

Dr. Bob Nelson Consulting Employee Motivation Demystified

In today's ever-evolving, fast-paced workplaces, the traditional methods of employee recognition (service anniversary awards, employee-of-the-month awards, holiday/birthday parties, annual awards events, etc.) have become obsolete. Increasingly, such practices do not effectively motivate a growing number of employees such as the Millennials, who currently are the largest generation in the workforce, virtual and remote workers. Helping organizations be more relevant for today's workers with more data-driven employee recognition practices is Dr. Bob Nelson, head of Bob Nelson Consulting and president of Nelson Motivation Inc.

The leading authority and "Consultant's Consultant" on the topic and dubbed "The King of Rewards," by Workforce Management magazine, Dr. Bob has worked as an Executive Strategist for HR issues for 80 percent of the Fortune 500 during his 25-year journey in the employee recognition space. The only person to have done a PhD dissertation on the topic, "Factors that Encourage or Inhibit the Use of Non-Monetary Recognition by U.S. Managers," Dr. Bob has been featured in national media such as The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post, CBS' 60 Minutes, CNN, PBS, NPR and many more to discuss how best to motivate today's workers. "Ironically," he observes, "the best forms of employee recognition driving the best company cultures today have little or no financial cost."

Dr. Bob has sold over five million books on workforce management and employee recognition that have been translated into over 30 languages, including: 1,501 Ways to Reward Employees, The Rewards & Recognition Fieldbook, 1,001 Ways to Engage Employees, The Management Bible and 1,001 Ways to Energize Employees, among others. He has been a long-term collaborator & confidante of Dr. Ken Blanchard, "The One Minute Manager," and is currently a personal coach for Dr. Marshall Goldsmith, the world's #1-ranked executive leadership coach.



Dr. Bob Nelson

Find out what your employees most want and then systematically provide that to them when they do good work

"To establish an effective employee recognition culture, companies have to gain a clearer understanding of what their employees most want and then systematically provide those things as they perform well," he explains, and Dr. Bob does precisely that. "If a company has an employee recognition program that rewards everyone the same way, it will inevitable fail because what most motivates employees varies so widely — one size no longer fits all today," he observes.

Another big challenge businesses large and small face today is attracting and retaining talent — especially in the current tight labor market. "You have to be the company employees want to work for because they have great managers that inspire workers to do their best each day, every day," says Nelson. "Short of that, you'll likely have a culture of entitlement in which employees expect more from the company just for showing up year after year," he explains. "If organizations truly develop an employee recognition culture, research shows they can increase employee retention sevenfold," he concludes.

In his doctoral research, Dr. Bob found the primary reason why managers don't recognize their employees when they did good work was: "They didn't know how to do it well." To counter this, he trains leaders as to WHY the topic is no longer optional today and strategies, techniques and examples for HOW they can each become skilled in applying timely, specific recognition to their employees on an ongoing basis, so far presenting this message to leaders on six continents.

With workplaces increasingly becoming more high-tech and more employees working virtually, Dr. Bob cautions on the effects of utilizing tech-based tools when recognizing employees: "Today, there are some excellent software platforms to track and leverage the impact of employee recognition programs. Within any organization, however, employees still crave personal thanks and praise when they do good work from those individuals they most hold in high-esteem, foremost of whom is their immediate manager. The best recognition makes people personally feel special, and for that, there is no substitute." 