



PROPERLY PRESENTED, RECOGNITION STANDS THE TEST OF TIME

Stan Hilton - Senior Editor, Human Capital

How long does it take for a human resources department to plug in a new employee? Unfortunately, much, much longer than it might have taken to properly say, “Thanks,” to the employee who once fit that now-empty slot. Time means money, and turnover means big money. According to a survey conducted by Memphis-based BT Novations, four out of five employers say turnover is a top concern, but only one out of 11 has measured how much it costs.

“With all the attention paid to employee attrition, it’s surprising how few companies have a clear picture of its financial impact on their business,” says David Erdman, president and CEO of BT Novations. “Organizations that track and measure their turnover quickly realize how critical it is to improve retention, and they have a benchmark by which to gauge their effectiveness.”

Erdman believes senior management needs to take another look at retention and empower those who can turn around turnover. “At first glance, retention may sound like an HR issue,” says Erdman. “But for better retention, responsibility must be shared by senior management, HR and, most important, by middle managers and supervisors.”

Top companies recognize the correlation, according to Adrian Gostick, author of *Managing With Carrots: Using recognition to attract and retain the best people*.

“To keep our best people, we must be recognizing and rewarding them in a consistent, strategic manner; it’s that simple,” says Gostick, director of marketing and corporate communications at O.C. Tanner Recognition Co., Salt Lake City.

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Timepieces and writing instruments have been traditional recognition gifts since the sundial, but the presentation can be the key to making the recognition value last.

“The presentation of the award should never be underestimated,” says Spencer Toomey, vice president of special markets at Bulova, Woodside, N.Y. “Research among reward recipients and attendees tells us that a successful rewards presentation has a number of positive effects. It builds commitment, reinforces loyalty, communicates values, increases productivity and helps reduce turnover.”

Proper presentation can make a remarkable difference in a recognition program, believes Gostick.

“Effective presentations are a wonderful opportunity to create bonding experiences with your employees, to align an individual and coworkers with your corporate strategy and to say a sincere thank you, all of which helps you keep your best employees and keep them committed to you for a long, long time,” says Gostick.

“Whether it is a small gathering or a gala affair, it is the recipient’s moment in the spotlight and the culmination of months or years of hard work,” says Toomey. “A bad presentation can dim the glow of even the most impressive award.”

The most beautiful engraved watch, a grandfather clock or a world-class pen and pencil set can lose luster and actually have the undesired effect if presented improperly.

“A poor presentation doesn’t have to be catastrophic to be disastrous,” says Toomey, who builds the case that the old standard meeting in the lunchroom may miss the mark. “Mediocrity is just as demotivating,” he says.

Bulova offers a how-to guide, *How To Run A Successful Awards Presentation*, with tips on all of the aspects of awards presentation planning, including budget, communications, venue selection, room setup tips and presenters.

Timepieces and writing instruments have a wide price range and an appropriately priced thank-you can be found for any recognition opportunity.

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“Engraving or any type of personalization makes a reward even more special,” says Toomey. “That makes it even more of a cherished gift to the recipient. It’s another constant reminder of a job well done.”

Fashion trends in watches today include stainless steel and non-traditional colors. No-battery-needed quartz watches are hot, as well as solar-powered models. But trends come and go, and Toomey thinks care should be taken. If it’s a short-term recognition program, trendy may work. “Remember also that the trend in New York may not be the trend in Iowa,” says Toomey.

Watches also work well for recognition gifts that encourage continued excellence. The continuity can engender increased accomplishment and further recognition. Bulova offers diamond recognition watches.

“As the recipient accomplishes more goals or continues exemplary service, the number of diamonds on the watch can increase to reflect that,” says Toomey. “And, of course, tribute watches are engravable.”