

Reward & Recognition

With so many people involved in the delivery of facilities services it is important that any facility manager understands and implements an effective reward and recognition strategy. Regardless of the strategic objective, whether it is reducing costs or improving service, an effective reward and recognition strategy can help motivate the FM team to perform better. It can also reinforce behaviours that it may be desirable to encourage in pursuit of those strategic objectives.

When developing a reward and recognition strategy for facilities people, it is important to find out which incentives really motivate the people involved. It must be remembered that 'rewards' or 'benefits' may be intangible; the Work Foundation found that work content and fulfilling personal goals and ambitions are both more important, and working hours are almost as important as the level of pay offered.

While Reward and Recognition strategies have an important role to play in motivating teams, they work in a different way to incentives in that they focus on past performance while incentives focus on future performance. Despite this simplicity, many organisations get the two confused. It is important to avoid this confusion because a good deal of cash can be pumped into rewards in the expectation that they will have an incentive effect.

Some pay systems reward only people who achieve top results, creating performance rankings that target variable pay at the, say, top ten percent of performers. Other schemes set out explicitly to reward improvements in performance by the combined team. The choice between these approaches depends partly on philosophy and partly on whether the Facility Manager believes that they have an elite group that generates most of the value or whether a wider group of staff plays a part.

Formal recognition schemes of the Employee of the Year kind need to be carefully designed in order to ensure that they don't become over-engineered and, therefore, too mechanistic. Ironically, the need to be transparent and demonstrably equitable, thus avoiding charges of favouritism and bias, can often push such schemes towards being very formulaic and inflexible.

Experienced facilities leaders will testify to the motivational power of a well-timed, genuine, non-patronising 'thank you' from someone with status in the organisation whose opinion is valued. Given the complexity of the reward and recognition schemes that exist in many UK organisations, it is sad that that the simplicity and effectiveness of such recognition is often lost.

The Work Foundation produces independent research on a wide range of work related topics much of which is free to download from their website www.theworkfoundation.com