

8 Employee Appreciation Day ideas your staff will love

Your employees are the lifeline of your business. From those holding an entry-level position to others who have advanced significantly throughout their career, when you take care of your employees, you are more likely to see higher retention and better performance.

March 6 is Employee Appreciation Day, and while you're coming up with ways to acknowledge their contributions, here are 8 ideas your staff will love. The level of celebration you have on this day depends on your company budget, the company culture, and your employees' preferences.

Ultimately, the purpose is to express your gratitude in a way they will be able to accept and appreciate.

Offer a food or dessert bar

One common interest your employees likely have is their love for food. While you might provide snacks or lunch throughout the year, try offering one or a couple of food or dessert bars as an employee appreciation gift.

You can choose tacos, ice cream sundaes, hot dogs, candy, or whatever you think might be a hit at your company.

Provide a desk or office allowance

When you consider how much time is spent at work, you want the environment to be as comfortable as possible. If your employees primarily work at a desk or in an office, consider giving each of them a set amount to buy items for their space.

They might want to purchase a more comfortable chair, a new mouse pad, or picture frames to keep photos of loved ones near. Providing them the funds to make these purchases can be a significant bonus.

On the other hand, if desks and offices aren't common, you can make improvements to the employee break room. Better snacks, an improved coffee maker, comfortable seating, a television, etc. could all make the shared space more enjoyable.

Go on a group outing

One great way to improve the bond between your staff is to take the relationship building outside of the office. A fun employee appreciation idea is to go on a group outing to take part in an event everyone will love.

There are many options available, including bowling, karaoke night, a concert, happy hour at a local restaurant, or an arcade. Think about what your employees might enjoy doing and have them vote on the outing location.

The memories that will be made are invaluable.

Bring in a masseuse or manicurist

We all know the stress that life can bring, so why not improve your employees' mood with a little relaxation? You can hire a massage therapy team or group of manicurists to provide massages and manicures to your staff.

Even a quick massage and manicure can uplift the spirits and ease stress for your employees. This is often an underutilized yet very appreciated way to say thank you to your staff.

Host an awards ceremony

Who doesn't love to win an award? One employee appreciation idea is to host an awards ceremony. The formality of this event is entirely up to you. You can choose to keep it casual or create a more formal event, either way, do what you feel will be appreciated most by your staff.

In deciding the type of awards ceremony to put on, you also want to consider honoring your staff for both personal and professional life achievements.

Personal achievements could include having a new baby, adopting, buying a home, or getting married.

Professional achievements could include hitting specific sales goals, being a superb mentor, getting a promotion within the company, and more.

There are many ways to showcase your appreciation, and an awards ceremony is a great way to give everyone in the company recognition for the role they play in making the business a success.

Kick-off a new initiative

What new policy or benefit have your employees been requesting or hinting around about? If you've been planning to implement a new initiative, consider making Employee Appreciation Day the day you kick it off.

Some ideas might be having a casual Friday, the option to work from home, a more relaxed policy for requesting time off, or whatever else would benefit your employees.

Social media shout out

Everyone is on social media these days, so you can consider using the platforms your company actively engages on to highlight your employees for Employee Appreciation Day. Depending on the size of the company, you might be able to shout out each employee, or it might be better to do so based on their department or the overall wins for the company.

You can put together a series of quick videos or show their pictures online to honor their achievements and contributions to the company.

Have a surprise celebration

An alternative to allowing your staff to vote on the celebration for Employee Appreciation Day is to make it a surprise. Have them come to work prepared for a typical day and surprise them with a party they won't soon forget.

The details of the celebration are entirely up to you and will depend on how your company operates. The surprise element will shock your staff, and the thoughtfulness you display in this action will help to showcase just how much you appreciate their contributions to the company.

Personal thank you cards

While this might seem a bit old school, you could celebrate on Employee Appreciation Day by providing each staff member with a handwritten personalized thank you card.

In your card, you can outline anything specific to him or her that you want to express your appreciation for. A simple employee appreciation gift like this can go a long way.

Host a feedback forum

While gifts, recognition, and food are all great ways to express your appreciation, what many employees want to is a better work environment year-round, which starts with them feeling that their wants and needs are heard and considered.

This year, think about providing an opportunity to get open and honest feedback about how working for the company can be improved. Could this be done through the culture, the policies, or something else altogether?

It's time to have a conversation - in person, via a suggestion box, via email or an online survey, that opens the doors to transparent communication about what's needed to feel appreciated every day.

The impact of employee appreciation day can be felt year-round

Employee Appreciation Day should be far more than an obligatory expression of gratitude for the work your staff does year-round. When your actions come from a genuine place, the impact can be seen in everything from lower turnover rates to an increase in productivity.

Take the energy and spirit behind Employee Appreciation Day and spread it throughout the year, so your staff understands that their role is not taken for granted. In doing so you can build or maintain a positive, happy and desirable company culture.