



Key Management Skills

Practical Tools and Techniques For Managers and Supervisors

Low and No Cost Rewards for Employees

Research by Dr. Gerald Graham throughout the United States revealed that the type of reward employees most preferred was *personalized, spur-of-the-moment recognition from their direct supervisors*. Here are three big ideas.

1. Say “thank you” and “good job” often.

Of course, this is the first and most effective reward of all. It is the one that all employees I have ever interviewed have said is their number one reward. Many employees say they don’t need or want a big deal made, or even a bonus or a prize. They just want their direct supervisor, whether that be the CEO or their lead worker, to say *thanks, good job, nice one, I appreciate your effort* or any of the many ways to say thank you.



**The big deal here is...
What gets rewarded gets repeated!**

On the other hand many an employee has told me that they have become resentful because their boss never or rarely says thank you. Some managers and supervisors, on the other hand, have said that they think that saying thank you all the time is phony and unnecessary. “It’s their job, why should I say thank them all the time”.



**Because...
What gets rewarded gets repeated!**

And is there really anything wrong with being grateful that your employees do a great job for you and your organization and telling them so?

2. Listen well and ask good questions*

There is both an art and a science to listening and we can’t cover all of that in this tip sheet, but suffice it to say that if you are listening well you are:

- Sitting up attentively
- Making eye contact
- Being genuinely interested in what is being said
- Listening 80% of the time and speaking 20%

Good questions are usually open-ended questions designed to elicit more or better information. They might go something like this:

- a. How would you like it to work?
- b. What could we do about that?
- c. How could we help you to be even more effective?
- d. What one thing would you like changed in your work?
- e. If you didn't have this concern how would it make a difference in your work life?

When I ask employees why they like or respect their boss they will invariably say "He/she listens to me". "He cares about me and my work". "He listens to my ideas". "She asks questions about how we could make things better".

Remember, just because you listen and ask good questions, doesn't mean you have to grant the request or change a procedure, or bend over backwards to do what they ask. It just means that you are in conversation with the employee. You are able to find out what is going on, what is important to employees or the chief complaint is. That is good! They may have a great idea. They may need to hear, that there is no budget for this item, but that you can see their point.

3. **Circulate a circulating trophy or animal figure for good performance.**
Buy one "High Performance" trophy or award. Reward it to a high performer, a person who has demonstrated great "attitude" or someone who has accomplished something special. It can also be rewarded to a team. The person or team may keep it until they find another person whom they feel is worthy of it. This way it circulates through the team or units and encourages your employees to reward each other. Follow-up every month or so to ensure it keeps circulating. Often the trophy can be a n inexpensive comic figure or animal figure that represents speed, or courage or persistence. Trophy stores have inexpensive trophies as well.

* If you are interested in improving your listening skills go to www.KeyManagementSkills.com and click on the products site. There is a workbook for learning to listen and ask questions.

