



Workforce Recognition in the Public Sector Case Study When a large government agency asked Achievement Awards Group to put together a staff recognition program, they were looking for an immediate and assertive response to disturbingly low employee engagement scores. After just one year, the program achieved results that exceeded the most optimistic expectations of how Recognition could change a culture.

The evolution of a government organisation Over several years this government agency had evolved from a lacklustre government department to a respected agency of state pursuing an ambitious modernisation agenda. While a strong executive management team had led the drive to streamline processes and improve customer relationships, performance mindsets across the organisation were harder to change.

The next step Management realised that they had to do more to engage and motivate their people and establish a culture that would attract and retain the level of talent they needed to take the organisation to the next level. They started by investigating the mood on the ground.

Identifying the problem Employee engagement surveys exposed a strong and widely held perception among staff that management was more focused on job functions than the needs of the people in the jobs, individual contributions were not appreciated and accomplishments were unrecognised. These responses prompted immediate and assertive action.

A Recognition solution A Recognition program was identified as a relatively immediate solution to address these areas of dissatisfaction, build a values-driven culture and support the organisation's long-term talent management strategy. The client was passionate about making this initiative work, but lacked the time and resources to run a program inhouse to best practice standards. The next challenge, was finding a specialist partner.

The right Recognition partner Achievement Awards Group was chosen as a partner with the right experience and expertise to deliver a big-scale Best Practice Recognition solution, custom designed and

managed from start to finish.

A two-phase Recognition approach A two-phase program focused on forging mutually respectful staff / management relationships and highlighting individual accomplishments and contributions.

- **Phase one.** Everyday, 'on the spot' recognition aimed at spreading a recognition message across the widest possible audience.
- **Phase two.** A 5-star gala awards event to recognise outstanding individual contributions and teams that had sustained exceptional performance throughout the year.

Best practice strategy meets best practice execution Efficient project management and a commitment to success supported best practice execution of the plan.

- **Senior Management ownership.** A main driver of program success was a strong project team leader on the client side who was behind the program every step of the way and drove support and participation at the senior executive levels.
- **Training.** Pre-launch training workshops, presentations and communications ensured that managers had the understanding and recognition skills to participate with confidence.
- **Communications.** Program communications were frequent and supplemented by ad hoc opportunities in every available employee communication medium.
- **Measured and monitored continually.** Regular surveys assessed the perceptions of employees and managers. Recognition activity was monitored through detailed monthly reports and interventions employed as required.

Shifting mindsets and spiking engagement Over the course of nearly two years, recognising the contributions and achievements of individuals has become a prominent feature in daily business interactions at the agency. Mindsets are shifting and employee engagement scores are climbing. The program has laid a strong foundation for a lasting culture of Recognition.

- Number of truly engaged staff increased by 4.8%
- Nearly 36% of staff received recognition against a 16% target based on industry norms over the period for a similar program
- Nationwide, 60% of managers participated

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