

## **Developing a Recognition Culture** (Republished from Sept/Oct 2009 *Stateline*)

Regular recognition is essential in creating a culture where everyone feels appreciated for their efforts. This is especially important in these difficult economic times, when we are all being asked to do more with less. We all need to be appreciated for our increased and ongoing efforts. Research shows that people need regular affirmation for the job they do and the value their job adds to their organizations.

In a recognition culture, events and programs are combined with a variety of other techniques that make recognition a regular part of an organization's daily work environment. A true recognition culture has the following characteristics.

- Recognition is a way of life, not just a program or a yearly event.
- Employees are treated with respect, and recognized on a regular basis.
- The organization's goals and values are practiced and communicated, and are continually reinforced and recognized.
- Opportunities for recognition are identified, which develops the habit of making meaningful recognition a part of your daily routine.
- Recognition needs to be personal and meaningful, since not all employees like to be recognized in the same manner.

When developing or maintaining a recognition culture, an assumption might be that it takes money to do recognition, but the reality is that cost-free recognition can be just as effective, if not more so, than options with costs attached to them. Here are some cost-free recognition ideas to keep everyone feeling appreciated and supported.

- A simple and sincere “Thank You” can go a long way in showing your appreciation to another employee. It can be done in person, email, or personal note.
- Make recognition part of every meeting. Before staff meetings think about recent contributions of the people you work with. Then make a regular agenda item to recognize that individual or team. Remember individual preferences as some individuals may not value public recognition so you want to adjust accordingly.
- Every time an employee gets a letter from a customer about his or her excellent service or receives commendations (kudos) from another employee, frame it and hang it on a “Wall of Fame”. This also can be done within a departmental newsletter, internal website, or internal group email.
- On a monthly or quarterly basis ask employees to submit a meaningful accomplishment of someone else that impressed them. Have the supervisor or manager read over all the accomplishments at a regular meeting or even a regular gathering, such as a monthly birthday celebration. It gives all coworkers the chance to hear about accomplishments that they might not have known about and gives everyone a chance to join in recognizing their fellow employees.

The goal for developing a recognition culture is to limit or eliminate missed opportunities for employee recognition and celebrating achievements with coworkers, while focusing on meaningful recognition for behaviors that contribute to the achievement of organizational goals.

#### Further Guidance and Ideas

- *Guide to Incentive and Recognition Programs* - [www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite/DPA-DHR/DHR/1232982640165](http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite/DPA-DHR/DHR/1232982640165)
- Contact your department or higher education institution Human Resources Office
- Contact the Department of Personnel & Administration, Division of Human Resources statewide recognition program coordinator at [job.eval.comp@state.co.us](mailto:job.eval.comp@state.co.us) or 303-866-2391