

BUSINESS KNOW-HOW

Rewarding And Recognizing Employees

(NAPSA)—If you want your customers to receive excellent service, you first need to make sure your employees are happy and motivated. That's easy to say, but much harder to accomplish.

What's a manager to do when traditional incentive pay programs aren't enough to keep employees motivated? The following guidelines come from Shirley Dreifus, chief executive at New York City-based Strategic Communications Group (SCG). SCG helps Fortune 500 companies develop and implement comprehensive rewards and recognition programs.

1. Inspire employees to action. To change behaviors, communicate your expectations clearly, creatively and concisely. According to Dreifus' Understanding, Belief, Action Paradigm (shown in chart), employees first need to understand what you want them to do and why. Next, you need them to believe that the company can deliver. Then they will take action by delivering excellent products or customer service.

2. Give them the trophy, not just the cash. While incentive pay is an important piece of the compensation pie, rewards and recognition play a critical role in reinforcing the desired behavior. Rewards such as merchandise, have incredible "trophy value." They often go a lot further than cash does in driving results. Cash rewards often are quickly forgotten in the compensation mix, and most employees are hesitant to boast about dollars.

3. One size does not fit all. Be sure to stack a mix of rewards and recognition strategies against the desired results. Reward strategies for top performers may be completely different from those designed to drive team performance.

4. Recognition is often more

Understanding, Belief, Action Paradigm

Understanding

Initial communications create understanding about the need to change, what's changing and why the change is important.



Belief

Successful communications convince the audience of your commitment, as well as the value of change.



Action

When your audience believes in the change and understands what is expected of them, they will take action.



valuable than the reward. Be sure to highlight the achievements of top performers in a creative way. A sales rep at one company won a 52" television for her outstanding efforts. Her only comment: "No one saw me receive the television." She would have been much happier with a 25" television and a huge award ceremony.

5. Align management practices with your end goal. Base compensation, incentive pay, training, performance, management and career advancement opportunities should all reinforce the business goals as well as the desired behaviors to drive results. Any time you have mixed messages, it's hard to get employees motivated and believing in the business.

6. Walk the talk. Having seniors model the desired behaviors is the most important aspect of motivating employees. No amount of money or merchandise can replace the value of practicing what you preach.

For more information, Shirley Dreifus can be reached by e-mail at sdreifus@scgnyc.com.