

Employee Recognition Tips

Recognizing employee contributions, hard work, and special accomplishments is a great way to improve morale and encourage higher levels of performance. Everett Community College 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 giving 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. Acknowledge individual achievements by using employee names in status reports.
2. Encourage, enable and empower staff to excel.
3. Encourage and recognize staff who pursue continuing education.
4. Post a thank you note on an employee's door.
5. Make a thank-you card by hand.
6. Say Thank You.
7. Inscribe a favorite book as a gift.
8. Establish a place to display memos, posters, and so on, recognizing progress towards goals and thanking individual employees for their help.
9. Establish a "Behind the Scenes" award specifically for those whose actions are not usually in the limelight.
10. Instead of an email, send a handwritten thank you or acknowledgment; it will have a greater impact.
11. Nominate the employee for an Everett Community College formal award.
12. Create a place in your department to display printed thank you notes and letters from customers/other departments.
13. Take time to explain to new employees the norms and culture of your department.
14. Design a "Stress Support Kit" that includes items such as wind-up toys, a stress ball, and comics.
15. Present "State of the Department" reports periodically to your employees acknowledging the work and contributions of individuals and teams.
16. Have staff vote for top manager, supervisor, employee and rookie of the year.
17. Allow employee to participate on College committees or attend special on-campus presentations.
18. Give a shiny new penny for a thought that has been shared.
19. Purchase a unique pin to serve as a memento for a task well done.
20. Create an Above and Beyond the Call of Duty (ABCD) Award.
21. Hold informal retreats to foster communication and set goals.
22. Ask your boss to attend a meeting with your employees during which you thank individuals and groups for their specific contributions.

23. Pop in at the first meeting of a special project team and express your appreciation for their involvement.
24. Find an appropriate trophy or award for your department and make it a traveling trophy of the week/month honoring employees for their good work.
25. Send a letter to all team members at the conclusion of a project, thanking them for their participation.
26. Find ways to reward department-specific performance.
27. Say “Good Morning” everyday to those in your office.
28. Plan a surprise achievement celebration for an employee or group of employees.
29. Start a suggestion program.
30. Be creative and write a poem thanking an employee for their contributions.
31. Give an employee a blue ribbon for achievement.
32. Write a letter of praise recognizing specific contributions and accomplishments. Send a copy to senior management and the employee’s personnel file.
33. When you hear a positive remark about someone, repeat it to that person as soon as possible (Face-to-face is best, e-mail or voice mail are good in a pinch).
34. Call an employee to your office to thank them (don’t discuss any other issue).
35. If you have a department newsletter, publish a “kudos” column and ask for nominations throughout the department.
36. Publicly recognize the positive impact on operations of the solutions employees devise for problems.
37. Smile – it’s contagious
38. Express an interest in employee’s career development goals.
39. Post a large “celebration calendar” in your work area. Tack on notes of recognition to specific dates.
40. Design and give magnets with appropriate messages.
41. Create and string a banner across the work area.
42. Make a “Welcome” banner for a new employee.
43. Give a framed poem (poster or card) as a thank you.
44. Greet employees by name.
45. Practice positive, nonverbal behaviors that demonstrate appreciation.
46. 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.
47. Share verbal accolades – forward positive voice mail messages.
48. Actively listen to co-workers, especially when discussing their accomplishments and contributions.
49. Use 3x5 cards to write “You’re special because...” statements. People can collect the cards and refer to them when things aren’t going perfectly.
50. Have a recognition event created by a peer group that decides what they will give and why they will give it.
51. Widely publicize suggestions used and their positive impact on your department.
52. When someone has spent long hours at work, give them a letter of thanks.
53. Share news of employee accomplishments or awards at team, department, or other meetings.
54. Acknowledge and celebrate birthdays.
55. Give a puzzle as an award to a problem solver.
56. Give a birthday card

For the following suggestions, please be considerate of allergies and dietary restrictions:

57. Treat an employee to lunch.
58. Serve ice cream sundaes to all of your employees at the end of a project.
59. Give a deserving employee a mug filled with treats.
60. Once a year, have a "Staff Appreciation Day" where the managers supply, cook and serve food.
61. At an employee meeting, randomly tape candy or other small item to the bottom of chairs (for the first time, choose chairs only in the front row).
62. Give a note reading, "Thank you. You are a Lifesaver!" Attach a roll of Lifesavers.
63. Throw a pizza lunch party for your unit.
64. Give Mr. Goodbar (candy bar) Awards
65. Make and deliver a fruit basket.
66. Serve a team a hero party sandwich at the end of an assignment, for a job well done.
67. If you have subgroups within your department, designate a week in honor of a subgroup and give them candy, flowers, doughnuts, muffins, pizza, etc.
68. Have a department potluck to honor an employee for a special accomplishment.
69. Serve popcorn and lemonade on Friday (especially after a particularly hard week).
70. Give out gold candy coins for a job well done.
71. Bake a gift (cookies, bread, etc.) for an outstanding employee or team.
72. Bring someone their favorite latte or other morning beverage.
73. Have a department potluck to just have fun and socialize with each other. Ask for funny stories; find something to laugh about.
74. Occasionally deliver candy or other snack to your employees. Find out what they are working on and give recognition for good work if it is warranted.
75. Provide a lunch for project teams once they have made interim findings. Express your appreciation.

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