

When It Pays To Use Incentive Programmes

Non-cash incentive programmes and fringe benefits can have a powerful influence on attitudes, which should in turn improve results.

You can give employees the greatest incentive programme, but by impairing a sense of ownership in the organisation.

If you don't know what kind of incentive programmes to employ so as to motivate your people to work and increase productivity, here are some tips that you can use:



1. Sharing the shares.

Use share schemes as an incentive programme to reward people for contributing to team success.

An employee who sees his or her efforts rewarded in company shares will, in theory, identify with the company, be committed to its success, and perform more effectively.

In reality, it may be hard to tell whether the company's success is due to employees owning shares, or whether the success itself has led the company to issue shares.

It is also difficult to know whether employees would have performed less effectively if no shares had changed hands.

Nevertheless, by giving people a stake in the company as an incentive programme, you are making a highly positive statement about them, which encourages them to feel positive in return.

2. Gifts are not just for Christmas.

Surprise people with gifts they do not expect. Expected remuneration has less impact than the unexpected.

Even generous pay rises are taken for granted after a while, as salary wishes increase accordingly.

Incentive programmes like a far smaller payment, in the form of a gift, have an unequal worth in the eyes of the recipient.

An employee could use a cash award to buy a gift, perhaps a weekend vacation, but that would provide less satisfaction than an incentive programme in kind from the management as a reward for work well done.



Consider this, which incentive programme is better:

A company called for a special meeting for all of the employees that had achieved the sales quota for the month. In the meeting, the company announced that the incentive is a gift certificate. They went to the Accounting Department, as instructed, signed their name, and off they go.

Or: The company gave them a specialised mug embossed with the word "Congratulations", plus a special card with a special message personally written by the manager.

Between the two incentive programmes, the latter is more appreciative. Gift certificates could be a good incentive programme but it is sometimes taxable, so they get only a fraction of what was written on it.

Plus, the first incentive programme is more rigid, lacks personalisation and appreciation.

On the other hand, the second incentive programme is far more favourable. A more specialised and personalised gift idea as incentive programme can be more appreciated. It makes your employee feel that they are individually valued especially if it comes with a "thank you" note.

Best of all, presents are also a better incentive programme and a cost-effective method of motivating staff when cash is short or when competition does not allow an increased pay.

How To Make A Net-Work!



Networking is the art of building and maintaining mutually beneficial relationships. So, like anything else, networking requires a bit of practice and finesse.

Here are a few tips that can help develop a network that works for you:

Be Patient

Networking doesn't happen overnight; it's a process.

While people may want to help you, they might not be able to do so right away. Quite simply, you may not be the first item on their agenda. So, if someone agrees to meet with you but can't do so immediately, accept their offer graciously and patiently. Never let an opportunity to meet with someone during the course of networking slip away. Always be open to meeting!

Be Authentic and Kind

When you do meet with someone resulting from your scheduling attempts, take a sincere interest in their life, not just the information or possible assistance they can offer you. Don't push people for their knowledge or connections and then abandon the relationship.

Networking means fostering relationships. This objective cannot be achieved by one person constantly taking while the other person constantly gives information or time.

Be a Conduit

Remember, the objective of networking is well more networking. You should be constantly adding people to your list of contacts.

Always find more contacts to meet and, in turn, become a great connector yourself!

Open up your network to others. Hopefully they'll follow suit and do the same for you, keeping the cycle going.

Think about those contacts who could help others in your network, then introduce them!

Be an Educator

Create a presence for yourself as someone who provides useful information, tips and advice relevant to your industry; thus creating yourself as the expert in your field.

This will enhance your reputation.

Be a Helper

Networking is all about reciprocity. No matter who you're dealing with, you should always try to give more than you receive.

For example, if you have information about a particular company, industry, or educational programme that would be valuable to someone in your network, share it.

By sharing you will help others and in turn, others will help you.

If you're constantly looking for ways to help people in your network achieve their goals, they'll be much more likely to help you in return.

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3. Optimising benefits.

Fringe benefits have become a much less effective incentive programme financially in many countries because of tax charges, as mentioned earlier.

Good pension schemes, however, have become more attractive as an incentive programme wherever state-funded provision falls. The same applies to medical insurance.

The knowledge that the company cares for its people in sickness, health, and old age is a basic yet a powerful factor.

Ultimately, loyal and happy employees tend to work harder, leading to increased overall productivity.

4. Bequeath status.

The modern company, with its flat structure, horizontal management, and open style, avoids status symbols that are divisive and counter-productive. Reserve parking places and separate dining rooms are rightly avoided. However, important-sounding job titles are easy and economical forms of incentive programme at the same time a better way of providing recognition and psychological satisfaction.



So, now you know that incentive programmes don't necessarily mean it has to be in the monetary form. Do remember that giving people incentive programmes of any kind sends a very positive signal. As they say, it's the thought that counts.

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