people (i.e., will you please "go-fer" this or that, etc.

11. **Thanks in advance.**
    Sure we enjoy being recognized and deserve to celebrate and be acknowledged for our contributions when we retire. But why wait? How about a party and a celebration on the employee's first day of joining the company/organization? What a great way to set the tone and include them as a member of the team.

12. **Employee recognition week.**
    a. **Monday:** Snack/candy day. Have a break room full of snacks/candy like Skittles, Gummy Worms, Sour Gumballs, Mike and Ike's, M&Ms, licorice, jelly beans or Red Hots.
    b. **Tuesday:** Dessert buffet. Cupcakes, cookies, cakes and whoopee pies can all be found in a variety of colors.
    c. **Wednesday**: Game day. Wear your favorite sports team gear.
    d. **Thursday**: Thirsty Thursday. Bring each other's favorite drinks and share.
    e. **Friday**: Ice-cream social.