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Information Commissioner's Office

Recognition at the ICO

Introduction

Achieving results and maintaining a great performing team takes time and effort.

Managing people effectively goes beyond just ensuring that they perform to the standards you and the organisation expect. ICO managers and leaders challenge and support their teams. They set a clear vision and goals for the future and coach people to develop expertise and achieve service excellence. Equally coaching is part of the line managers' responsibility to develop and recognise staff contributions. Encouraging great performance and recognising it when it takes place is essential to helping people feel motivated, developed and valued.

Pay progression and Recognition

This brief guide sets out what managers can do to recognise when great performance has taken place. It is separate to the pay progression framework which is the mechanism for financially rewarding a sustained contribution and impact over time within a given role. We also want to be able to recognise one off contribution and impact as well as long service.

Furthermore, this guide does not include provision for away days, as away days are not part of recognition. Directors will have access to budgets to authorise one off payments for activities that promote team planning and development -containing a work component.

- **Why recognition is important**

Employees respond to appreciation at work, especially when it's expressed through recognition of their efforts because it confirms their work is valued. A simple thank you goes a long way and will not only make your employees feel good, but it also benefits the organisation in the following ways:

- **Productivity**

It's well-known that engaged staff are significantly more productive, working efficiently and proactively in order to do a good job. If efforts are likely to be praised and recognised, then it makes sense that a member of staff will work harder to receive such employee recognition.

- **Job Satisfaction**

Recognising an employee's efforts demonstrates that the job they're doing is valuable to the organisation. It sends the message that their

hard work is worth recognising and therefore must be important. This, in turn, makes the individual feel that they are making a difference.

- **Employee Contentment**

A content and fulfilled employee can be motivated to perform better because of the positive feeling they have towards the organisation. If an employer treats its staff with respect and gratitude, then those staff members will want to do a good job in return. This positivity can also be felt across the organisation, creating a happy working environment that people will want to be a part of.

- **Retention**

A high staff turnover leads to poor morale that can make others want to look elsewhere. The time required to find and train new staff is expensive, so retaining staff has to be a priority. The provision of recognition gives employees a tangible reason to stay.

- **Loyalty**

If our employees are engaged with our organisation, they will promote the work of the ICO far better than anyone else. Recognising hard work generates loyalty and helps teams to feel an emotional bond with the organisation.

Values and Strategic Priorities

The trigger for most recognition is the demonstration of behaviours linked to the values of the ICO.

- **Ambitious** - Working boldly, ready to test boundaries and take advantage of new opportunities. Working with a sense of genuine urgency, continuously improving when striving to be the very best we can be.
- **Collaborative** – Working towards achieving our goals, supporting one another whilst seeking and sharing information and expertise and working effectively with a range of partners to achieve our collective objectives.
- **Service focused** – Working impartially and ethically to provide excellent services - continuously innovating to remain relevant to the environment we regulate.

Examples based around values and behaviours could include:

- recognition for actions that have enabled the ICO to step up (ambitious)
- recognition for excellence in customer service (customer focused)
- recognition for going beyond expectations (ambitious/ customer focused)
- recognition for excellent collaboration (collaboration /great teamwork internal/external)

Implementing schemes that reflect our strategic goals and priorities, and recognising staff is also one way for internal communication to promote a more consistent dialogue and ensuring all parts of our organisation are working towards a set of shared goals. It also ensures that we are bringing these values to life with real examples of staff living them and behaving in this way.

At the ICO we will use three main schemes to recognise individuals:

1. Manager Recognition
2. Peer recognition
3. Senior Leadership Recognition

The process for each of these schemes are explained further below:

1. Manager Recognition

The power of a simple 'thank you'

Taking the time and effort to say thanks and explain what the person's contribution has done for you, the team, the customer or the ICO is important. It helps the person to identify how their efforts have influenced the success of the organisation and can help to motivate them further.

The key is remembering the importance of giving a few words of thanks and finding the time to do so regularly.

As well as the day to day recognition from their line manager, or Group Manager, messages from a countersigning manager, Head of Department or SLT member identifying what a person has done particularly well can be motivating for some.

Managers should feel comfortable to tell their/a Head of department or an SLT member when an individual has performed particularly well or completed a challenging piece of work to a high standard.

The SLT member / Head of department involved can then decide if and how they want to contact the individual to thank them.

2. Peer recognition

E -Thank You

A bit more special than an email, 'e-Thank You's' are a quick and easy way to demonstrate appreciation and they make it clear that someone has taken time out to recognise hard work. They are also really easy to share, so they can be sent to a team as joint recognition, or can be shared to make a wider audience aware of someone's achievement, all of which are extremely motivational.

A template will be provided that sits on ICON that can be edited for use by all staff. These can also be displayed on notice boards in the areas of the ICO.

3. Senior Leadership Recognition

I. ET Quarterly Recognition

Each quarter the Executive Team will consider recommendations for special commendation awards. These will be for examples of especially noteworthy contribution and impact during the previous quarter. These awards will be announced during the regular ET quarterly all staff briefing.

Staff who are recognised in this way will receive a letter of commendation from the Commissioner that will be added to their HR file.

To mark the award the member of staff will also be able to chose between:

- a) A one-off, non-pensionable payment of £100, which will be paid via payroll and so subject to tax and NI deductions; or
- b) Inviting up to 10 of their colleagues to join them for a non-alcoholic, sandwich lunch/buffet. This event will be held at the office premises. This is an opportunity for the member of staff to

recognise their colleagues who they feel have supported them or who may also have contributed towards their accomplishment. A member of the Executive Team will attend the first part of the lunch to present the award and to further recognise the contribution.

II. Recognising long service

Celebrating long service provides acknowledgement and recognition for members of staff who have spent significant periods of their lives working for ICO.

This will be managed by HR and there is no special criteria required, as it will be based on the length of service. The years of continuous service at, 10, 15 and 20 year milestones will be celebrated together with a long service letter of recognition from the Commissioner and a respective bronze, silver or gold lanyard given to staff by a member of ET

In addition, the ICO will provide a choice for the individual to receive either:

- a) a one-off, non-pensionable payment of £150, which will be paid via payroll and so subject to tax and NI deductions; or
- b) a non-alcoholic, sandwich lunch/buffet lunch for the individual to host up to 15 colleagues of their choosing. This event will be held at the office premises. The Director /ET member will attend to say a few words. This is an opportunity for the member of staff to celebrate their long service with a selection of their colleagues who have perhaps supported them at key times during their career or been a close colleague.

III. Celebrating collective success

The staff events committee will be asked to plan two celebrations of success each year to recognise the collective contribution and impact of all at the ICO. First, a celebration in December and a second in July. These celebrations will be held at our Wilmslow offices and the July celebration will be timed to coincide with the publication of our Annual Report on condition that our Management Board are content with our organisation's performance.

These events will need to adhere to tax and NI rules, as well as respecting religious and cultural differences in the provision of refreshments and entertainment, but it should be designed to be a mark of recognition for the efforts of the staff in achieving the annual report results.

End