

30+ smarter ways to work

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Overview

From lessons gathered from forty years of observation, reading and discovery. I have broken the smarter ways into the following categories.

Making Work Fun	Have an annual grand final
	Recognition
	Celebrate more
	Offsite team meetings
	Blue Sky Fridays – making time to shape the future
	Offer leading-edge training opportunities
Smarter work Habits	Beware of becoming a workaholic
	Move to a stand-up desk with three screens
	Greeting the guest
	Remember you / remember me
	Full attention at meetings
	Returning phone calls
	Network within your organisation
	Estimate your deadlines better by using the rule of three
	Never be a dick with your phone
	Have a cluster of mentors
	The importance of a second passion, a 'safe haven'
	Using consultants effectively
	Look a million dollars
	Embracing learning
Better communication	Learn how to sell change
	Have "Action Meetings"
	Hold stand-up SCRUM meetings
	Other ways to save time in meetings
	Controlling the wild beast -your email
	One-page reporting
	Contribute to the organisation's newsletter and intranet
	Propel your career with "killer" presentations
The importance of Peter Drucker's abandonment	

Making innovation a daily activity	Embracing Kaizen Jim Collins' five step innovation blueprint
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Making work fun

There are some smart ways, that have been tried and tested, to ensure your team members feel they are working for a special manager.

Have an annual grand finale

George Hickton, one of New Zealand's most successful CEOs, firmly believes, "You need a grand finale, something to work towards". The annual conference is a two-day event that everybody attends. It is heralded as an opportunity to communicate and to celebrate

When George Hickton (G.H.) first introduced this concept to the employment service there was a certain amount of scepticism. G.H. said to the executive team I wish to acknowledge a member of staff who has gone beyond the call of duty to deliver a stunning service. The executive team replied, "You cannot do that. By singling out an individual, you will ostracize the rest". G.H. nodded and said, "I accept your point of view, but we will go ahead."

On the day when G.H. started to deliver the acknowledgement there was a silence in the room. Upon announcement of the individual there was spontaneous applause and ovation. Everybody was not only recognising the individual but also celebrating that the organisation was happy to recognise the individual.

As G.H. recanted, tears flowed, and the recipient had to rush out of the hall to ring his wife to share the first major recognition in twenty years of service.

In Tourism New Zealand they give out rocks as awards, rocks fashioned by nature over millions of years, and as the advert goes "given away in a moment, priceless". The recipients are called "rock stars". While I was writing this article, I was lucky enough to sit next to a recipient of this award on a plane trip. She recalled to me the shock, gratitude, and buzz over the acknowledgement, and she, too, had to rush out to share the news with the folks at home.

Recognition

I have long been aware of the significance of recognition, but only recently did I realise that it is a fundamental foundation stone to all our relationships. The ability to appreciate and recognise all those we come in contact with defines us as a person and defines how successful, in the broadest terms, we can be. Giving recognition freely makes us a person staff like to work.

As Nicola Plessⁱ so succinctly puts it, recognition is more important than most of us understand. Apart from the need for attachment and affiliation, there is a fundamental human need to be recognized, respected, and valued as a human being."

McDonalds' and other companies have taken this tax on recognition to the ultimate by having an employee of the month award, indicating that only one staff member can achieve this. Surely, if four staff have succeeded, then four staff should be given the award.

Recognition checklist	Date
When did you last:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Send a signed memo of thanks to a fellow member of the staff?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Take a colleague out to a café as a thank you?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Send a letter of thanks to a major customer, appreciating the continued relationship?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Send a letter to a major supplier, appreciating their faultless supply record?	

The power of a letter

Signing a recognition letter and then posting it says a lot about you. You were so impressed that you made the effort. Now, let us answer the question on your minds, "Why not just send an email?"

The physical testimonial means more to the recipient. People receive so little in the post that your letter will make a greater impact. It saves them from having to print it out to show at a meeting.

Besides, you feel good about giving some positive feedback to the universe.

I bought a sports car in Dunedin, and soon I noticed a noise. The power steering was faulty. The dealer, once informed, immediately wanted to put it right. This was done.

Two things happened. I wrote a letter of thanks. And three years later, I was dining at the Boulcott Bistro and a man was eating alone. I engaged in a conversation to find that he came from Dunedin. I said, "I got two very important things from Dunedin, my wife and my white sports car." He asked, "Was it a white Porsche Boxster?" I said "Yes." He replied, "You wrote the letter."

How about that for a small world, and the power of a recognition letter?

The three parts of a recognition

Marshall Rosenberg, the father of effective communication said there were three distinguishing components in the expression of appreciation:

1. the actions that have contributed to your well-being