You'll see the results when Kate, Elvis and Darth visit your call centre

The build-up, with posters, teasers and mailshots, is almost as important as the day itself. So is the follow-through, to solidify achievement and continue the process. The support of everyone involved is also essential; managers, trainers, everyone has to come on board and help bring home the message.

What results should you expect of an activity day? Certainly your staff to have felt energised and have learned lessons they can then carry through into the rest of their work. You can also, if that's your focus, expect an on-the-day sales "spike" of 20-35 per cent. And, if well-run activity days are built into call centre culture,

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Failing to plan equals planning to fail

REWARD and recognition programmes can help to give your staff a sense of belonging. Boosting morale through engagement and injecting excitement can help to motivate them.

If they are not fully engaged, they will fail to perform to their maximum potential. And the results might be disruptive behaviour, absenteeism and high staff turnover. Naturally, this will affect sales and customer service.

Take a look at these figures: 2.4m people aged 30 or younger regularly experience feelings of anxiety and tension at work (GfK NOP International Employee Engagement Survey 2011).

Many call centres across the country have a high proportion of staff in their twenties and younger, demonstrating the importance of employee engagement schemes.

Which brings me to another hugely important point. To be most successful reward and recognition programmes must be tailored to the intended audience and suited to their aspirations. To achieve this managers need to know what drives their people. The particular needs and aspirations of a nineteen year old girl are usually poles apart from those of a fifty nine year old man, yet both may be working under the same scheme. Flexible, widely encompassing schemes that engage at different performance levels and in different ways are essential to success. In terms of communication we have to find a way to master the Baby Boomer and Generation Y, whether that's the traditional employee bulletin or facebook!

Of course, a well planned reward and recognition framework, with an agreed methodology and measurement criteria provides a fabulous tool for managers and team leaders to drive performance, whether that's to reinforce other policies and procedures or to boost sales or customer satisfaction. It's a flexible tool that can be switched on and off in response to the fast changing call centre environment.

In summary, failing to plan a reward and recognition structure which builds in the potential to reward and recognise individual needs and drivers is the equivalent of planning to fail. Employee engagement in a call centre supports success and encourages the application of good working practices.

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