



Confused About the Best Ways to Engage and Appreciate Your Employees?

While it sounds good, there's no one, single program that can do it all!

I read an interesting press release the other day - <http://www.prweb.com/releases/2013/8/prweb11077464.htm> and it really got me thinking.

At first blush, it sounds like Janet Treer is really on to something. However, after reading it carefully, I realized that the suggested approach is potentially quite confusing and overly simplified. While I don't know Ms. Treer and am sure she means well, this inaccurate and overuse of industry "buzzwords" does not help companies understand the best way to achieve high employee engagement.

Treer suggests that research clearly shows that traditional programs for Length of Service don't effectively motivate employees and the answer is to sweep your budgets in to "performance-based, individualized program". While there is some truth to this, it's just not that easy. Let me clarify the terms:

1. **Length of Service** is a true Recognition Program. It is totally objective, because every employee gets the same value award for longevity, independent of position, title, salary or level of performance. A Length of Service award has nothing to do with measurable performance, so is not a motivation program at all. It's a simple, traditionally accepted, and fully tax deductible way to tell your employees, "...thanks for being on our team!" If done properly, it engages the Right Brain (the warm, emotional, feeling side) and shows that you care about your employees as human beings.
2. **Performance-Based Programs** use incentives to modify behavior. They are subjective, appeal to the Left Brain (the logical, calculating, fairness side) and offer employees the option of improving specific behaviors for the opportunity to share in some of the increased value the company achieves. These programs work, because employees who like and trust their employer naturally want to offer their Discretionary Effort (that above and beyond work they offer just because they feel good about the organization). These programs are partially taxable (about 70%), but can be shown to yield a significant ROI if set up, managed, and promoted properly.

Making sure they know you care as much as you really do.

3. **Motivation** is a more vague and personal term that can be different for each employee. It's basically any management action that leads to an employee feeling energized to become more engaged and improve the quality of their service to the company. It can be as simple as a friendly smile, a pat on the back or a timely thank you; or as complex as a major community service event. Motivation can come from a manager, peer or even a client or guest to the company. It's only of value when appropriate, believable and genuine; and that's in the eyes of the recipient, so if not done honestly can backfire.

We all wish it was as simple of just picking the current recognition flavor off the shelf, but the reality is, all three components (we call it an Umbrella Recognition Solution) are needed and must be both balanced and initiated in the proper order to be effective. Each method of employee communication impacts your people differently, so to be effective, you have to first win them over emotionally, then excite them with opportunities to share in the growth and success of THEIR company, and finally make it fun, challenging and worthwhile for employees to share, be creative and bring their "A" Game to work every day.

The one secret that so many companies either miss or under value, is the importance of managers being seen as believable to their people. Any small glimmer of doubt can have tremendous impact on the value of your program over time. Employees need to know your truly care, before they will be willing to open up and share their best ideas. Managers that are trained about how and why recognition is important, will be seen as more vulnerable, honest and sincere; the perfect environment for optimal employee response.

To learn more, about how to optimize your most important asset – people, visit <http://www.SchaeferRecognitionGroup.com> .



John Schaefer is a Consultant with more than 20 years of experience helping companies realize and react to what he calls the *Employer/Employee Disconnect*. "Your people have the capacity and desire to become far more involved and productive than they are today. The resources required are freely available, if you simply choose to use them," says Schaefer. "The key is to get your managers and supervisors to embrace this challenge by seeing what's financially in it for them." John is the author of the book *Get More Productivity for Less Money ... Your Employees will Love You for It!* as well as *The Vocational Shrink The Game* and Manager Training Program *"Why Should Supervisors Care?"* which gets to the bottom of what they're *really* thinking, "what's in it for me?" www.SchaeferRecognitionGroup.com