

Positive reinforcement is the practice of rewarding desirable employee behavior in order to strengthen that behavior. For example, when you praise an employee for doing a good job, you increase the likelihood of him/her doing that job very well again. Positive reinforcement both shapes behavior and enhances an employee's self-image.

Recognizing and rewarding desirable employee behavior is the essential key to motivating employees to work more productively. This method will reap many benefits:

1. It clearly defines and communicates expected behaviors and strengthens the connection between high performance and rewards.
2. It reinforces an employee's behavior immediately after learning a new technique and promotes quick, thorough learning.
3. It motivates effective workers to continue to do good work. Lack of reinforcement leads to job dissatisfaction.
4. It increases productivity by rewarding workers who conserve time and materials.
5. Employees who are rewarded after they successfully perform feel self-confident and become eager to learn new techniques, take advanced training, and accept more responsibility.
6. Rewarding employees who suggest improved work procedures will produce more innovation – if you create a relaxed work environment, reward new ideas and tolerate innovative failures.
7. Employees who receive recognition for their achievements are more enthusiastic about their work, more cooperative, and more open to change.
8. When you show appreciation and reward employees for good work, you increase their job commitment and organizational loyalty.

To reinforce successfully, you need to define exactly what it is that constitutes desirable behavior. You should then set specific, measurable work goals with each employee or with the entire team, and then decide together, which behaviors are most important for achieving the results.

These guidelines will help make your reinforcements most effective:

- Be specific.
- Give the employee concrete, specific information about what he/she did right.
- Reinforce immediately.
- Reward the employee as soon as possible after his/her good behavior.
- Be sincere.
- Show genuine appreciation for the employee's achievement.
- Reinforce often but unpredictably.
- Regular reinforcement comes to be expected and fails to motivate. Frequent, but random, reinforcement is more effective.
- Reward small increments of improvement.
- Most performance improvement is gradual. Rewarding good effort and small improvements will lead to bigger improvements.
- Give realistic reinforcement.
- Rewards should be proportionate to the importance of the behavior.
- Personalize the reinforcement.

Through skillful use of positive reinforcement, you will increase your employees' self-esteem and call forth from them greater contributions and increased dedication to the job.

**For Staff** - Show staff this works by using it with them at staff meetings. (Point out that they like being recognized for what they do--even if they should be doing it anyway! Use candy with specific names to thank others: Lifesavers for helping out, Look bar for looking for good behavior, \$100,000 bar or Kudos for other various acts. Give a good parking space for the month or car washes in the parking lot.







