Recognition Professionals International (RPI)

RPI Best Practice Standards

Program and Standards

Revised: April 2007

Recognition Professionals International
1601 N. Bond Street, Suite 303, Naperville, IL 60563
www.recognition.org

Program Purpose
Recognition Professionals International's mission is to enhance organizational performance through workforce recognition by:

- providing access to best practice standards, education, research and the exchange of ideas
- creating opportunities for our diverse membership to grow professionally
- advocating recognition and engagement strategies as a means to promote organizational excellence

We believe that employee performance is the key to success for any organization. We know, based on extensive academic, scientific and business research, that employee performance is enhanced by systematic Employee Recognition, defined as:

The acknowledgement of an individual's or team's desired behavior, effort, or business result that supports the organization's goals and values.

RPI is dedicated to enhancing workplace performance through recognition by providing information, research, education, best practices, and a forum for networking and benchmarking to foster the use of, effectiveness of, and enthusiasm for recognition.

The purpose of the RPI Best Practice Standards program is to:
- Establish objective standards by which to evaluate employee recognition programs;
- Recognize organizations that successfully implement recognition programs; and,
- Share information on case studies of employee recognition best practices with RPI's membership.

RPI Best Practice Standards
Overview
RPI's Best Practice Standards have been developed based on knowledge gained from literature, conferences, and experience in the development of recognition programs. During the research process, RPI identified the common elements of known successful recognition programs. These elements have been listed and described as the RPI Best Practice Standards. These standards are intended to provide guidance for the creation and maintenance of a recognition system, and for independent evaluation of any system for Best Practice rating and/or benchmarking.

The original RPI Best Practice Standards have been amended to reflect lessons learned from previous program cycles, including suggestions from our judges and Best Practice award recipients. The Standards have been designed to be useful for the creation and evaluation of recognition programs in the public and

private sectors, large and small organizations, and organizations with single or multiple locations or functions.

There are seven RPI Best Practice Standards:

Standard 1. Recognition Strategy
Standard 2. Management Responsibility
Standard 3. Recognition Program Measurement
Standard 4. Communication Plan
Standard 5. Recognition Training
Standard 6. Recognition Events and Celebrations
Standard 7. Program Change and Flexibility

The RPI "Best Overall Recognition Program" award is to recognize recognition programs that are outstanding on an overall basis.

RPI "Best in Class" awards are to recognize programs that not only fulfill the basic requirements in Standards 1 and 2 but also are outstanding in one or more of the specific areas covered by Standards 3 through 7.

A successful program includes Intangible Recognition (verbal and/or written praise in acknowledgement of individual or team achievement), Awards (cash or tangible items for individual or team achievement), and Celebrations (planned or spontaneous events in recognition of individual or team achievement). These categories are not mutually exclusive. Intangible Recognition may involve a certificate or other token of appreciation. Celebrations may consist of an informal team lunch or an organization-wide event. Successful recognition programs use a variety of motivational tools and communication methods to maximize every opportunity to positively reinforce behavior that is consistent with the organization's goals and values.

RPI Best Practice Standards
Recognition Program
STANDARD 1. RECOGNITION STRATEGY
General - The organization establishes and maintains a recognition strategy that promotes employee recognition at all organizational levels and is fully documented. Each element of the program should be focused on identifying employee behaviors that advance the organization's goals and values, and recognizing and reinforcing these behaviors.

Three Dimensional Approach - A comprehensive recognition strategy includes a three-dimensional approach that promotes:

Day-to-Day Recognition encompasses a wide range of recognition that is frequent, ongoing, and informal. It may consist of Intangible Recognition, Awards, Celebrations or eligibility for Awards or Celebrations to recognize behaviors that support organizational goals and values. It may include thank you notes or forms that employees give to one another or verbal praise. All employees can participate in this recognition, supporting recognition up, down and across the organization.

Informal Recognition singles out individuals or teams for progress toward milestones, achieving goals or projects completed. Celebrations may include low cost mementos or refreshments as a way to celebrate achievements or outstanding positive behavior. It is less structured than Formal Recognition and reaches a larger percentage of the employee population.

Formal Recognition consists of a structured program with defined processes and criteria linked to organizational values and goals, a nomination and selection process, and an Awards ceremony where employees receive public recognition and are presented with awards in a formal setting. Generally speaking, it is an annual program and only a small percentage of employees are recognized.

