

# **An Informal Recognition System**

**ALMA Symposium  
Pittcon 2006  
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# Informal Recognition System

## Informal Recognition – A Way of Life

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# Outline

- **Where are we now?**
- **Building a recognition culture**
  - **Goals/values**
  - **How to do it**
    - **“Thanks”, feedback and praise**
  - **Benefits**
  - **Insights from ALMA members**
- **Potential obstacles**
  - **Alfie Kohn’s perspective on rewards**
- **Measuring success**
- **Closing thought**

# Recognition Jeopardy

**Answer: Very Few**

**How many managers feel that “appreciating others” is a major part of their job?**

# Recognition Jeopardy

**Answer: Very Few**

**How many managers feel that “appreciating others” is a major part of their job?**

**Answer: Lack of appreciation**

**What causes you the most dissatisfaction at work?**

# A Challenging Situation

- **Employee faith and loyalty in organizations dropping!**
- **40% of employees feel unappreciated**
- **1 in 3 workers are unhappy and not engaged – at a cost of \$300B/year**
- **“not feeling appreciated” may be the #1 reason people leave a job**
- **61% of employees received no meaningful praise in the past year**

# Who Needs Appreciation?

78% of employees feel it is very important to be recognized by their manager

“I can live for two months on a good compliment!”

*Mark Twain*

“I now perceive one immense omission in my psychology – the deepest principle of human nature is the **craving** to be appreciated.”

*William James*

# **Informal Recognition Building A Culture**

- **Understand organizational goals/values**
- **Determine the goals of the recognition initiative**
- **Know your staff better**
- **“How to do it” – every day**
  - **Look for recognition opportunities**
  - **“Thanks”, praise and feedback**

# Organizational Goals/Values

- **What values and goals does the organization want to promote?**
  - Relative importance?
  - Relative impact?
- **What specific values and goals will be addressed with recognition efforts?**

# Potential Initiative Goals

<b>Create a positive work environment</b>	<b>80%</b>
<b>Create a culture</b>	<b>76%</b>
<b>Motivate high performance</b> <b>75%</b>	
<b>Reinforce desired behaviors</b> <b>75%</b>	
<b>Increase morale</b>	<b>71%</b>
<b>Support organizational values/goals</b>	<b>66%</b>
<b>Increase retention</b>	<b>51%</b>
<b>Encourage loyalty</b>	<b>40%</b>
<b>Others – communication, teambuilding, focus</b>	

**NAER 2003 Recognition Survey**

# Recognition Follies

**If we want**

**better people skills**

**innovative thinking**

**employee development**

**Why do we often recognize**

**technical achievements**

**“no mistakes”**

**tight control over  
resources**

**Remember you get what you recognize!**

# Potential Benefits

- **Positive workplace...**
- **Support of organization's goals...**
- **Increased retention**
- **Higher performance**
- **More innovation/better economics**

# Potential Benefits

- Positive workplace...
- Support organization's goals...
- Increased retention
- Higher performance
- More innovation/better economics
- Increased self-esteem
- An employee who feels more valued
- A more committed, engaged analyst
- Strengthened bond between the analyst and manager
- A more focused manager

# Know Your Analysts

- **What are their professional and personal goals?**
- **What do they value?**
  - **Fit the recognition to their values**
- **How do they want to be recognized?**

# Chemists - Commonly Held Values

- **Challenging, interesting work**
- **A collegial work environment**
- **Work that supports growth and personal achievement**
- **Good communications and supportive relationships**
- **Recognition for new promising ideas**
- **Support for risk taking**
- **Clearly integrated technical/business goals**

# **“Good Recognition”**

- **As immediate as possible**
- **Specific**
  - **What did you see**
  - **How did it impact the situation or the organization**
- **In a form meaningful to the employee**
- **Provided in a way meaningful to the employee**
- **Recognizes work in progress/efforts as well**
- **Recognizes everyone including high performers**

# Effective Ways to Recognize

- **“Thanks!” including feedback**
- **Employee involvement**
- **Responsibility and authority**
- **Employee development**
- **The work itself**
- **Attention**
- **Professional recognition**

# Highly Valued Forms of Recognition

4. More authority

3. More responsibility

2. Personal praise

1. Manager's support and involvement

Survey by Nelson Motivation

# Employee Involvement

- **Ask for their opinions and ideas**
  - Implement their ideas whenever possible
- **Include them in planning and decision making**
- **Provide as much information as possible**
- **Let them represent the lab**
- **Suggest participation on special teams and committees**

# Responsibility/Authority

- **More freedom to work independently**
- **More opportunities to self-manage**
- **Higher levels of responsibility**
- **Empowerment to make more decisions**
- **Ability/responsibility to improve processes**

# Employee Development

- **Provide opportunities to fulfill their own goals – not just follow organizational dictates**
- **Freedom to work more independently**
- **Formal training opportunities**
  - In or out-of-house
  - Let them use the new skills immediately
  - Let them brief others
- **Recognize individual talents when assigning work**

# **(ASAP)<sup>3</sup> = Effective Praising**

- **As soon**
- **As sincere**
- **As specific**
- **As personal**
- **As positive**
- **As proactive**

© **1997 by Bob Nelson**  
(scientific version of ASAP-Cubed)

# Recognition Using Feedback

- **Feedback is a powerful form of praise**
  - Addresses important values of challenging work and excellent performance
  - Shows your concern and interest
  - Positive AND constructive messages
    - “...can’t have one without the other”
- **Enhances intrinsic motivation**
  - A positive cycle of excellent work leading to higher motivation from the work leading to higher performance....

# ALMA Roundtable – Insights

- **“Thanks” is highly effective if reinforced over time**
- **Recognition must be sincere, timely, appropriate**
  - Tailor the recognition/reward
  - The more personal the better
- **Show appreciation in various ways**
  - Personal notes
  - Pass along or post messages of appreciation
  - Post successes
- **“Recognition/rewards are not motivators, but they keep motivated people from becoming de-motivated”**

# Potential Obstacles?

- **Managerial behavior**
  - Mismatch with environment/culture
  - Expectancy/reinforcement theory
  - Recognizing the wrong behavior or value
- **Intrinsic motivation – the Pareto 20%**

# Measuring Success

1. Response to surveys
2. Performance development meetings
3. Retention rates
4. Exit interviews

#3 and #4 – highly accurate data, too late and likely “NO”

ALMA Roundtable 2005

# Why Do Rewards Fail?

- Often punish/undermine relationships
- Undermine interest in the task itself
- Reduce risk taking
- Undermine attempts to solve problems

**Alfie Kohn**

**Out with carrot & stick psychology!**

# Choice, Collaboration & Content

- **Choice** – participative management style
- **Collaboration** – opportunity to interact with analysts of similar skills and work ethic
- **Content**
  - What work they perform
  - How they perform their work
  - Environment

**These suggestions on recognition directly address Kohn's concerns, fit with his suggestions and should lead to more-satisfied analysts.**

# A Closing Thought

**“...the best success we can have in getting managers and supervisors to recognize employees more often is less a function of awareness of the importance of recognition and the skills of providing recognition**

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“...the best success we can have in getting managers and supervisors to recognize employees more often is less a function of awareness of the importance of recognition and the skills of providing recognition **and more a function of getting managers to personally experience the power of recognition.**”

**Bob Nelson**