



Informal Recognition Ideas for Employees



It's easy and meaningful to recognize the efforts and accomplishments of employees for their work every day, as well as after the completion of projects both large and small.

Taxable Income: Rewards such as cash, gift cards, debit cards or gift certificates are considered taxable income. Any decision to use these types of rewards should be discussed with your supervisor and/or your Financial Transaction Center or Business Service Center.

Bargaining Units: If your employee is represented by one of Cornell's bargaining units, please consult with Workplace Policy and Labor Relations (lmj6; 607-255-6866) before you implement recognition ideas marked by an * as there may be restrictions on these types of rewards.

Related: [Employee recognition programs and awards](#)

Contact the Cornell Rewards and Recognition Committee: recognition@cornell.edu

[accordion]

No cost individual & group recognition

- Say "thank you" on a regular basis
- Smile. It's contagious.
- Notice and praise progress towards a goal
- Check in on a project to give encouragement
- Check in on employees performing daily work to recognize those efforts

- Acknowledge each team member's contribution
- Provide immediate positive reinforcement
- Commend employees for small successes
- Praise employees publicly
- Email a note of appreciation and copy the employee's supervisor
- Handwrite a note of thanks for a job well done
- Encourage, enable and empower employees to provide feedback, input and observations
- Encourage employees to take advantage of development opportunities
- Encourage a team mentality; emphasize the importance of working together
- Recognize the different roles and strengths each employee contributes
- *Casual dress on Fridays
- *Support "flex-friendly" schedules
- Present "State of Department" reports to your employees acknowledging the work and contributions of individuals and teams
- Encourage and implement ideas from employees shared at staff or other group meetings

Other forms of individual recognition

- *Car wash and/or wax
- *Round of golf
- *Occasional lunch or dinner
- "Kudos" candy bars
- Pack(s) of "Extra" gum
- *Magazine subscriptions
- *Theatre or Movie tickets
- *Tickets to sporting event
- *One day parking pass
- Nominations for quarterly employee recognition
- Nominations for special acknowledgments
- *New/varied work or special assignment
- *Attendance at work-related seminar
- Personalized coffee mug
- *Afternoon or day off for project completion
- *Institutional Logo Items
- Create a trophy to be passed around to a different employee each month
- *Day off for a job well done

Other forms of group recognition

- Intermittent gatherings with refreshments or departmental luncheons
- *Occasionally hold a offsite meetings and provide a meal
- *Outing to sporting or other event
- Years of service celebrations
- Occasional free refreshments
- *Off-campus retreats
- *Team Morale Building Events
- Arrange for a team to present the results of its efforts to leadership
- Celebrate with employees at the end of a project
- *Schedule an afternoon or extended lunch hour for activities such as playing board games, softball, soccer, volleyball, and/or miniature-golf

[/accordion]