Recognition Program Procedures - Documented procedures for recognition that include:
   • Process for identifying and recognizing day to day positive behaviors
   • Nomination procedures

- Selection criteria & procedures
- Notification procedures
- Award selection
- Procedure for tax or income purposes
- Event planning guidelines
- Procedures to make changes to the program or processes
- Procedure to add team members
- Budgeting procedures
- Tracking procedures

Recognition Program Objectives - Description of the objectives of the recognition system.

Continuous Process Improvement - How the program is designed to continually improve and how it has advanced recognition within the organization.

STANDARD 2. MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITY

Recognition Policy - Senior management defines and documents its recognition policy and overall strategy, including program objectives that reflect its commitment to recognition.

Recognition Program Administration – Responsibility and Authority - Senior management identifies individuals who are responsible for managing the recognition program, including their positions, departments and number of reporting levels from the Chief Executive Officer. If the recognition program is administered by a team or committee, please provide the above information with respect to each team or committee member, together with a description of how the team or committee is selected.

The individuals responsible for the program have the authority to:
- Design program elements to implement the recognition strategy
- Establish recognition practices and procedures
- Negotiate with vendors for award options
- Negotiate programs with labor organizations, if appropriate
- Create and administer recognition budgets
- Schedule, plan and facilitate events and celebrations
- Maintain alignment of recognition program goals to organizational goals
- Develop measures to evaluate program effectiveness

Resources - Senior management identifies and provides adequate resources to manage and maintain the recognition program.

Support and Involvement - Senior management supports the recognition program, communicates their support to all employees, and is personally involved in the program.

Management Review - Senior management periodically reviews the recognition program to determine effectiveness**.**

STANDARD 3. RECOGNITION PROGRAM MEASUREMENT

General - How the recognition program is measured for effectiveness.

Measurement Indicators - The organization establishes recognition program measurement indicators or tools. The measures are statistically valid and substantive in nature. (Examples could include: nominations per communications dollar, level of participation in programs, productivity increase per recognition dollar, employee feedback through surveys or otherwise.) There shall be at least one year of data. The organization provides evidence that the measures are reviewed periodically and used to manage the program.

Employee Participation – The organization documents the level of employee participation in all parts of the recognition strategy, including specific programs. The organization also describes the level of employee satisfaction with the program. There shall be at least one year of data. The organization also describes how they use statistics to validate levels of employee participation in the recognition program. Examples could include number of nominations submitted or number of employees attending a recognition event.

Employee Satisfaction – The organization demonstrates employee satisfaction ratings with their recognition programs, and explains how employee satisfaction is measured.

STANDARD 4. RECOGNITION PROGRAM COMMUNICATION PLAN
General - The organization establishes and maintains a strategic communication plan that communicates all aspects of the recognition strategy including program objectives, recognition processes, events, or celebrations.

Communication Tools - The organization employs a variety of media to reach its audiences: internet and intranet, focus groups, presentations or training, bulletin boards, posters, video, CD, e-mail, literature, telephony, etc. The organization may elect to use any or all media to communicate.

Communication Objectives - The organization has specific communication goals that are periodically measured for effectiveness. Communication goals are easily understood by all, compelling, and action-oriented.

STANDARD 5. RECOGNITION TRAINING
General – The organization describes its methods for training managers and employees at all levels on the principles of effective recognition, and the methods of documenting the objectives of the training and curriculum.

Training Emphasis - The organization demonstrates that training is an important element in the overall recognition strategy, and that the organization devotes the necessary resources to make the training program successful.

Training Results - The organization demonstrates that the recognition training has been effective and has achieved results, and describes how the training has helped employees and managers to develop skills in practicing effective recognition.

STANDARD 6. RECOGNITION EVENTS AND CELEBRATIONS
General - The organization demonstrates the process for Celebration, event planning, and/or Award ceremonies to recognize its employees. The organization demonstrates creativity and uniqueness in these events.

Responsibility - The organization assigns responsibility for the planning of these Celebrations, and that person demonstrates creativity in their planning.

Resources – The organization devotes adequate resources (funding invested and staff) to the planning and execution of celebrations and events.

