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When money gets tight, use creativity to reward employees

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All too often managers and supervisors have the mistaken idea that money is the best way to motivate employees to work harder and smarter. While the paycheck is important to most employees, it generally fails to generate that added commitment that moves an organization to excellence. This is a particularly important principle to understand when the economy tightens and outlays for salary increases or bonuses are hard to come by.

What do employees identify as the most effective reward?

Personal heartfelt congratulations from the boss—not just the BIG BOSS, but even better, the boss to whom the employee reports. It's a reward that each employee should receive in some form with real regularity.

Other less formal recognition and reward tools may also have a strong positive impact on motivation and morale. Listed below are a few no-cost or low-cost rewards that can generate positive results:

- A personal note from the boss
- A new title
- Name on electronic bulletin board
- Flowers
- Home helper (to cut the lawn, wash windows, weed, etc)
- Candy
- Movie tickets
- A car wash
- Gift certificate
- A make over
- A one month health club membership
- Cake and ice cream
- A traveling trophy
- A magazine subscription
- An afternoon off
- A tee-shirt
- Lunch with the Doctor
- A round of golf
- Massage

- Dinner for employee and spouse
- Balloons
- Limo ride

This list could go on forever. Just remember that recognition and reward does not have to be big or expensive. It just has to be there. Even in periods of economic difficulty, there is increasing competition for talent. Keeping our best and brightest employees is critical. Effective recognition and reward will go a long way to accomplishing this objective.

D. Allen Miller is Managing Director of Business Advantage International, Inc., (www.gotoBAI.com) which offers a comprehensive approach to resolving your organization's management challenges. Whether it's facilitating the development of your organization's strategic planning process, designing and implementing a comprehensive compensation system, conducting employee opinion surveys or initiating results-oriented training programs, Business Advantage International is a one-stop center for management expertise to supplement your in-house resources. BAI works with you on an on-going basis to address organizational issues before those issues become real business problems. Contact Allen at 801.444.9919 or by e-mail at amiller@gotoBAI.com. #