# RECOGNITION / REWARD

Recognition can be delivered in a number of ways. Think about just saying "Thanks." Praise is inexpensive. If it only takes a few minutes to reap days worth of increased productivity and morale, isn't it worth it? This doesn't mean that meaningless praise is going to work.

**When and How Often To Recognize**

Recognition should be a daily management practice using personal praise, thank you notes, or public praise. It does not need to be formal or time consuming. The most appreciated form of recognition is for you to personally congratulate your employee for doing a good job.

Jim Brintnall, in his article, "What Makes a Good Reward?" in *Recognition News, Vol. 2, Issue 2,* said recognition has to be **SMART!** That means the rewards should be:

- **Sincere.** Above all else, a good reward should reflect a genuine expression of appreciation. Token acknowledgements leave something to be desired.

- **Meaningful.** To endure a motivating influence, rewards should be aligned with the values, goals, and priorities that matter the most.

- **Adaptable.** The diverse workplace demands alternatives. Consider creative options to keep your program fresh. No single reward format works for everyone all the time. [Recognition should be adapted and valuable to the receiver.]

- **Relevant.** Some personal dimension is essential to a good reward. No matter how formal or informal, expensive or affordable, the relevance of any recognition will be improved with a personal touch – it's a little thing that makes a big difference. [Recognition should be provided by someone of significance to the receiver.]

- **Timely.** It is important that rewards respond to the behavior they are intending to reinforce. Don't let too much time pass or the reward may be devalued and credibility eroded.

To ensure that employees tie recognition into the work unit or agency's strategic goals, be certain to tell employees what they did right and how it interacts with the goals. Provide the opportunity for recognition to come from a variety of sources. Peer-to-peer recognition usually is highly valued by employees. It can be used to develop a supportive work environment.

For many employees, recognition received through the expression of genuine appreciation for the work they do is a reward. Being involved in a project or receiving special training may be another's reward. Make no mistake, however, that most

employees would not turn down a monetary, non-monetary or recognition leave reward! We have compiled a list of no and low cost options that managers may consider. (See "Reasons and Ideas for Recognition")

In developing your rewards incorporating gifts or prizes, remember that some employees are recipients and some are non-recipients. Pay careful attention to your goals and determine if a particular program works well in your work unit. It is possible to cause more harm through competitive contests than to provide some form of recognition that rewards a greater number of your employees. Also, consider whether the recognition and reward focuses employees more on the gift or prize than on the underlying goals.