

Appreciating Employees

i appreciate
you

Employee Appreciation Week is a great time of year where managers across Pinellas County do their best to make sure their employees know that they are

valued. Although the week is dedicated to this cause, employee appreciation can and should be shown throughout the year.

Showing appreciation to your employees is important. It is a natural desire for human beings to want to feel acknowledged and that they are providing a value. Some studies indicate that employees who are recognized are more likely to go above and beyond what is expected of them, are more productive and motivated, and are more likely to stay with an organization.

Sometimes supervisors and managers struggle with the question of, "How should I show appreciation?" A good idea is to ask your employees. You might start off a conversation with your team with, "How do you want to be recognized when you do great things?" That says two things to an employee — you're going to do great things and you're going to be acknowledged for it.

Recognition can be formal or informal. Here are some fun ideas inspired by *101 Ways to Reward Employees (Without Giving Them Cash)* by Mike Michalowicz:

- **Wall of Fame** - Create a wall of fame for each recognized employee. Write below their picture why the employee is being recognized.

- **Helmet Stickers** - Get a football helmet from each employee's alma mater and put it on their desk. Every time they do something great, give them a helmet sticker ... just like the college sports teams.
- **Recognition Circle** - Ask each employee to write something positive about the person you're recognizing on a piece of paper. Either give them the box of collected sayings or type and frame them for the person.
- **Ice Cream Party** - There's nothing like an old-fashioned ice cream party where the team you're appreciating make their own sundaes and desserts from a selection of ice cream and toppings.
- **Performance Hours** - If employees consistently perform well, give them "performance hours" tokens they can redeem to take a longer lunch, run errands or use for personal reasons.
- **Show and Tell** - Set aside one day a month for "Show and Tell." Encourage employees to brown bag lunch and bring in something from home (hobby, accomplishment, video game, etc.) to "show and tell" other employees about. It doesn't have to be a trophy, just an interest, such as a cake recipe (with samples), pictures, etc.

If you're a crafty person or someone who likes to be creative, take a look on Pinterest or other social media sites for inspiration. Remember, recognition doesn't have to be expensive; it just needs to be sincere. Sometimes the best recognition comes in the form of two words, "Thank you."