History/Documentation – The organization demonstrates how photos, videos, and other media are used to document the Celebration or event and to enhance the overall recognition program.

STANDARD 7. PROCESS/PROGRAM CHANGE AND FLEXIBILITY
General - The organization demonstrates flexibility in its recognition program. As changes arise, the organization demonstrates its ability to adjust to changing goals and objectives and the diverse recognition needs of its employees.

Change Management - The organization describes how changes to the recognition program are determined. This may include:
- Adjusting the recognition program to reflect changing organizational goals.
- Tailoring recognition to meet the diverse needs of individuals and teams throughout the organization.

Nomination Process
Each year, RPI selects one recognition program for the "Best Overall Recognition Program" award, and also selects up to 5 additional programs for "Best in Class" awards based on the recognition program elements described in Best Practices Standards 3 through 7.

Organizations may self-nominate or be nominated by someone outside their organization. Please note: A nomination of any organization other than its own must be with the nominee's approval. Nominees must be willing to share their processes with RPI, be audited and have the results published. The recipient of RPI's "Best Overall Recognition Program" award must be willing to share their processes in a one (1) hour presentation at the RPI Fall Summit.

The recipient of RPI's "Best Overall Recognition Program" award is not eligible to receive additional Best Practice Awards for three years. Past recipients of a "Best in Class" award are not eligible to receive additional Best Practice Awards for the same Standard for three years. Organizations that have previously been nominated but did not receive an award may be nominated again.

Best Practice Sponsors are not eligible to submit Best Practice nominations, nor are sponsors eligible to receive the Best Practice Award.

All nominations must be submitted on a RPI Best Practice Nomination Form and must be accompanied by a program document and/or other relevant materials sufficient to demonstrate that the program is documented as required by the RPI Best Practice Standards. These materials must be submitted via the online application or in an electronic format to Christi@recognition.org or sent on CD to the below address.

> Recognition Professionals International
> RPI Best Practice Standards – Recognition Program
> 1601 North Bond Street, Suite 303
> Naperville, IL 60563

To assist our judges, please keep the following two important points in mind:

1. Please give specific examples in the Nomination Form whenever possible, to supplement general statements; and
2. Please include specific cross-references in the Nomination Form to the supporting documents and supplemental materials.

If you are nominating more than one organization, please use a separate form for each organization. As you prepare the Nomination Form, please refer to the Best Practice Program Standards for more specific guidance on each item.

TO APPLY:
Official Nomination Forms are available by contacting RPI Headquarters at 630-369-7783 or by visiting www.recognition.org. RPI member organizations and non-RPI organizations are eligible to participate. An application fee of $150 is required for RPI members and $400 (includes a one year RPI membership) for non-RPI members. Nomination Forms, together with the application fee, should be sent via electronic format to RPI headquarters at:

RPI Best Practice Committee
1601 N. Bond St., Suite 303
Naperville, IL 60563

All nominations must be postmarked by the deadline date indicated on the RPI NOMINATION FORM. If you have any questions about the RPI Best Practice Standards - Recognition Program, please call 630-369-7783 or contact RPI Headquarters at RPI@recognition.org.

Selection Process
The RPI Best Practice Standards program seeks to provide an objective and competent evaluation of each award nomination. This is achieved by establishing a Judges Panel comprised of independent recognition experts. The judges evaluate each nomination based on the Best Practice Standards, and select recipients for the Best Overall Recognition Program award and Best in Class awards. If a judge has a current business relationship with a nominee organization, s/he will not participate in evaluation of that program.

Best Practice Awards
Best Practice Award recipients will be notified each year in February. The organizations selected for Best Practice Awards will be formally recognized at RPI's Annual Conference during the All Awards Dinner Presentation. Best Overall Award recipients will be invited to make presentations at the following RPI Fall Summit about their recognition programs. All Recipients' recognition practices will be profiled in association and trade publications and website features.

Background
The RPI Best Practice Development Team laid the groundwork for the RPI Best Practice Program beginning in 1998, conducting extensive research to identify the elements of a successful recognition program. The Best Practice Program was launched in 2001. For more detail, see "History of the Best Practice Program", below.

Best Practice White Papers
With the assistance of our Best Practice Award recipients, RPI has prepared Summary White Papers profiling the recognition programs that have been selected for Best Practice Awards. To purchase reports, visit www.recognition.org. All RPI Best Practice White Paper summaries are free for RPI members.

