



*Learning with Purpose*

## Employee Recognition Tips

Recognizing employee contributions, hard work and special accomplishments is a great way to improve morale and encourage higher levels of performance. The University of Massachusetts Lowell encourages recognition of employees who make extra efforts beyond their regular job duties.

Offer recognition in ways that are meaningful to the recipient. Some prefer public recognition, while others prefer more subtle, private recognition. The best way to find out what type of recognition people like is to ask! Get to know the recipient before selecting a method of recognition. When selecting forms of recognition, please keep in mind: equity among employees; religious/ethnic practices; dietary restrictions; allergies (food, flowers, chemical reactions –such as latex in balloons), personal likes and dislikes. At all times, maintain professional boundaries; do not give something too personal that would cause someone to feel uncomfortable. Remember to have some fun in your work life!

Here are some low cost suggestions managers, supervisors and co-workers can use to show thanks and recognition:

1. Say “thank you.”
2. Acknowledge individual achievements by using employee names in status reports.
3. Encourage, enable and empower staff to excel.
4. Encourage and recognize staff who pursue continuing education.
5. Post a thank you note on an employee's door.
6. Inscribe a favorite book as a gift.
7. Establish a place to display memos, posters, and so on, recognizing progress towards goals and thanking individual employees for their help.
8. Establish a "Behind the Scenes" award specifically for those whose actions are not usually in the limelight.
9. Instead of an email, send a handwritten thank you or acknowledgment; it will have a greater impact.
10. Nominate the employee for a formal University award.
11. Create a place in your department to display printed thank you notes and letters from customers/other departments.
12. Take time to explain the norms and culture of your department to new employees.
13. Present "State of the Department" reports periodically to your employees acknowledging the work and contributions of individuals and teams.
14. Allow employees to participate on University committees or attend special on-campus presentations.
15. Purchase a unique pin to serve as a memento for a task well done.
16. Hold informal retreats to foster communication and set goals.
17. Ask your boss to attend a meeting with your employees during which you thank individuals and groups for their specific contributions.

18. Pop in at the first meeting of a special project team and express your appreciation for their involvement.
19. Send a letter to all team members at the conclusion of a project, thanking them for their participation.
20. Say "Good Morning" every day to those in your office.
21. Plan a surprise achievement celebration for an employee or group of employees.
22. Start a suggestion program.
23. Give an employee a blue ribbon for achievement.
24. Write a letter of praise recognizing specific contributions and accomplishments. Send a copy to senior management and the employee's personnel file.
25. When you hear a positive remark about someone, repeat it to that person as soon as possible: face-to-face is best, email or voice mail are good in a pinch.
26. Call an employee to your office to thank them and don't discuss any other issue.
27. If you have a department newsletter, publish a "kudos" column and ask for nominations throughout the department.
28. Publicly recognize the positive impact on operations of the solutions employees devise for problems.
29. Smile - it's contagious.
30. Express an interest in employee's career development goals.
31. Post a large "celebration calendar" in your work area. Tack on notes of recognition to specific dates.
32. Make a "Welcome" banner for a new employee.
33. Greet employees by name.
34. Practice positive, nonverbal behaviors that demonstrate appreciation.
35. Encourage employees to identify specific areas of interest in job-related skills. Then arrange for them to spend a day with an in-house "expert" to learn more about the topic.
36. Share verbal accolades - forward positive voice mail messages.
37. Actively listen to co-workers, especially when discussing their accomplishments and contributions.
38. Widely publicize suggestions used and their positive impact on your department.
39. Share news of employee accomplishments or awards at team, department or other meetings.
40. Acknowledge and celebrate birthday; give a birthday card; have a departmental "monthly" birthday get together.
41. Treat an employee to lunch or throw a pizza lunch party for your department.
42. Once a year, have a "Staff Appreciation Day" where the managers supply, cook and serve food.
43. Give out KUDOS! (candy bar) awards.
44. Serve popcorn and lemonade on Friday (especially after a particularly hard week).
45. Bring an employee their favorite latte or other morning beverage.
46. Have a department potluck to just have fun and socialize with each other. Ask for funny stories; find something to laugh about!