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Nobody Works for Free: How to Reward Outstanding Performance

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Let's be honest. Nobody works for nothing. We all work because there's something in it for us, be it financial remuneration, prestige, recognition, pride or a sense of doing the right thing. The preferred rewards for a job well done vary from person to person. But the need to get something for one's hard work is universal.

Great leaders know all about this. They realize that they cannot simply expect their employees to do their best work, day after day, year after year, without some sort of meaningful acknowledgement. They understand that to get the most from their people, they've got to recognize their accomplishments in ways that have an impact, that serve to reinforce hard work and encourage continued creativity and innovation.

Here are some effective ways to reward employee excellence:

- **Show them the money.** That is, remunerate your high achievers in accordance to their worth. What value does an employee bring to the company? How do his efforts impact the performance of his team or department? What's the impact on the bottom line? Think about output, not input. Compensation (such as bonuses) based upon results achieved, rather than tasks performed, is both a powerful motivator and an effective reinforcement.
- **Offer sincere thanks.** A well-deserved pat on the back, a written letter of commendation, or some private (or public) words of appreciation and recognition can be extremely effective. Don't make the mistake of assuming that your employees already know how you feel. Tell them. \
- **Provide meaningful perks.** Offer some extra flexibility to work from home where feasible. Give your high achievers the afternoon off from time to time. Send them on a golf outing or to a show. Take them out to lunch at the restaurant of their choosing. The possibilities here are nearly endless. Be creative.

- **Help them keep up the momentum.** A motivated employee will relish the opportunity to work on a challenging new project. Success breeds further success. Give your outstanding employees a say in where their talents will be used next. Encourage them to keep on growing, learning and raising the bar.

- **Develop them.** Mentoring, coaching and advanced training need not be viewed merely as a means of addressing poor or deteriorating performance. Invest your developmental time and dollars in your top performers. That's the way to raise the bar, accelerate the growth of your strongest performers, and drive your organization to even greater levels of success.

There are innumerable ways to recognize the efforts and accomplishments of your employees. If you're not sure what approach to take with a given employee, remember this: You can always ask. What better way to engage him in the process, demonstrate your respect and provide him with a meaningful, high-impact reward for outstanding performance?

Dr. Bywater helps her clients dramatically improve individual, team and organizational performance, resulting in heightened job satisfaction, maximized productivity and increased profitability for the organization. To learn more or to sign up for your complementary e-newsletter, visit Bywater Consulting Group at <http://www.BywaterConsultingGroup.com>. ●



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