

# BUSINESS ACTION GUIDE

Leading at the Intersection of People & Profits

## RECOGNIZE AND REWARD

### Non-Financial Recognition and Rewards: New Belgium Brewing

*Businesses may not always have enough cash on hand to rely solely on financial incentives and rewards to encourage peak employee performance. Fortunately, there are other alternatives beyond salaries and bonuses. To learn about strategies for*



JENNY BRIGGS, HUMAN RESOURCE DIRECTOR

*effectively recognizing and rewarding employees, we spoke to Jenny Briggs, Human Resource Director at New Belgium Brewing.*

*A craft brewing company based in Fort Collins, CO, New Belgium*

*is well-known for its workforce of 560 engaged employee owners. The*

*company has a strong set of Core Values and Beliefs which form the basis of the*

*company's culture (see sidebar).*



At New Belgium we are dedicated to our culture and core values, and everything we do supports and ties back to those. We measure the return on investment (ROI) for many of our programs, but some just make sense for our culture. For example, we fly all employees to our Fort Collins headquarters once a year for our annual meeting so we can all be in one place and interact with each other. All of our programs are designed around meaningful human interactions and a culture of trust, because when people trust each other and their interests are aligned, everything is more effective and this helps drive growth and profit. Here are some key principles we keep in mind when we implement non-financial rewards and recognition programs:

#### **1. Design rewards that match the company's culture**

New Belgium is 100% employee owned via an ESOP (Employee Stock Ownership Plan). Each year we hold an ownership celebration and induct new employees into the plan. As part of the celebration, our co-founder and CEO Kim Jordan welcomes new employees with a handmade keychain (nicknamed "mojo") made with a stainless steel bead – representing beer making equipment – and a unique bead representing each person's individuality. She hands the mojos out personally, along with a hug. People carry them around or have them at their desks – once they have their mojo, they are truly part of the company.

#### NEW BELGIUM'S FORMULA FOR NON-FINANCIAL RECOGNITION AND REWARDS

1. Design rewards that match the company's culture
2. Make smart use of technology
3. Continuously evaluate
4. Match individual rewards to individuals

#### **2. Make smart use of technology**

Employee and team achievements are recognized on an online "kudos" board, and at the all-staff meeting these are taken off the company's intranet and posted at a higher level. We also have a place to recognize small wins so that these get exposure and don't get buried in a list.

#### **3. Continuously evaluate**

We have found that reward programs have to be re-evaluated as the company grows. For example, as a result of a company survey, we recently stopped providing company lunches. Since our employees are now more geographically dispersed, these lunches no longer serve the original purpose of promoting human interactions.

## RECOGNIZE AND REWARD



On the other hand, our employees rated the “Adopt a Ranger program” highly. Rangers are salespeople who live outside Colorado and travel. When they come to the Fort Collins headquarters, employees open their homes and serve them a homemade dinner. This program really promotes bonding with remote co-workers.

In order to determine whether a new practice fits the company’s culture, we vet it with one or more of its cross-functional teams. We often try a new idea – it might have a high impact. If it fails, that’s not bad because you can learn from it.

#### 4. Match rewards to individuals

You can give someone \$100, but that will fade quickly. At New Belgium, if a co-worker likes pedicures, for example, we might give her a gift certificate for one when she is working particularly hard or has reached a milestone. This has a more profound psychological impact than cash because people appreciate that you really know them.

### FINAL WORDS OF WISDOM

It’s very important to be aware of an individual company’s culture when implementing rewards beyond salaries and bonuses. At New Belgium, giving someone a watch would not fit. Instead, our employees receive a custom cruiser bicycle (in honor of our signature Fat Tire Amber Ale) after one year of employment, and a brewery tour of Belgium with company leadership after five years. The trip to Belgium is symbolic; it makes the employee part of the company’s legacy.

#### NEW BELGIUM CORE VALUES AND BELIEFS

1. Remembering that we are incredibly lucky to create something fine that enhances people’s lives while surpassing our consumers’ expectations.
2. Producing world-class beers.
3. Promoting beer culture and the responsible enjoyment of beer.
4. Kindling social, environmental and cultural change as a business role model.
5. Environmental stewardship: Honoring nature at every turn of the business.
6. Cultivating potential through learning, high involvement culture, and the pursuit of opportunities.
7. Balancing the myriad needs of the company, our coworkers and their families.
8. Trusting each other and committing to authentic relationships and communications.
9. Continuous, innovative quality and efficiency improvements.
10. Having fun.

### HOW DO WE LEARN MORE?

[1501 Ways to Reward Employees](#), Bob Nelson, PhD

[www.recognition.org](http://www.recognition.org), Recognition Professionals International

[Noncash Rewards Can Be Effective Motivator](#), Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)

[A Culture of Positive Appreciation](#), Ari Weinzweig, Zingerman’s

*Other companies that excel at non-financial rewards and recognition include Optimax and Zingerman’s.*

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