

SERVICE AWARD PROGRAM

way, the awards are a visible reminder to the recipient and co-workers that they are valued.

- Select merchandise with trusted, brand-name recognition and warranties.
- Customize your awards to reflect the company's personal interest in the employee.
- For length of service awards, set truly milestone achievements: 5, 10, 15, 20 and 25 or more years of employment. It is more common now, however, to award for the first anniversary, letting employees know early on that management recognizes them and is pleased they've become part of the organization and expects them to be around for a long, long time.
- Seek out the advice of an experienced award manufacturer or distributor. They can offer expertise in selecting awards and promotional materials needed to enhance your program. Plus, they will offer awards at below retail cost.
- For on-going programs, merchandise should have continuity.
- Choose awards that can be delivered within a reasonable timeframe. Quick turnaround time ensures participants remember they are being rewarded for a particular achievement.

E. Presentation is Everything

Service award winners deserve their moment in the spotlight. Show them—immediately and with style—just how grateful you are for their hard work and dedication. Here are some ideas:

- Create excitement in the office with an announcement as soon as the service award recipients have been determined. Throw a staff party, write a story on each winner and what they did to earn their award for the employee newsletter, or post the announcement on the company's electronic Intranet if you have one so that all employees have access to the information on their computers. Immediate recognition is the key.
- Schedule a formal awards presentation. If your budget is small, you can hold your awards program in a cafeteria or a conference room with refreshments. Awards should be personally presented by the president or someone in upper management in front of peers, which will generate self-pride in

More Ways to Recognize Employees

In addition to the fabulous merchandise awards you've selected, here are some other ways to recognize those who've served you well:

- Make a bulletin board photo collage of outstanding employees.
- Maintain a "Milestones" column in your employee newsletter, magazine or Intranet site listing employees who have reached a service anniversary goal. Do the same for perfect attendance award winners or for other types of recognition award recipients.
- Order a "special delivery" of balloons, flowers or candy for an employee who has gone above and beyond the call of duty.
- Hold a monthly staff lunch to recognize employees who have achieved a specific goal or done something extraordinary.
- Send hand-written thank you notes.
- Offer a preferential parking space.
- Give employees extra comp time off or an additional vacation day.

employees.

If your budget is larger, go all out with a huge awards ceremony and banquet dinner for those being recognized, their spouses and fellow employees. It's important that service award recipients be honored for their achievement in the presence of colleagues and management.

- Be sure to recognize service award recipients with a speech that lets colleagues and spouses know exactly what they did to earn their award. The speech should tie in with the program's objectives and how the individuals achieved specific goals.
- If the awards are to be personally presented, wrap them with class: select plain but elegant paper and bows, tasteful logos and always include a handwritten thank you note.

F. Promoting the Program

The manufacturers or distributors you select for your service awards can usually supply you with catalog sheets of the merchandise you select at a very nominal cost. Or, at your request, they will supply you with color art-