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FIRM MANAGEMENT

How to Really Thank Your Team After Tax Season

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Paul McDonald • May. 16, 2018



Tax season can be like a bad storm – loud, intense and chaotic – and, as with a tempest, your employees feel relieved but exhausted after it passes. As busy season ends, this is the perfect time to thank your team for their hard work, professionalism and dedication. It is a must-do you can't afford to save for later.

Many firms have a bonus structure in place to financially reward employees, but that's not enough. More than a nice gesture, going above and beyond — much as your workers have done since at least January — when showing appreciation is a must to keep employees motivated and on board.

Consider these thoughtful ways to thank and recognize staff following busy season:

Time off

Find ways to let employees leave early one day or take a full day for themselves without having to take vacation.

Surprising the team on a Friday morning by telling them they can work a half day and start their weekend early, for example, shows you value their time and want to reward them for the work they devoted to your firm and clients. Of course, they put in more than an extra few hours during busy season. Look for opportunities throughout the spring and summer to reward staff with the gift of time.

Staff night out

Your employees may be relieved busy season has come to a close, but they still have much to celebrate and bond over. Facilitate team-building activities, such as a dinner at a local restaurant.

Don't be afraid to get creative. Additional options include:

- **Bowling** — Draw names out of a hat for teams so you mix up departments and generational groups.
- **Dinner** — Book a restaurant everyone loves or wants to try, or find an off-site event space and have a meal catered.
- **A show** — Think beyond the multiplex: See the symphony, opera, a musical or an independent theater with a play receiving rave reviews.
- **A cruise** — If you live near a lake, river, bay or ocean, you could take employees out for a daytime or sunset cruise.

Office party

After-work events can be tricky, due to employees' other commitments. A party during work hours can be an ideal solution for offering a special celebration while accommodating staff members' demands away from work.

You can hold the festivities in or outside of the office. If it's at work, though, take care to make the event special. A potluck next to individuals' work stations leaves much to be desired. Instead, consider decorating a conference room or other social area, ordering catering from a popular restaurant and playing music.

Thoughtful gifts

Perks can have a big effect on staff morale, which is why they're often used as a retention strategy. [Show your appreciation at the end of busy season](#) by offering staff extra tokens of appreciation, such as:

- Their choice of a one-year subscription to an entertainment or personal care service
- A free back massage every month from a licensed massage therapist
- Bring-your-pet-to-work day
- Food trucks at the office and a voucher to apply toward them
- Vacation bucks, to be used only when employees get at least 100 miles away from the office

Role-reversal day

After your staff diligently served clients during tax season, make it their turn to get the royal treatment. At the beginning of the workday, have senior managers take employees' coffee or tea requests and then deliver the drinks to their desks. At lunchtime, place orders for pizzas or sandwiches. Walk around with a tray of desserts and serve everyone their top choices, and be sure to clean up afterward so your team doesn't have to.

Customize your appreciation

To truly recognize an individual, craft personalized thank-you notes. Take the time to find out how each person excelled during tax season, then have senior directors handwrite messages of thanks highlighting each recipient's specific contributions.

Feeling appreciated is an essential part of [workplace happiness](#), which itself is a major factor in loyalty and a low turnover rate. Make sure to put in real effort when thanking your team members, especially after monumental efforts such as another successful tax season.

Paul McDonald is senior executive director at [Robert Half](#), the world's first and largest specialized staffing firm. He writes and speaks frequently on hiring, workplace and career-management topics. Over the course of more than 30 years in the recruiting field, McDonald has advised thousands of company leaders and job seekers on how to hire and get hired.

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