



Tips for Innovative Meetings and Events (T.I.M.E.)

Topic: Giving Thanks

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Welcome

We are just 2 days away from Thanksgiving Day here in the United States. Let me offer my own personal thanks to everyone. Thanks for the comments, suggestions, feedback and praise for Tips for Innovative Meetings and Events (T.I.M.E.). I treasure each comment and encourage you to keep them coming.

This issue of T.I.M.E deals with saying “Thanks” in meetings and events from the awards presentations to the incentive meeting.

– And once again, thank you for letting me share my thoughts with you monthly through Tips for Innovative Meetings and Events. Happy Thanksgiving.

Sue
[Sue Tinnish](#)

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What's in Recognition

The Random House College Dictionary defines recognition as:

1. The act of recognizing someone or something
2. The state of being recognized
3. The perception or acknowledgement of something as true or valid
4. Appreciation of achievement, merit, service, etc.
5. Formal acknowledgement conveying approval

Sue Glasscock and Kim Gram in their book, [Workplace Recognition: Step-By-Step...](#) say that the definition is easy to remember by focusing on the three A's: Acknowledgement, Appreciation and Approval. Effective recognition embodies all three A's.

It Starts with

It starts with the Words "Thank you for..."

Bob Nelson in his book [1001 Ways to Reward Employees](#) cites a study that identified that among 1500 employees, the single largest motivator was personalized instant recognition from their managers.

Meetings, large and small, should include appropriate and creative opportunities to say thanks. Here are some ideas that [Joan Beck](#) shared with me about opportunities to say thanks:

- Going the extra mile
- Being a team member
- Meeting the objective
- Exceeding the goals
- Trying
- Creative Contributions
- Practical answers
- Being there
- The business
- Referrals
- Opportunities
- Service

Don't wait for "the end." We often wait to celebrate until the end of a project. Instead, select several milestones along the way and pause to reflect on your team's progress. It will re-energize and motivate people when they need it most.

For ideas on award presentations, see my back issue from January 2001, Tips for innovative Meetings and Events on Awards. [January 2001](#).

One part of a meeting that can seem a bit tiring to meeting participants is the mandatory “thank you’s” for the people who made the meeting possible. These people can include sponsors as well as the “behind the scenes” people. Here are my thoughts on creating more memorable thank you’s for these key people:

1. Distribute postcard sized blank cards to individuals at the meeting and ask them to note a specific element of the meeting that they enjoyed. Note 1 or 2 of the most interesting comments and share them with everyone during the public thank you.
2. Post an easel with flip chart paper and ask people (the meeting participants) to write a quick note of thanks.
3. Use product or props to showcase your sponsors. Afford your sponsors the same amount of production consideration you give to your own presentations.
4. Recognize sponsors periodically throughout the program so that the audience isn’t inundate with “the list”. Hearing a long list of sponsors is not meaningful.
5. Remind people what sponsorship meant to the meeting. “The _____ would not have been possible without the sponsorship of _____.”

Incent Me

Oftentimes in business, when we say “thanks” we are also trying to encourage repeat behavior. Thus the birth of the Incentive Program!

Traditionally, these programs have been used to increase sales or profits, however, they can also be used to solve other business issues. Often times it is not only the sales person who is responsible for the sale but also the administrative staff, customer service representatives, inside sales, or a technical engineering liaison. Beyond sales, your organization can utilize incentive programs to drive improvement in other areas of performance.

Human Capital Magazine reported on a study that showed that 88 to 95 percent of all incentive programs reach or exceed their goals and that the Return on Investment or ROI on non-sales programs at 200 percent is actually greater than the ROI on sale incentives, 134%.

Incentive Meetings

Amid an environment of uncertainty and ambiguity, incentive meetings are even more necessary. Whether the issue is concern about travel, economic uncertainty or ethics among our business leaders, during difficult times it is even more incumbent to offer incentives.

Incentives are the core of top performers during economic tumbles. “In difficult times, incentives are exactly the sort of thing that good companies have to lean on.” Leon Martel, author of [High Performers: How the Best Companies...](#)

One of the trends in incentive trips is combining meetings into the incentive trip. Here are 2 reasons why:

Reason 1: Adding education to an incentive adds another source for Return on Investment or ROI. It may also make it more palatable for management who may not understand the value of incentives.

Reason 2: Employees value education. People are interested in personal and professional development. Top performers realize that they need to continually reinvest in themselves to stay on

top. People need to be life long learners.

"Combining meetings with incentive programs presents any company with the opportunity to share information, spread a company message or hold training session with its best and brightest employees.", says Sherry Blabalil-Das.

