



Unit: Engaging and Empowering Others

Skill 35: Acknowledging the Team

Activity B: Incentives and Rewards

Activity Skills:

Small group discussion or self reflection.

Leadership Skills:

Understand the basic techniques for acknowledging the contributions of others.

Suggested Level:

Beginning

Time:

20-30 minutes

Supplies needed:

- Flipchart.
- Markers.

Do Ahead:

N/A

Source:

Developed by:
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Based On:

The Manager's Role as Coach, Dr. William Hendricks, ed. 1994.

BACKGROUND:

Since we know that effective leaders make an effort to acknowledge the accomplishments of their group members, it goes without saying that leaders will need to provide incentives and rewards at some point. While not all rewards require a physical reward (see Activity 35A). Most ongoing leadership relationships involve a more structured system of incentives. When you work at a job, you expect to be paid; when you do a good job, you expect to increase your pay over time.

Leaders have a role in determining what the incentives and rewards will be, but even before that, they have a critical role in guiding their staff to reach an increased level of performance. Consider the leader as supervisor in several different roles:

For an employee that is performing above the established standards, the supervisor serves as coach. Even people who are performing very well need a little coaching. Consider the role of a coach; this person reviews how you are doing, and offers techniques for how you can improve and become even better.

For the employee that is performing at the established standards, the supervisor serves as mentor. When you mentor someone, you provide guidance and encouragement, offering suggestions and modeling a higher level of achievement.

For the employee that is performing below the established standards, the supervisor serves as counselor. When there is a problem, counselors talk with the person to figure out what is not working, and explore strategies for how the problems might be solved.

According to this approach, the leader as supervisor needs to be flexible depending on the needs of the employee. All supervisor-staff relationships, however, must be based on a clear set of guidelines and policies that define the performance standards. These must be communicated to all staff, and updated and reviewed periodically. Once the policies and standards are in place, and once the supervisor understands how to reach and encourage staff according to their performance, what is next?

WHAT TO DO:

Have participants break into small groups of 4-6 people. Each group will need a large sheet of paper. Have the participants brainstorm a list of incentives – besides an outright raise – that supervisors might convey to reward an employee.

Next ask the participants to customize these incentives according to the 3 levels of employee performance defined – above average, average

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Notes:

and below average. (i.e., Do you get box seat tickets to a game if you are performing poorly?)

TALK IT OVER:

Reflect:

- What other incentives, besides a raise, can supervisors offer?
- How do the incentives or rewards vary with an employee's performance?
- As a supervisor, is it more difficult to be a coach, a mentor or a counselor?

Apply:

- Have you received a reward at work? What was it?
- Have you provided staff members with a reward? What was this reward?
- Are some rewards even more desirable than an increase in pay?
- What if an organization doesn't have the financial resources to provide certain rewards and incentives?
- Can incentives such as time off compromise or enhance employee performance?

BEYOND THE BOX:

Optional Homework:

Find an article in a business publication that specifies the reward package of a high level executive. Sources such as the Wall Street Journal or Business Weekly or various trade and professional periodicals do this. What performance level has this person reached in order to command this type of reward package? What pressures are in place when your incentives are so publicly stated?

Resources And Web Links:

Dr. William Hendricks, ed. 1994. *The Manager's Role as Coach: Powerful Team Building and Coaching Skills for Managers*. National Press Publications.