



Dear Joe:

The summer seems like a good time to hold an employee appreciation event. Do you have any suggestions for a fun and engaging to celebrate our hardworking employees?

Sincerely,

Employee Appreciation

Dear Employee Appreciation,

Two Showing appreciation for others can rarely be overdone and an employee appreciation event can serve as a good way to build camaraderie and commitment. There are a multitude of things you can do, but one of the most thoughtful can be for the management team to serve food to the rest of the employees. Whether that's cooking breakfast or firing up a barbecue, this approach shows the team that you are serving their needs just like they serve the needs of the members.

With that idea in mind, here are a few guidelines to consider when it comes to employee appreciation events:

- ▽ Employee appreciation can't just be an event. If appreciation only happens once a year, the event is likely to draw more criticism than enjoyment. Knowing how each person likes to be appreciated and delivering "doses" of personalized appreciation throughout the year is critical to driving engagement.
- ▽ Ask a few employees for their thoughts about a meaningful event. Involving people is a key to increasing overall commitment and specifically for this event. One organization I worked with formed a Spirit Committee. The function of this committee was to plan events throughout the year. The committee was comprised of employees at all levels of the company and from all functional areas. Each voice held equal weight and everyone shared in the work. They planned great events and enjoyed a highly engaged workforce.
- ▽ Make it an "event." Go all out to deliver a memorable celebration that energizes people. Often planning and carrying out these events is viewed as one more thing to do on a never ending to-do list. In a busy world, most people don't need "one more thing to do," but if you aim for "memorable and energizing" you're likely to achieve an outcome that you want and everyone can be proud of.

Keep the appreciation flowing in a way that is meaningful to employees. After all, I've never heard of anyone leaving their credit union because they were over-appreciated. Have you?

Stay Positive — Joe B.