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Show meaningful appreciation for workers who 'do it right'

Most people desire to go to work each day, do a good job and help the company grow. But sometimes employees need a little bit more from each other, the company and its leadership. A little bit more in the form of recognition for doing a good job, organized in a way that helps the employee to understand what doing a good job looks like and shows appreciation.

I get approached by company leaders asking me why they can't seem to get their employees to go the extra mile for the company, to show a commitment to seeing that the company does well. What I think they are looking for is employees who care so much that they'll put in whatever extra effort is needed day in and day out, to ensure their jobs get done and done right.

The reality is that if leaders want to see that kind of commitment, then they must show more appreciation in the form of positive recognition. I'm not referring to recognizing employees for years of service. I'm talking about recognizing employees when they do what is expected (or even better, more than expected) to help the company achieve its stated business vision, goals and objectives.

According to a recent study, the United States is losing roughly \$300 billion annually due to a lack of productivity from disengaged employees. In addition, it has been reported that three out of 10 workers planned to look for a new job in 2006, and 41 percent plan on jumping ship by the end of 2007. The Internet has made jobhunting while on the job so easy that companies now need to worry about employees searching for better work opportunities and e-mailing off dozens of résumés during their work shift.

There are some potential solutions to these challenges. We could turn off the Internet. OK, so that won't work. Another option might be to engage employees with the company values, mission and objectives and then *recognize* them when they are doing it right. This not only makes sense, it's a must. According to a global study by Towers Perrin, a human resources company, only 14 percent of employees are "fully engaged" in their work. It concluded that the majority is only moderately engaged or, worse yet, disengaged. Might this be because employees don't feel appreciated for doing good work?

Are you familiar with the Chinese proverb, "I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand"? This proverb embodies an important fact that can be applied to an "I Caught You Doing it Right" employee recognition program. It would be a program that communicates the company's vision, values and objectives and enables employees to show appreciation for fellow workers when they do the behaviors that lead to success. Here is what you can do to get started:

- Evaluate. Find out how well your company's current efforts have been working with respect to communicating the values and objectives and recognizing employees for doing good work.
- Implement. Put into practice a program that communicates the company's values and objectives and provides employees an opportunity to nominate others when they catch them doing it right.
- Capture and share. Document successes over time and proactively share them with employees to openly celebrate their performance.

To obtain an Employee Recognition Scorecard and other tools that will be helpful for setting up and implementing an "I Caught You Doing It Right" program, go to www.brandintegrity.com/truth9.

Keep this in mind: The No. 1 reason why employees stay loyal to a company is because they feel appreciated for doing a good job. On the flip side, lack of appreciation is the No. 1 reason why employees leave a company. If you want to help your company grow, help foster a spirit of recognition in the workplace. Know it. See it. Do it.

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