Do it Well

The trick to combining incentive trips with meetings is to do it well. Here are 6 tips:

- 1. Maintain the Right Atmosphere** -- The trip should still feel like an "incentive trip". If spouses or guests are included insure that the meeting agenda does not leave them "high and dry".
- 2. Provide Balance** -- The agenda should allow ample time to relax, regroup and enjoy as well as engage in some development.
- 3. Meet Creatively** -- The meetings should be creative, engaging and special. For example, hold the meeting in a non-traditional setting, e.g. by the pool, at the golf clubhouse. Or involve a guest speaker that appeals to attendees and their guests.
- 4. Provide Premium Information** -- Share information that everyone may not know. An incentive trip is a great time to hear first hand about company strategy or new product development.
- 5. Make it Relevant and Applicable** -- Information that is shared should appeal to people's personal or professional development.
- 6. Include Upper Management** -- Part of the appeal of an incentive trip is the opportunity to network and mingle with senior management. A discussion of the enterprise's strategy and future is far more interesting when delivered by a senior manager. Hearing the information first hand with the ability to respond and ask questions is a motivating experience.

Some ideas for including "content" during an incentive trip include:

Teambuilding -- These activities can take many forms. The overall goals are to be fun, offer a change of pace and afford people the opportunity to learn some "lessons" first hand.

The Head Game - The Head Game is a unique, challenging—and fun—experience in which sales people learn to use the same mental approach that helps high-performing athletes. The Head Game uncovers the roots of successful selling by blending powerful sales techniques with the challenge of a game of golf. During The Head Game, participants learn techniques for managing their Self Talk, then practice the techniques as they play 18 holes of golf. Learning aids posted at each hole ensure that each salesperson gets maximum benefits from the round. Participants' sense of discovery, increased confidence, and excited improvement are visible as every golfer from novice to expert enjoys the challenge and camaraderie of the game. For more information about The Head Game, contact Sue Tinnish [Golfing & Training = The Head Game](#)

The value of an incentive trip is it's "stickiness". When properly planned and customized, group incentive travel creates personal memories that can last a lifetime, and most importantly, goodwill and loyalty toward the organization sponsoring the trip.

Behind the Scenes

When designed properly, incentive programs provide four to five times better results than any other

investment your company makes. Here are some ideas to consider when managing your incentive meeting:

1. Determine Objectives and Goals

When setting goals and objectives also give consideration to the internal and external (competition, economy) environments. Furthermore, recognize the underlying behaviors that support your company culture and core business goals. Create a program that supports those behaviors.

Also remember that organizationally, management must be willing to communicate and educate if you want to improve performance!! This may not fall within the budget or scope of the incentive trip, but needs to be addressed.

2. Consider your audience and what will motivate them.

Sales people are different from engineers. Corporate Meetings and Incentives (2/2002) classifies 4 personality types for incentives:

Directors – goal oriented, take-charge individuals

Socializers – open, relationship-oriented

Thinkers – analytical, systematic, enjoy problem solving and learning

Relaters – value personal relationships

"Consider peoples' differences and reward them accordingly, rather than looking for blanket solutions.", says Jim Cathcard author of [The Acorn Principle](#)

People are rewarded by inclusion, recognition, rewards, accomplishment, altruism and control.

3. As organizations get more global, so do their incentive audiences. Motivation is viewed differently in other cultures. See my past issue of Tips for Innovative Meetings and Events on Multi-cultural differences. Click here [Multi-cultural Communication March 2002](#).

4. Create assessment checkpoints along the way to make any mid course adjustments if necessary.

5. Consider instituting a Wild Card Slot into the incentive program. This will increase your participation and overall interest in the program.

6. Analyze past year's success. If applicable, it may be valuable to analyze competitor's incentive programs.

7. Don't forget your plans for Measurement. Plan upfront what metrics you will track and share after the incentive meeting.

8. Include strategic partners and alliances. Our success is not exclusively our own! If appropriate within your field or industry, include your strategic partners as a way of recognizing them in the "value chain", as well as introducing your key people to your strategic partners.

Resources & Freebies

"What gets recognized gets repeated. What gets celebrated becomes habit."

The Society of Incentive & Travel Executives is "a worldwide organization of business professionals dedicated to the recognition and development of motivational and performance improvement strategies of which travel is a key component. It recognizes the global cultural differences and practices in developing these strategies, and serves as a networking and educational opportunity for

its members."

