



The rules of rewarding

■ BY GUNJAN RAWAT

Recently, I got a chance to study various recognition programs running across organizations and realized that they differed not only in their structure but also in the way they were being operated for different demographics of working population, especially Gen-Y, as it forms a significant part of the workforce. Organizations are tailoring their reward and recognition strategy to suit the needs and requirement of this demanding segment.

The environment in which the generation Y has grown up is highly competitive and challenging. They have toiled hard to achieve what they currently have and are ambitious to go beyond. It thus becomes a challenge for organizations who are trying to manage their aspirations and want to reward and recognize their efforts. There are a few ground rules:

Keep it simple! The recognition types that you choose for a program are quite important. Gen-Yers are open to both formal and informal types of recognitions, which can be monetary or non-monetary. All recognition need not necessarily be in a formal gathering, they may be as simple as a line of appreciation from the Head of the business on a mail or a high-tea with the top management. The mantra is to keep it fair, transparent and simple.

Make it instant! Gen-Y appreciates recognition that comes immediately after a good work. They have short waiting time and want things to happen fast. Ensuring that your recognition program has this

as one of its feature surely works for them. To deal with this, organizations are now increasingly enabling the immediate manager to reward instantly. Spot recognition is one of the ways to motivate employees to deliver better and faster than ever before.

Give them freedom! Reward is usually decided depending on the importance of deliverable or achievement to the organization. The old school of thought is to give standard rewards that are often embossed with the organization's logo. These rewards though 'good to give' may not be perceived as 'desirable to receive' in the long run by Gen-Y. This young generation is clear as to what it wants and what it doesn't. The best way to handle this is to gift them the freedom of choosing their own reward - allow for flexibility of rewards. The concept of online rewards in the form of virtual gifts, reward points, online cash, and gift cards is soon catching up. Not only are the rewards going virtual; newer concepts of experiential rewards are also evolving where you reward an exotic/adventurous/different kind of a holiday or experience are gaining prevalence to motivate the young working population.

Gen -Y is the digital generation. Use of social media has made it important for them to know where others are in terms of professional achievement and personal life. A recognition forum that satisfies this need will surely be appreciated and admired. Increasingly employers are

using online social media as a tool to recognize their young population.

In this age of global teams, organizations are now coming up with online recognition platforms where employees can see who all have been recognized, what is the achievement all about and also give their praises and good wishes to the recipient. With the social media policies in organizations getting a Gen- Y avatar, another way of recognition that is gaining prevalence is freedom of posting it on the external social media sites where the employee is active. This not only acts as recognition for the employee in their existing social network but also as a way of branding the organization.

In a workforce where Gen- X and Gen-Y work together it is important to have a working environment where recognizing employees is in its culture. The consistency and frequency of use of the program plays an important role in building this culture. It is difficult to build a culture of recognition instantly - it takes a lot of time and effort to build that up. The programs should be designed such that there are no or minimal possible approvals that are required to give a recognition.

Recognition for Gen-Y is an important factor which keeps them engaged in any organization. Make sure you recognize them in a way that they value!

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