

## Employee appreciation lunch... Why & How



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Having a special day celebrating and acknowledging Employees helps remind employees and company leaders that it's a team effort to reaching goals. It's a great way to show your appreciation for the various ways your employees are working for you. It helps boost morale, encourages hard work, and employees really note the dedication and sincerity of the management and owners of businesses during this time.

A major HR organization found that 60% of top-class companies thought employee recognition to be one of the most important factors for successful work performance.

Many employees, especially Millennials, seek regular and constructive motivation and appreciation. As we show in this white page (add link) about Millennials, the vast majority of them find that recognition by management to be more important than pay raises and promotions. In fact, a Gallup poll found that the top reason people leave their jobs is they don't feel appreciated. It contributes to a high rate of turnover for the majority of companies.

And this is the very reason why you should schedule a regular employee appreciation lunch. You don't have to wait until the first Friday of March to show that appreciation, either. There are many companies out there that have found regular appreciation lunches; even small self-catered affairs significantly increase the morale of employees.

These company lunches encourage socialization and collaboration among members of your staff that normally don't work together. It helps bring management to the level of the employees and encourages honest dialogue. During this time, when management and business owners recognize and congratulate their employees, it fosters better self-esteem among employees and builds company morale.

What we have below are several steps to take to create a successful employee lunch. We will also give examples of how to do this on both small scale and large scale.

### Budget Wisely

No matter the scale that you are going to host this gathering at, it will require some funds. Start off right by setting aside a certain amount that you are willing to spend for your employee lunches. Depending on your budget you can decide whether you are going to host a larger single affair or several smaller affairs. Your employees might prefer several smaller, low budget lunches to one large affair.



## Plan Accordingly

Be sure to set aside the dates and times you are going to have your lunches with enough lead time that your employees can plan their day and the workload. In larger organizations, you may have to plan rotating shifts in order to accommodate all your employees. Some people may have to plan to come to work on their day off. All of your employees will have to plan their workload to make sure they have time set aside for the lunch.

You will also need to plan the festivities for the lunch. Will your employees just eat, or will you recognize some of them for their outstanding work? We recommend taking at least a few minutes for employee recognition and updating all employees on the status of the business.

## Tap Your Vendors

Many companies have connections to restaurants and catering companies. You may be able to leverage some of the goodwill you've already established in order to get discounts or catering that's not normally available. In addition to this, many of your employees will recognize the name of the provider of the food and it will help increase the quality of work your employees do for that company.

Even if you don't have these connections or just want a small affair, reach out to local restaurants.



## Create A Safe Menu

Long gone are the days where you could just provide a sandwich tray chips and pretzels. Many people have food allergies and eating choices that may restrict the type of foods you can serve. Be sure to ask your employees if there are any food allergies or dietary preferences that need to be avoided. Be sure to include at least one vegetarian dish and options for fruits and vegetables. If a person is allergic to peanuts avoid any dish during the employee gathering that has peanuts (or other allergy food). Nothing ruins a party faster than somebody getting sick.

## Plan Recognition

In the white paper we have over here on the [5 Easy Steps to Giving Good Awards](#) (add link), we outline why it fits in with good practices to give awards. An employee luncheon is a prime opportunity to give out recognition awards and may help you write off both the lunch and awards on your taxes.

Note in your invitation that you will be recognizing certain workers who have shown dedication to the company and a good work ethic. Some experts feel that stating the names of specific names of people

who will be recognized in the invitation encourages some people to show up. On the other hand, there are others that believe that this may decrease in attendance for those who are not recognized.



Be sure to recognize each person individually and why they are receiving an award. This will help motivate others to work hard to achieve the same award. The award itself does not have to be costly or large. You can do anything from a certificate with the employee's name on it to a coffee mug to keychain or a trophy. We have been helping client plan their events for many years.

Be sure to provide small tokens of thanks to everyone who attends the luncheons. These can be practical items your employees can use at work, such as pens, coffee mugs, or little notebooks. It also serves as a daily reminder that your employees' hard work is recognized and appreciated by your company. Ask about recommending memento gifts.

## **Taking Charge Of The Luncheon**

Management and business owners should quickly realize that the business luncheon is not just a time for people to eat. It is a great time to deliver a morale-boosting talk to your employees and help them see the bigger picture and new challenges.

You can't do this off the cuff. While your speech should be unique and heartfelt, you do need to take a little bit of time to plan it out.

## **Create An Outline**

Write down ahead of time the few specific ideas you want to tell your employees. This may be a quick summary of how the company is doing, what the company plans for the future, and how various team members work into this plan.



## **Highlight Success Stories**

People rarely remember facts and figures, but they remember stories very well. Whenever you are giving an award or highlighting an impressive achievement, be sure to name the person involved exactly what they have done.

Tell the tales as if it were a story being told to a child. Use large gestures, dramatic pauses and lots of descriptive words. A Gallup study in 2015 shows that nearly 60% of employees are more likely to be

engaged when their leaders are. This will show you're passionate and engaged, which will encourage your employees to become more.

## **Encourage Individualism**

Seek to make the goals personal and specific to each person. When your employees understand how their own role fits into the company's plan, they are more likely to become engaged and share that special specific goal. Let your enthusiasm become contagious.

When you are telling your story in an animated way, you are showing your employees that you truly care that they are part of the story. Taking the time to share the success stories and make it sound exciting, allows you to recognize the key players and encourage others to just as excited.

This is a great way to highlight a unique and new way somebody has completed a job.

## **Conclusion**

As leader of your company, it is up to you to motivate and encourage your employees to be the best they can be. An employee luncheon shows you are committed to your employee's happiness and using the awards and success stories help share impressive decision-making skills and leadership of your employees. It shows your employees that you are excited about leading them and you are proud of them. This might be one of the biggest keys to keeping your employees happy and motivated. We're here to help.



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