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Employee Suggestion Program

There isn't very much that is new about an employee suggestion program. There are many companies and institutions that use various suggestion programs that give credit to the employees that do a good job. Providing positive feedback to these employees can build pride and loyalty. These programs are also beneficial because they tend to harvest novel ideas from an existing work force.

The University of Ottawa has added a small but important twist to the benefits program; there is a financial incentive proportional to the amount of money saved by the employee's suggestion (up to a maximum of \$5000). This financial incentive combined with the recognition conferred upon the employee has been a winning formula for years at the University because the amalgamation of the two elements accelerates employee participation.

The process begins with a submission to the suggestion program. Every submission is collected and reviewed. A preliminary triage is conducted. Submissions that are not eligible for the program are returned to the sender with a full description of why their submission was not accepted. The remaining submissions are disseminated by the Suggestion Awards Program Committee to experts on campus that can analyze the submissions and confirm the potential savings or impact of the program.

Once the submissions have been fully evaluated, the employee who submitted the suggestion receives a cash prize in proportion to the savings generated. Because of the rigour of the process involved in the validation of these submissions, the proposed ideas can be quickly turned over into a functioning project. Not only have the projects been evaluated in the university context, but also it is quite often the employees that evaluated the submission who will be implementing the project afterwards.

This program has been a great success at the University, with thousands of suggestions having passed through the program since its inception. This type of program is particularly interesting for resource based suggestions (such as utilities consumption) since the payback from the program is very easy to calculate and the impacts are immediate. Just this past year, two employees from our Service were recognized for their contributions, which will save the university tens of thousands of dollars every year.

http://www.gazette.uottawa.ca/article/suggestion_award_program_winners_save_water_energyand/

As the person who ultimately evaluates the submissions related to the environment and resource optimization, I can say that the quality of the program has significantly added to our Energy Management success. More information about the Employee suggestion program can be found at the following link:

<http://www.hr.uottawa.ca/hrinfo/2011/02/suggestions.php>

Sincerely,

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