

A Carrot A Day A dose of recognition for your employees

By Adrian Gostick and Chester Elton

Praise Effort. Reward Results

Our job is teaching leaders how to say thanks.

We know, that shouldn't be a real job, but it is. Why? Because very few managers put this simple concept to work. Just ask yourself if you ever miss opportunities to thank your employees when they go above-and-beyond for you. Or ponder for a moment what happens when you don't say thanks in a meaningful way when someone pulls off something great. Will they try that hard again?

Now, to be fair, you aren't alone. We could fill a Central American soccer stadium with managers who don't offer effective praise or rewards. These are the guys who offer such thoughtful contributions to leadership as:

"They get their recognition every two weeks in their paycheck."

"I don't care if they like me, as long as they respect me."

"If they want warm and fuzzy, they can buy a puppy."

But ever since researchers started conducting workplace satisfaction surveys, employees have been in search of carrots. Take 1949, when Lawrence Lindahl asked North American workers to rank the rewards of their jobs. Highest on the employees' lists were: (1) feeling appreciated for work done and 2) feeling "in" on things. Managers were shocked. They had guessed that good wages and job security would be one and two. Wouldn't you?

But that was the forties, right? Certainly today's employees are more realistic. They want money above all. Well, the study has been replicated many times in recent years. The results? Each time, the findings are exactly the same.

So ask yourself: When was the last time you publicly recognized a great employee for her specific contributions to your team? 1949?

The truth is, *most* managers fail to regularly recognize their employees. The leaders who do have a strategic advantage over the majority of their peers and competitors. Employees fed a steady diet of carrots focus better on team or company goals. They spot new opportunities faster. They have longer employment life spans. And they can lift you and your team higher than you might have dreamed possible.

We've seen it happen in organizations around the globe. And in this column we are going to offer some easy-to-use recognition ideas, hints and pieces of advice that we've learned along the way. Our goal is to help you become a better leader – a person who is able to tap the power of the carrot to build a stronger workplace where people come, stay, and stay committed to your goals.

So let's get started.

Today's Carrot A Day: One-Minute

Recognition

Here's your first idea. And all it takes is 60 seconds. Try this *today*, the minute you see an

employee doing something right. Don't hesitate.

Just:

- Tell them exactly what they did right.
(“Julie, I notice that you picked up the phones today, since Sandra was sick.”)
- Tell them what value or goal they met.
(“That shows a lot of teamwork, and that's one of our core goals around here.”)
- Explain how that impacts the company.
(“We might have missed that emergency call from our biggest customer without your help.”)
- Express appreciation. (“Thanks so much.”)

Voila! In less time than it takes to stir your morning coffee, you've recognized someone with *specific* praise. Now, how easy is that?

Want to learn more about employee motivation? Go to www.carrotbooks.com. And if you are wondering who are Adrian Gostick and Chester Elton? They are acclaimed authors of the Wall Street Journal and Business Week best seller “A Carrot A Day.”