



The Science Behind Recognition

Savvy business leaders have learned the power that a well-developed and executed recognition program plays in during results.

Understanding the science behind recognition can help program designers maximize their ROI.

TAYLOR
COMMUNICATIONS

taylorcommunications.com

Thinking Like a Social Scientist

Key Considerations when Designing a Rewards Program

Self-Actualization:

Our deepest psychological need, defined by Maslow as the our “desire for self-fulfillment for the individual to become actualized in what he is potentially.” When recognition is nothing more than an annual performance review, we are turning our backs on this desire. Recognition frequency on small victories can help make this connection. Leveraging peer-to-peer recognition tactics helps drive self-actualization, particularly when made public.

Equity:

Fairness drives motivation. When structuring a program, make sure to establish clear rules and clearly tie them back to desired behaviors. Make sure this detail is clearly communicated and understood by the organization.

Sociability:

Sometimes cash isn't king. The easier it is to talk about a reward, the greater the effectiveness. Research has shown that people are much more likely to talk about non-cash rewards – like travel and merchandise – than cash rewards.

Reciprocity:

I'll scratch your back if you scratch mine. Reciprocity helps explain why recognition programs are so effective: employees are more likely to work hard and do well in return when awards and recognition are given to them.

Justification:

Struggling justifying spending cash on that big-ticket, fun item? One of the reasons for the effectiveness of non-cash rewards is that employees don't feel the need to justify spending their own money on that item.

Expectations:

Stagnant recognition programs can result in expected rewards or bonus – which lead to very little change in employee engagement or behavior. Make sure to sprinkle in unexpected and fun recognition opportunities and rewards that tie directly back to key desired behaviors.

