

Seven Ways to Use Rewards to Fix Employees - By: Jennifer Vecchi

Using an effective rewards and incentives program can help to fix poor-performing employees. Follow these steps:

1. Understand why the employee is having issues. Communicating is the first step. Incentives or rewards will not engage problem individuals if they are struggling in other areas, so identify the root of the problem. Why is the employee struggling or not living up to expectations? Is it a lack of skills that can be solved with additional training? Is the employee's personality creating obstacles to learning or improving? Are personal problems creeping into the office and causing performance issues?

2. Know your corporate culture. To build an effective rewards and incentives program, know employees and understand the culture in which they work. Many variables contribute to corporate culture, and demographics is one of the biggest factors. If an employee falls outside of the core demographics, he or she may not feel engaged with other employees or company business methods. Continuous training and interoffice gatherings, social or business related, can help alleviate feelings of not fitting in with peers.

3. Customized programs. In general, trying to execute a one-size-fits-all program is a recipe for failure. This is especially true in a diverse workplace. Knowing employees' interests and hobbies helps. Do they like to travel, golf, or ski? Are they shoppers and homebodies? By matching rewards to their interests, talent managers can create a more personalized approach to demonstrate caring and motivate employees after the program ends.

4. Communicate. Regardless of the type of rewards program, maintain continuous communication. Don't rely on the prize to motivate an employee throughout the process. For some, the prize may seem too far from reach; remind employees that their small, daily efforts can have a huge impact. Utilizing the right communication methods can be the fine line between success and failure. Asking for feedback lets talent managers know if the program is reaching its

intended audience and can help when planning the next program.

5. Know when to make changes. If the aforementioned steps have been taken and employees are still not productive, they may be complacent from doing the same tasks for years or bored by lack of stimulating challenges. Offer them a different role, perhaps one featuring newer experiences to remind them what they liked about the company in the first place. This is worth trying because it can be less costly to reposition employees than to replace them. If there is no immediate opening, developing a career path could make them more engaged in their current job.

6. Know when to get help. There are times when managers might be in over their heads. Managing an effective rewards program with constant communication takes a lot of work, and seeking external assistance can help hit established targets.

7. Know when to call it quits. A toxic employee can greatly impact the morale and productivity of an entire team, rendering an incentive or rewards program useless. Knowing when to terminate could be the best thing for the employee and the company long term. Much like personal relationships, opening new doors can lead to a happier environment for everyone.

Jennifer Vecchi is the Manager of Incentives and Recognition Programs at Atlas Travel Meetings & Incentives in Milford, MA, where she is responsible for supporting her clients' employee recognition programs and sales contests.



As Manager of Incentives & Recognition Programs at Atlas Travel Meetings & Incentives, Jennifer is responsible for structuring and creating sales & employee recognition campaigns, designing creative pieces that support it and measuring its return on investment.

Bringing to Atlas over 12 years of experience in event planning and production, Jennifer's ability to assess a company's demographics and find ways to motivate their target audience has had a proven track record of success.

Contact Jennifer Vecchi at:
508-488-1119

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