

Employee recognition is best approached creatively. Ideas for employee recognition are limited only by our imaginations. Here are a few ideas to pass on to managers to get them started:

### **Include recognition in everyday interactions...**

- ★ when delegating a project or task, praise employees for their work on a past project.
- ★ when providing project updates, recognize employees for their contributions to the project - for their thorough research, well-delivered presentations, or excellent relationship building with stakeholder groups.
- ★ when talking about new challenges, remind employees how well they handled the last challenge and specifically describe the contribution it made to the division's business goals.
- ★ when conducting staff meetings, consider ending with a round-table where employees can describe the initiatives they are working on and how their work is furthering the organization's mission. This offers employees the opportunity to provide input on current initiatives, it allows initiatives to be communicated to all in a work unit and gives employees the opportunity to thank others for their assistance or good work.
- ★ Before leaving the office at the end of the day, make a note of the individuals who made a difference that day. Send a quick e-mail to those individuals, or have a set of note cards handy at your desk to jot down a personal note and leave it on someone's desk.
- ★ Take advantage of the ease of e-mail. If you receive a positive e-mail about an employee, share it with others in your work group and copy their supervisor. Otherwise, print the e-mail and share it at your next staff meeting.
- ★ Take different routes to your office so that you can meet all your colleagues. This will give you an opportunity to meet others, learn colleague's names and learn something about them.

*Ventrice, Cindy. "Make Their Day! Employee Recognition That Works". San Francisco. Berrett-Koehler Publishers Inc. 2003.*

Here are other ways to express employee recognition and make employees feel valued and appreciated for their contributions to the organization. These ideas may be used by recognition teams, managers and/or employees.

### **Recognize someone through written words**

- ★ Handwritten thank you note or card
- ★ E-mail a thank you or note of appreciation
- ★ Send an e-card, several websites offer free e-cards
- ★ Present a certificate
- ★ Note contribution on the department's intranet site
- ★ Leave a post-it note on employee's door
- ★ Forward a letter of commendation to an employee's personnel file

### **Use Office Bulletin Boards or Displays to recognize employee achievements**

- ★ Wall of Gratitude / Honour
- ★ Department Constellation – displays department stars
- ★ Bragging Wall
- ★ Walk of Fame (like Hollywood Blvd)
- ★ Traveling trophy or rotating mascot – passed from employee to employee

- ★ Display thank you notes from clients and external partners
- ★ Banner of appreciation or acknowledging a milestone
- ★ Place a flip chart in a common use area for spontaneous thank you's
- ★ Create a collage of pictures to celebrate a team achievement

### **Extend a simple gesture to make someone feel appreciated**

- ★ Take an employee for lunch or for a cup of coffee
- ★ Offer to do a colleague's most unpleasant task for a day
- ★ Bring a snack to the office
- ★ Nominate an employee for a corporate or department award
- ★ Plan a surprise get-together to celebrate a project milestone or special achievement/contribution
- ★ Offer an employee a two hour lunch
- ★ Make a donation to an employee's favourite charity
- ★ Provide an equipment upgrade

### **Give an employee some positive attention**

- ★ Stop by an employees desk to talk informally
- ★ Provide frequent positive performance feedback
- ★ Provide praise at a staff meeting
- ★ Take an employee out to lunch or coffee
- ★ Provide praise in front of a senior leader
- ★ Have a senior leader drop in or call to say thanks

### **Encourage Employee Development**

- ★ Send employees to job-related conferences and seminars
- ★ Ask employees to present a summary of what they learned at a conference or seminar
- ★ Work out a written employee development plan
- ★ Make career development commitments and a schedule
- ★ Allow training/mentoring opportunities that support employees career development plan
- ★ Provide a subscription to a trade magazine
- ★ Provide a subscription to a trade journal
- ★ Rotate responsibility for being the division's representative at meetings

### **Provide additional opportunities in an employees' job**

- ★ Provide cross training opportunities
- ★ Provide a new and interesting job assignment
- ★ Provide more of the kinds of work the employee enjoys
- ★ Provide opportunities for empowerment and self-management
- ★ Acknowledge an employees expertise and skill by having them mentor or train others
- ★ Ask employees to represent the department at an external meeting
- ★ Have employees represent the department on inter-departmental committees
- ★ Provide opportunities for employees to determine their own goals and direction
- ★ Provide opportunities for employees to provide input into decisions that affect their work
- ★ Offer some flexibility to their work schedule

### **Provide a gift**

- ★ Offer paid parking for a day / week
- ★ Present a trophy
- ★ Company logo merchandise such as shirts, hats, mugs, and jackets
- ★ Vouchers/Coupons to local stores
- ★ The opportunity to select items from a catalogue
- ★ Merchandise meaningful to an individual based on their preferences (i.e. flowers, food, books, music, portfolio, tickets to an event, chocolate, etc.) Leave a balloon, treat or flower on someone's chair.

Here are some suggested 'openers' to assist employees in delivering day-to-day recognition:

- ★ You really made a difference by...
- ★ I'm impressed with the way you...
- ★ You caught my attention when you...
- ★ You are doing some top quality work on...
- ★ We couldn't have done it without your...
- ★ What an effective way to...
- ★ Your presentation today was very well researched and delivered...
- ★ I heard great things about you from...
- ★ I would like you to lead this project since you did such a great job the last time...
- ★ I noticed the way you handled that difficult customer...

Here are some examples of the types of performance or behaviours you may want to recognize an employee for:

- ★ Learning new skills
- ★ Pitching in to help a coworker
- ★ Mediating conflict
- ★ Giving a customer extra attention
- ★ Tackling a problem in a new way
- ★ Making people laugh in a stressful situation
- ★ Sharing information
- ★ Perfect attendance
- ★ Mentoring/training others
- ★ Adapting to change
- ★ Supporting a colleague's initiative
- ★ Covering for someone who is absent
- ★ Project completion
- ★ Quarterly successes
- ★ Reaching a business goal/objective
- ★ New hires
- ★ Departing employees

Here are theme ideas for recognition teams when creating activities:

- ★ Catch them in the Act
- ★ Kudos Kards
- ★ Behind the Scenes award
- ★ I saw/heard what you did
- ★ You made my day
- ★ Catch a shining star
- ★ Bravo! awards
- ★ Hi-Five awards
- ★ A+ Award
- ★ Bright Ideas
- ★ Make your Mark
- ★ Random Acts of Gratitude
- ★ Someone is Singing your Praises
- ★ Pause for Applause
- ★ A Cause for Applause
- ★ Way to Go!
- ★ WOW!
- ★ All Stars!
- ★ All Good Things
- ★ Make a Difference
- ★ Appreciation is appreciated
- ★ Smashing successes
- ★ Employees are #1

Recognition works best when it is immediate, sincere and based on performance. It works best when it is personal and comes from an employee's immediate supervisor or someone highly regarded in the workplace - *Bob Nelson*