



Engagement: The New Meaning Of Cross Promoting Incentives

IN THIS perilous business environment if you want a highly engaged work force then undertaking and implementing a corporate incentive program and cross promoting it to the entire enterprise is not as easy as it may seem.

A company cannot just make up its mind to implement a performance improvement program without holding a number of meetings within the enterprise with various department managers to find out exactly what those who you want to motivate to higher performances are really all about. So first you must determine what aspects of the various job parameters each employee enjoys, and which they do not and why. This is often accomplished through interviews with employees and then focus groups within the company to determine how to better integrate traditional external and internal marketing communications, and rewards that engage, motivate, and empower your entire organization.

Once the decision is made to move forward with an incentive program it is important to cross promote and engage the entire spectrum of the corporation. Here's why. For example if you determine that the number one priority is to motivate the sales staff with an incentive program, think about the consequences of increased sales on the back office, production, fulfillment and the shipping department plus there's the extra work that the accounting department will incur. This demands a cross-functional view of the organization

linking sales, marketing, finance, HR, and operations. It must also focus on long-term financial success rather than concentrating on the current quarter.

Therefore the engagement plan must include strategies to cross promote the incentive to all departments that would be effected by an increase in sales. To do this is relatively simple because today technology has lead to many online reward platforms that let you have as many groups and hierarchies as you'd like. For example in addition to the ability to operate multiple programs if desired (e.g. promotions for each segment of the reward program such as sales and management, service based employees, or a segment for each region / division / or city), includes reporting by classification (group) and promotion, quizzes and surveys for training and recognition programs and discretionary point award capabilities. The platforms functionality also includes an online personalized point account for each participant, a customizable awards catalog and a custom shopping cart for online ordering and online tracking of orders.

Engaging people to perform more successfully can be accomplished by setting goals and objectives. The old thinking was to only include 2 or 3 goals. But today with the sophistication of data capture there can be many goals that can be measured and then rewarded. In a study conducted by Towers Perrin

in July of '08 companies with a high engagement rate had an earnings per share growth rate of 28%. Low-engagement companies saw earnings per share decline at an 11.2% rate. The conclusion of the study was that high-engagement firms outpace low-engagement companies in revenue and profit growth. Here then are some everyday engagement activities that can be measured and then recognized and rewarded: coming to work on time, not using all of one's allocated sick time, adhering to safety in the work place, an anniversary acknowledgement, joining the company gym and making improvements in weight control and other health related activities. Then you can set goals and measure for performance improvements such as good customer service, new customer referrals, sales achievement, sharing knowledge, improved work habits, better communications, teamwork, and in today's business environment the ability of an employee to accept and adapt to change.

An engaged work force that is enabled by management: will be more self-motivated, innovative and productive, lowering costs and increasing efficiency; will show enthusiasm for their work that goes above and beyond specific job requirements;

will always try to do better, faster; will have an ownership mentality; will help recruit other engaged employees. Now isn't that what every engaged company should strive for?

Have a Rewarding Day!