Funding/Sponsorship
RPI feels strongly that the prestige and credibility of this award will be enhanced if organizations concerned with employee recognition provide funding for the program. Organizations interested in sponsorship opportunities should contact RPI headquarters for more information. Sponsors will have the opportunity to publish findings and case studies from the Best Practice Program. Sponsors are not eligible to submit Best Practice nominations, nor are sponsors eligible to receive the Best Practice Award.

History of the RPI Best Practice Standards - Program
In 1998, the Best Practice Development Team laid the groundwork for the RPI Best Practice Standards program. The Development Team interviewed dozens of employee recognition practitioners, consulted extensively with the American Productivity Center, and reviewed literature, articles and conference materials on employee recognition. During the research process, team members identified the elements of successful recognition programs. Based on their research and their own experiences in the development of recognition programs, the team developed a basic outline for the Best Practice Program and Standards. The Team modeled the program after *Fortune* Magazine's 100 Best Companies, *Working Mother* Magazine's 100 Most Family Friendly Companies, and to a degree, the Baldridge Award for methodology.

In May 2001, RPI (formerly NAER) officially kicked off the Best Practice Program at its national conference in Scottsdale, Arizona and invited nominations for the first Best Practice Awards. Two award recipients were announced at RPI's annual conference in Arlington Heights, Illinois, June 2002. CalPers, California Public Employees' Retirement System was presented with the Best Overall Recognition Program Award. TELUS, a leading communications company in Canada, received three Best in Class awards for its recognition practices.

RPI Best Practice Award Recipients

2009   Best Overall Recognition Program: **Delta Air Lines**
        Best in Class:
                Standard1 - Recognition Strategy…………………….Ohio State University Medical Center
                Standard 2 - Management Responsibility……………Scotiabank
                Standard 3 - Recognition Program Measurement…..Faxton-St. Luke's Healthcare
                Standard 4 - Communication Plan……………………Scotiabank
                Standard 5 - Recognition Training……………………Scotiabank
                Standard 6 - Recognition Events and Celebrations…Scotiabank
                Standard 7 - Program Change and Flexibility………..TELUS Communications

2008   Best Overall Recognition Program: **Cargill, Inc.**
        Best in Class:
                Standard1 - Recognition Strategy…………………….Scotiabank
                Standard 2 - Management Responsibility……………TD Canada Trust
                Standard 3 - Recognition Program Measurement…..TD Canada Trust

            Standard 4 - Communication Plan……………………Scotiabank
            Standard 5 - Recognition Training……………………Bank of America
            Standard 6 - Recognition Events and Celebrations…Delta Airlines
            Standard 7 - Program Change and Flexibility………..Scotiabank

<u>2007</u>   Best Overall Recognition Program: **MGM Grand**
        Best in Class:
            Standard1 - Recognition Strategy……………………Cargill, Inc.
            Standard 2 - Management Responsibility……………Cargill, Inc.
            Standard 3 - Recognition Program Measurement…..Scotiabank

<u>2007</u>   RPI Best Practice Award Recipients-Continued
        Best in Class:
            Standard 4 - Communication Plan……………………Wells Fargo
            Standard 5 - Recognition Training……………………Wells Fargo
            Standard 6 - Recognition Events and Celebrations…Cargill, Inc.
            Standard 7 - Program Change and Flexibility………..Scotiabank

<u>2006</u>   Best Overall Recognition Program: **Westfield Group**
        Best in Class:
            Standard 3 - Recognition Program Measurement….. Integris Health
            Standard 4 - Communication Plan…………………… Integris Health

<u>2005</u>   Best Overall Recognition Program: **Conemaugh Memorial Medical Center**
        Best in Class:
            Standard 4 - Communication Plan…………………… University of Michigan HHC

<u>2004</u>   Best Overall Recognition Program: **La Porte Regional Health System**
        Best in Class:
            Standard 4 - Communication Plan…………………… Michigan Department of Transportation

<u>2002</u>   Best Overall Recognition Program: **CalPers**
        Best in Class:
            Standard 4 - Communication Plan…………………… TELUS
            Standard 5 - Recognition Training…………………….. TELUS
            Standard 7 - Program Change and Flexibility……….. TELUS