

Effective Rewards and Incentives

The first place to start when developing an incentive program is to identify exactly what you want to accomplish. You can't just spend money and then hope you see results. You've got to have a game plan. As you've read through this chapter, you've probably gotten a pretty solid feel for the personality types that formulate your team. You've probably also uncovered what your team's strengths and weaknesses are. Based on where your team is at, you can start designing rewards and incentives to produce exactly what you're striving for. When doing so, there are some general rules that are helpful to keep in mind.

First of all, always remember that what is considered a great reward can vary according to the individual and the particular circumstances. Many successful managers suggest mixing individual incentives with team rewards. This way, you are meeting individual needs while still fostering cooperation and maintaining attention on company goals. Incentives that are based on group performance also help salespeople become better team players and feel a sense of ownership in company goals. This way, they can feel some internal motivation and personal satisfaction in seeing the job done well instead of always depending on some external, temporary factor to motivate them.

Fair warning, however, that incentives often lead to a warning of the diminishing returns trap. What I mean by this is that a certain reward will lose its impact over time if it is used too much. That is, instead of feeling rewarded, people will come to expect the incentive as an automatic return for their efforts. The other side of this issue is that when the reward is taken away, the good behavior will also disappear. Motivation based on rewards is an external influence instead an internal one. It is worth pointing out here that the big, tangible rewards can definitely give your salespeople something to keep their eyes on the whole year long, but don't neglect the smaller incentives. Saying thank you, noticing a rep's extra effort, helping a rep through a slump and just day-to-day acknowledgements can count big and will contribute to your teambuilding efforts just as much as huge year-end bonuses will.

With any great incentive program, you have to devote time to promoting it. Obviously, a big, year-long incentive program is going to flop if you only mention it one time. If you want an incentive program to produce maximum return, you've got to promote it by giving your team members weekly updates, newsletter blurbs, short-term incentives, etc. Find ways to keep the momentum going to make sure the program pays off. Anything creative, fun or different that you can do will make your program more effective. It's also very helpful if there is prominent visual reminder whereby the team can see the countdown to the program's end.

Below is an extensive list of reward ideas you can incorporate into your motivational efforts. Some can be applied short term, others long term. Some are team rewards; others can be adapted to individuals. Some will work great for your team; others will not. See what fits your team's situation best. Often, it is just a matter of finding something fun that will break the tedium of the sales cycle. In terms of physical merchandise, remember that the *value* in the salesperson's eyes will be much more than the actual price tag. Cash disappears, but your customer will always remember that her/his laptop, TV or whatever it is came from your company.

Just a few more basic guidelines: 1) Be sure your salespeople understand what's expected of them, whether any reward is given or not. It is not wise to reward a salesperson for bare-minimum work. Once base requirements are consistently being met, then you have a starting point from which you can set higher goals. 2) Make the incentive program's timeline is clear so everyone knows exactly when it starts and ends and exactly what's required in the interim. 3) Establish the reward up front so people have a clear vision in their minds of what they are working toward. Remember that while cash is exciting, often other incentives can be more powerful. The actual dollar amount of an item and the value placed on that item by the recipient are two different things. If money were enough, why wouldn't a salesperson working on commission already be excited and motivated enough every day? 4) Whenever possible, use rewards that can be shared with friends or family. For example, such a reward could be a free dinner for two at a nice restaurant. If the rep

can share the results of her/his efforts with others, the incentive will be more exciting and will drive them to do better.

101 Ways to Motivate, Energize and Inspire Your Team

Group Building

1. Movie day—bring popcorn
2. Water-skiing/Lake trip
3. Join the city softball team
4. Go watch a professional team sport
5. Miniature golf
6. Volunteer opportunities
7. Cold-calling contest
8. Work-at-home week
9. Have the CEO address the sales staff
10. Racecar contest
11. Bring in a comedian for sales training
12. Fun, harmless practical jokes
13. Joke of the day to start a meeting
14. Bring in take-out for reps staying late
15. Laser tag
16. Ropes course
17. Bowling
18. Free lunch for the first sale of the day
19. VM broadcast about someone's personal success
20. Company Olympics

