



ANN HUMPHRIES

## Ways to build loyalty among your employees

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**Y**OU CAN develop interesting and inexpensive ways to build employee loyalty and productivity.

Lack of appreciation is a complaint found repeatedly on employee surveys. Too often employees say, "All I ever hear about is when I screw up. Appreciation? Ha! What's that?" Too often employers say, "Why should I acknowledge what I'm paying them to do?"

Employees need to be reminded regularly of the value they bring to the workplace. They want to feel they matter. Yes, raises are a form of recognition and profit sharing is an option in some organizations, but don't neglect inexpensive, ongoing recognition that connects people on a human level and keeps the workplace humming.

J. Margaret Gordon, business manager with Spartanburg Radiation Oncology Associates in Spartanburg, says, "Of course, we acknowledge employees during Radiation Oncology Week, and we give gift certificates at the holiday party."

"But what really impresses people around here are little things like taking their pictures, surprising them with lunch, or making Mexican dip that shows you did more than just pick up doughnuts."

When you measure the costs of replacing employees or the costs of lost time due to dissatisfaction, these small investments in recognition reap significant results.

Here are suggestions for building recognition into the everyday work environment.

- Nominate an employee for a VIP committee, leadership development program, or educational seminar.

- Assign an intern or member of management as a personal assistant for a half day to notable employees. They'll appreciate the help in catching up.

- Research existing organizational awards and nominate employees. Rotate recognition. Create your own departmental awards. Don't overlook the fun and funny. Circulate a gold star trophy in the office. Declare a recognition day for a specific employee.

- Take action with unproductive employees either by educating, reassigning or eliminating them. Show your leadership and strength.

- Include top employees in strategic meetings they wouldn't normally attend. Ask for their input.

- Have management write personal notes or e-mail, or leave voice mail messages to employees on anniversary dates of employment.

- Provide free lollipops, snacks, movie tickets, car washes, dry cleaning coupons or vending machine tokens.

Maintain integrity when you acknowledge good work. Although people appreciate sincere compliments, they also mistrust shallow praise, and you'll undo the good you intended.

Send us your best ideas for employee recognition.

We'll compile them and send you the results.

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