Recognizing Employee Contributions and Achievements – Resource for Managers

Recognition lets employees know that they are valued and drives performance that matters to the success of the organization. People what to make a difference in their work, and be appreciated for doing it.

To have the greatest impact, recognition should be woven into the fabric of the university's culture and should encourage work that advances employee, departmental, and/or Institute goals and values.

Managers are critical to fostering a culture of recognition. Continuously providing employee recognition and participating in recognition events sets the tone for a workplace that values excellence and sends a message about the type of work and behaviors that lead to successful performance.

Best Practices for Recognition

- Championing and visibly supporting a continuum of recognition
- Aligning award criteria with values, goals and priorities that matter most
- Utilizing group social events and awards to enhance/deliver explicit recognition messages
- Continuously recognizing a broad range of unique talents, contributions and achievements
- Recognizing achievement of goals and milestones
- Acknowledging effort as well as success
- Recognizing both individual and team performance
- Ensuring that recognition practices are fair, flexible, and transparent
- Consistently recognizing members across teams and organizations
- Considering creative forms of recognition that are valuable and motivating to the receiver
- Providing recognition in a timely manner

Ways to Recognize Individual and Team Performance

- Recognize high performers with upcoming development activities and learning and development opportunities
- Ask high performers to take on a special project or serve as a mentor or coach for others
- Acknowledge an employee's newly acquired skill or knowledge with new responsibilities
- Acknowledge employee achievements during regular staff meetings
- Take something off an employee's plate as a way to say thank you
- Ask a staff member for their ideas on the project they just completed
- Praise an employee for the completion of a milestone (rather than waiting for the project's completion)
- Send a written thank you note or e-card
- Send an email to senior leadership acknowledging individual or team performance
- Go to breakfast/lunch with a team and invite a senior leader

Ref: MIT