



# You Don't Need Wall Street Bonuses to Improve Employee Morale

What are the best motivators? Here's what employees have to say.

By Jonathan Rapoport

With increased work hours and layoff rumors, employees are in dire need of some cheer. But how do you make them happy without breaking your budget?

Who better to ask than employees themselves? A recent survey queried over 1,000 employees about the best ways to improve morale at their organizations. Results reveal that it's a misconception to think you have to give bonuses to motivate and delight employees.

The survey found that most employees are looking for simple niceties that bring fun and respect into the workplace. Here are respondents' top 10 answers when asked how their organizations could raise their morale and increase motivation:

- **Organize potluck lunches** to bring people together in a casual and fun environment.
- **Break up the monotony** of the work week by sending out a

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trivia question. Give inexpensive prizes, like movie tickets, coffee cups, or lunch coupons, to employees with the right answers.

- **Give employees half-day Fridays** or let them go home an hour early if their work is done.
- **Provide employees with discounts** to local restaurants, spas, sporting events, amusement parks, and shows. Many such discount programs are free to organizations.
- **Have a service day**, giving employees the option to volunteer for different causes as a team.
- **Reward people for a well-done project** with an extra day or half-day off.
- **Once a month, recognize employees** for projects that were particularly well done and give them a small non-monetary reward.
- **Arrange a week** to hold lunch-time "board game Olympics." Encourage employees to bring their favorite board games and play each other during lunch.
- **Bring in a chair-massage thera-**

**pist**, nutritionist, or yoga instructor to reduce stress and promote overall health.

- **Express your respect and appreciation** for your employees often and with sincerity. ■

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*Jonathan Rapoport is founder of Great Work Perks, LLC, a free employee discount program ([www.greatworkperks.com](http://www.greatworkperks.com)).*

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## Way Beyond the Bonus

For more ideas on motivating employees (volunteers as well as paid staff), see these *Nonprofit World* articles at [www.snpo.org/members](http://www.snpo.org/members):

- **How to Ignite Entrepreneurial Spirit in Your Organization** (Vol. 20, No. 5)
- **Overcome Organizational Indifference** (Vol. 24, No. 2)
- **Building Morale: The Key to Successful Change** (Vol. 13, No. 3)
- **Regular People, Spectacular Results** (Vol. 23, No. 4)
- **Use Employee Ownership to Motivate People & Gain Revenue** (Vol. 22, No. 4)
- **Avoid Headaches: Engage Your Employees** (Vol. 27, No. 2)