Company Socials

21. Luau
22. Fiesta
23. Ice cream social

24. Barbeque
25. Pizza party
26. Customer appreciation day
27. Four-day weekend
28. Bring in donuts
29. Company newsletter about the success of the week
30. Dress up like Santa and hand out gifts
31. Thanksgiving or other holiday party

Esteem Building/Awards

32. Best phone demeanor
33. Best dresser
34. Most creative close
35. Best sales week
36. Most improved
37. Best team player
38. Most cold calls
39. Most new clients
40. Best customer service
41. Top attitude
42. Special note or email
43. Telegram
44. FedEx special note
45. Thank-you card
46. Personal pat on back
47. Lead part of a training meeting
48. Personal goal-setting meeting
49. Suggestion box
50. Personal call from CEO

Simple compliments like...

51. You're incredible.
52. You're a good...
53. I believe in you.
54. Great job!
55. You made my day.
56. Hug.
57. Thank you for ...
58. I'm proud of you.
59. Perfect.
60. You're awesome!
61. Well Done.
62. Great!
63. Excellent!
64. I knew you could do it.
65. I trust you.
66. Spectacular!
67. Outstanding!
68. I'm your biggest fan.

Friendly gestures like...

69. Smile
70. Warm handshake
71. Pat on the back

Individual Building

72. Daily contact with praise
73. Let them off to take their children to school on the first day
74. Free calls on company cell phones
75. Motivational plaque
76. Health club membership

- 77. Lotto wheel
- 78. Drive CEO's car for the week
- 79. Shirt/Hat with logo
- 80. Special parking spot
- 81. Photo with CEO
- 82. Remodel office
- 83. Disneyland trip
- 84. Porsche for weekend

Personal Development

85. Books

<i>As a Man Thinketh</i>	<i>The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People</i>
<i>Swim With the Sharks</i>	<i>How to Win Friends and Influence People</i>
<i>Maximum Influence</i>	<i>The Power of Your Subconscious Mind</i>
<i>Think and Grow Rich</i>	<i>Psycho-Cybernetics</i>
<i>The Magic of Thinking Big</i>	<i>Learned Optimism</i>

86. Videos

<i>Remember the Titans</i>	<i>Miracle</i>
<i>Rocky</i>	<i>Chariots of Fire</i>
<i>Apollo 13</i>	<i>Field of Dreams</i>
<i>Mr. Holland's Opus</i>	<i>Seabiscuit</i>
<i>The Right Stuff</i>	<i>The Rookie</i>

87. Audios

- The Secrets to Manifesting Your Destiny*
- Lead the Field*
- Unleash the Power Within*
- The Psychology of Selling*
- Magnetic Persuasion*
- Present with Power*

The Strangest Secret
Exponential Success
The Science of Personal Achievement
The Psychology of Winning

88. Travel Incentives

Hawaii	Upgrade to first class
Local hotel with dinner	Limo to airport
Las Vegas	Bermuda
Cancun	Caribbean cruise
Free miles to fly	Tahiti
Hotel suite upgrade	Australia

Monetary Rewards

89. Large-screen TV
90. Computer
91. DVD player
92. \$100 bill
93. Lottery tickets
94. Restaurant gift certificates
95. Cashews
96. Take the rep's family to dinner
97. Department store gift certificate
98. Movie rental gift certificate
99. Costco certificate
100. Bookstore gift certificate
101. New suit

At the conclusion of an incentive program, it is important to assess how successful it was. Did you get the results you wanted? One of the best ways to judge the program's effectiveness, besides considering your own observations, is to get feedback from the

reps and administrators involved. You want to be sure that your directions were communicated clearly and at the right intervals, that the rewards were appealing and sparked interest and drive, that your team members felt supported and prepared to take on the challenges being presented, that the program boosted morale, team effort, energy and creativity, etc.

What were the weaknesses, if any? Did the program meet or fall short of participants' expectations? And of course, you must consider the bottom line impact on sales. Another important thing that cannot be overlooked is whether there may have been any outside influence that you did not have any control over. For example, has the industry experienced an increase in pricing? Was the product or service *new*, or has there been longstanding consumer awareness and recognition of it? Have there been any fluctuations in the company's marketing campaigns? All of these questions can basically be broken down into different areas, such as goals, budget or administration. In each area, identify what worked and what didn't so you have concrete information to help you develop your next incentive program.

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