[Soceity of Incentive and Travel Executives](#)

Another organization is National Association for Employee Recognition [NAER](#)

From their Regional NAER Conference in September 2002, they have a link on their website to low-cost/no-cost recognition suggestions. Follow this link: [No Cost/Low Cost Recognition Hints](#)

FREEBIE I attended a panel discussion held at Northwestern University's Forum for People Performance Management and Measurement. People Performance Management brings together the traditional internal management disciplines—organizational design, communications, incentive programs, and training—and aligns them with external marketing activities such as advertising and promotion, channel relationships, distribution and logistics, customer service, etc. so that all organizational activities focus on gaining and retaining customers at every level, maximizing organizational income flows and shareholder value.

Bruce Bolger, Executive Director, Incentive Performance Center; Jim Dittman, President, Dittman Incentive Marketing; John Farrell, Director, Carlson Marketing Group; Frank Katusak, Executive Director, SITE Foundation and Lois LeMenager, Chairman and C.E.O., Marketing Innovators International are some of the trustees of this group.

For a synopsis of what happened during this first meeting, please email me. Just send a blank e-mail to Stinnish@ameritech.net with the words Forum for People Performance in the subject line. [E-mail Sue Now](#) You can also learn more about the Forum at [Forum for People Performance](#)

Here are some other books that I recommend:

[Looking Forward to Monday Morning](#) provides activities to not only keep employees motivated, but to promote positive attitudes within yourself. It can give anyone in today's workforce an enthusiastic outlook on his or her career. This book targets a large, diverse group of people.

[Workplace Recognition: Step-By-Step...](#) This book explores myths like cash is the best reward, salary is enough, and only star performers deserve recognition.

On my to read list (will be published in April 2003) [Smart Things to Know About Motivation...](#)

Talking about the Carrot and the Stick, Authors Chester Elton and Adrian Robert Gostick, use the carrot metaphor in their two books

[Managing with Carrots : Using...](#) and [The 24-Carrot Manager: A Remarkable...](#)

Future T.I.M.E.

Tips for Innovative Meetings and Events will be accepting limited advertising. If you are interested in using this e-newsletter as a way to reach a targeted audience, please e-mail Ron Hopkins at rchopkins@ameritech.net for more details. [Or Click Here](#)

I also ventured to the Lone Star State and visited the Meeting Professionals International Chapter in The Texas Hill Country. The meeting was in Austin and I presented a three-hour version of 180+ Ways to Transform your Meetings. My hosts were Jeff Rasco (he insisted I try the Texas Martini), Lauren Grossman and Yvette E. Remschel. This program is available in a 1-3 hour version and I would love to come to your group. It all starts with your e-mail and you can contact me at: Stinnish@ameritech.net or 847-394-9857. [Contact Sue](#)

I also have now delivered a session on Setting and Designing Meeting Objectives at Meeting

Professionals International's Institute I. The program is ready to deliver for another group!

I'd love to work with you on creating more interaction for your meeting or event. Please contact me:
Sue Tinnish, SEAL Inc., Telephone: 847.394.9857, E-mail: stinnish@ameritech.net

In the meantime, I would really appreciate it if you would forward T.I.M.E. onto your colleagues, associates, and clients. Just press the forward button.

T.I.M.E. Gone By

If you are interested in past issues, please e-mail us with the month and topic and we will send you a copy of that newsletter. Here's what is included in past issues [Back Issue Request](#):

May 2000: [Teambuilding](#) and (Freebie) New York Times Reprint On Teambuilding
June 2000: [Green Meetings](#) and (Freebie) Resource List Of Exercises
July 2000: [Values](#) and (Freebie) Meeting Analysis
August 2000: [Minimum/Minimal Meetings](#) and (Freebie) Web Winners
October 2000: [Evaluations](#) and (Freebie) Sample Evaluation Questions
November 2000: [Politics](#)
December 2000: [Toys](#) and (Freebie) Brainstorming Ideas

January 2001: [Sales, Award Presentations](#) and (Freebie) Sales Tips
February 2001: [Change](#) and Communicating Change and (Freebie) Change Bombs
March 2001: [Open Space Technology](#)

April 2001: [Adult Learning Styles](#) and (Freebie) Learning Style Questionnaire
May 2001: [Trade Shows](#) and (Freebie) Trade Show Timeline
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October 2001: [Humor](#) and (Freebie) The Benefits Of Laughter
November 2001: [Customer Care](#) and (Freebie) Complaints
December 2001: [Slack](#) and (Freebie) Quiet Time

January 2002: [Teambuilding Options](#) and (Freebie)
February 2002: [Promotional Products](#) and (Freebie) Case Study
March 2002: [Multicultural Communication](#) and (Freebie) Multicultural Meeting Tips
April 2002: [Outdoor Learning](#) and (Freebie) Justification Checklist
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October 2002: [Return on Investment](#) and (Freebie) Balanced Scorecard

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