

Recognition versus Reward

The way people are treated at work directly impacts the quality of their work, as well as their behavior on the job. That's why recognizing people for a job well done is crucial to maintaining positive relationships and strong workers. It is also what helps build our Values in Action culture.

Oftentimes, people think that in order to recognize someone, they must offer them a reward like a gift or cash. However, there is a distinct difference between recognition and reward. While both reinforce actions you'd like to see repeated, rewards typically have monetary value whereas recognitions are a simple (and free) way of acknowledging the achievement and saying "thank you" for a job well done. In fact, a [recent study](#) found recognition to be more effective than rewards.

For recognition to be most effective, there are some guidelines to consider:

1. Be fair and consistent

Give equal treatment for equal achievement. Employees who feel their coworkers are recognized for a multitude of accomplishments while they themselves are hardly recognized at all are likely to have a poorer work ethic because they feel their work isn't noticed as much.

2. Be timely and frequent

Recognitions should be given as soon as possible after noticing the behavior. If you wait too long, employees may think the action went unnoticed or that their work didn't meet the standards. Be sure to give recognition often to make it a habit and keep recognitions constant.

3. Be sincere

Give recognitions in person when at all possible. Make sure you're being genuine when you tell them they've done a great job. An insincere recognition could be even worse than no recognition at all.

4. Be specific

Let the employee know exactly what behavior or action they did that you appreciate and are acknowledging. If you're too generic, they won't know what actions to keep repeating.

5. Be considerate

Think of how the employee will respond to being recognized in certain ways. Some people may want a public notification of their recognition while a private compliment is more appealing to others. A good suggestion is to give your employees a handout asking them about their preferences so you know exactly how each individual would like to be recognized.

Recognitions don't need to be anything time-consuming or fancy. Here are some suggestions of easy ways to give recognition:

1. Values in Action Recognition Program

Earlier this year, LECU – Lafayette implemented a recognition program for employees. There are several boxes around campus with slips available for employees to fill out, acknowledging the Value(s) in Action that another employee displays. Simply fill out a slip, have it validated by your supervisor, and drop it in the box ([click here](#) for a map of these box locations). The recognized employee will receive a free drink from the cafeteria, have their name displayed on the digital screens, and be entered into a quarterly drawing for a larger prize.

2. Verbal thank you

Simply acknowledging the employee's accomplishment out loud, whether in private or public, will let them know they've done a good job and to keep up their positive actions.

3. Written thank you

A handwritten note is another great way to recognize employees' work. Taking the time to write down what they've done well and thank them for it will go a long way. Feel free to pick up some Caterpillar thank you cards from the Building A HR office.

4. e-Recognition

LPSPD provides a great online recognition tool where you can personalize a recognition and it will be emailed to the employee, as well as displayed on the tool's site. To access this tool, [click here](#).

5. Recognition at Team Meetings

If the employee doesn't mind being publicly recognized, mentioning their hard work and accomplishments in front of the rest of their team is a great way to let others know what they have achieved. It may even motivate other team members to improve their own work.

6. Providing support, flexibility and understanding

A simple, unspoken way of recognizing an employee's hard work is by being understanding and flexible with them when work-life issues arise. As simple as it sounds, acknowledging that they are human and have a life outside of work can go a long way in developing a positive work relationship.

There are many different behaviors and actions that deserve recognition. Below are a few suggestions for consideration.

1. Performing extra duties beyond those assigned
2. Filling other roles when there is a shortness of staff
3. Developing new work methods
4. Exemplifying our Values in Action
5. Personal initiative, leadership, integrity, and reliability
6. Successful collaboration and teamwork
7. Creativity and innovation
8. Inspiration and a positive attitude
9. Community service
10. Being a role model

Recognition Quick Links

[Quick Reference Guide](#)

[LPSPD Recognition Tool](#)

[Employee Recognition Preferences Handout](#)

[Recognition Program Box Locations Map](#)