

Trending Now for 2016

6 Great Ways to Maximize Your Service Award Investment

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Change is inevitable. With today's fluctuating economy, rapidly evolving technology and multiple generations in the workplace, a long-timer can mean someone who's been with a company for three years. This means the employer/employee relationship has to change – the paradigms have shifted. So how do you attract and retain talented employees? It starts with a strong culture and part of that culture includes celebrating milestones. To make an impact, your company's service anniversary experience has to align with today's workplace. As we head into a new year, here are the latest trends to ensure your employees get recognized at the right time - and with the right message - in an impactful way.

TREND #1: Recognize early.

Most typical service awards programs don't recognize tenure until an employee hits the five-year mark. But with the increase of Millennials in the workforce, who tend to job hop more than other generations (91% expect to stay in a job for less than three years), it's quickly becoming less common to make it to a five-year anniversary. All this means going five years without any type of formal recognition for service is a really long time to wait – too long – and can be a contributing factor to employee churn.

Take action: Incorporate formal recognition earlier by including 1-year and 3-year milestones in your service anniversary program. Consider including informal recognition at the 3-month, 6-month and 9-month marks such as a manager giving an employee a handwritten card along with their favorite coffee drink.

TREND #2: Engage managers.

Managers play a huge role in any service anniversary program. Their support and adoption of the program will ultimately determine its success (or failure). Managers are the ones who give milestone recognition to employees and they're the ones who will make your program memorable, passable...or forgettable.

Take action: Make it a top priority to train managers upon the program launch or when any program updates are made so they understand the importance of milestone recognition and how best to give it. Give them access to resources they can reference when they need them and make sure there are ongoing communications to keep the program top of mind.



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TREND #3: Offer choice.

While company-branded merchandise may be a nice fit for new employees or for getting the word out about new product launches, it shouldn't be your go-to for service awards. Your employees work hard for your company and are ambassadors for your brand but their service award should be about them...not you.

Take action: Offer a collection of lifestyle awards culturally and demographically appropriate for employees in your organization. A meaningful award is something they'll be excited to receive but may not buy for themselves. A designer handbag or a golf club is a nice reminder of their recognition and gives them a greater affinity to your organization each time they use it.

TREND #4: Think (and act) globally.

With employees all around the world, it's essential that their recognition experience is memorable and meaningful, no matter where they are. Partnering with a supplier that has a global presence and offers comprehensive programs will help you better reach and recognize your employees. Plus, it allows you to successfully address any cultural issues, while also avoiding expensive international shipping and duties.

Take action: Ask the right questions to make sure program suppliers have brick-and-mortar locations outside of the United States. That way, your employees will have access to culturally appropriate award selections and local customer service. A U.S.-based supplier can easily ship awards across borders, but one with a true global footprint will save you shipping costs and provide locally relevant awards.

TREND #5: Be relevant.

Today's employees are on their phones whenever they have a free moment. They're checking in, catching up and staying connected to the latest news, emails, weather, pictures, videos and statuses. Employees are using their mobile devices to connect whenever, wherever and however they want to.

Take action: Magnify service awards using mobile and social conventions that your employees commonly use. When recognizing milestones, include a social feed where coworkers, family and friends can comment, like and post photos and videos to commemorate the occasion. A responsive and interactive web design lets employees view their recognition and redeem for an award on any device they use.

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TREND #6: Make it personal.

Everyone loves to see their name in lights. Personalization is key to making the award recipient feel as if the celebration is all about them — which, of course, it is! Put your recipients in the spotlight, whether it's a tailored communication package delivered to them by their manager, or an engaging, personal email sent directly to their inbox.

Take action: From the awards and messages your employees receive about their milestones to the website they visit to choose their award, make sure to match and enhance your company culture. Use language and branding that is energetic, positive and puts the spotlight on your employees.

For more information on how BI WORLDWIDE can help you build a successful service anniversary program in the year ahead, visit: BIWORLDWIDE.com or email info@BIWORLDWIDE.com.

