

*"It is not the ship as much as the skillful sailing that assures the prosperous voyage." – George William Curtis*



## Are Your Employee or Channel Incentives Delivering Desired Results?

Mark S. James | September 3, 2018

Or, could you be wasting time and money doing things that don't work?

Incentive programs work, but execution is key. Over the years, I have observed businesses discontinue employee or channel incentives with the justification, "we tried X or Y and it didn't work."

Upon doing some probing, commonly occurring root causes usually surface that explain why. And, they afflict more incentive programs than most people think.

To get more out of your employee or channel incentive investment, use the tips below to avoid these three common money and time sucking mistakes:

**Confusing or Complicated Program Structure and Rules** – They should make it easy, not harder, for participants to quickly know what they need to do

- Keep it simple; as close as possible to "Do X, get Y reward"
- Be sure rules are clear and unambiguous
- Don't overextend scope of the program. Limit it to what participants can accomplish
- Minimize use of qualifiers and conditions – They tend to over-complicate things and are often perceived as demotivating

**Poor Communication** – This is perhaps the most common mistake incentive sponsors make. No matter how inspiring an incentive program may be, it is doomed from the start if it's a secret. What gets talked about is what gets done.

- Does the promotional copy clearly answer for participants, ***"What's in it for me?"***
- Connect personal meaning. Explain how what participants do connects to company goals
- Utilize a frequent messaging cadence and avoid lengthy copy
- Use clear calls-to-action

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**Misaligned Goals and Rewards** – Misalignment between goals, degree of difficulty and reward is a results killer. Participation and results suffer when people don't see a realistic opportunity to be rewarded for their efforts

- Rewards should be positive, immediate and certain. Never use an element of chance as a condition for earning awards (Exception: sweepstakes or drawings are ok as a tactic to promote the program itself)
- What strategic objective is being served? An incentive program is **not** a strategy. They are a **tactic** that should support established sales, marketing or operational strategies
- What gets measured is what gets done. Have good performance tracking and reporting in place so it's easy for participants to see their progress and awards earned

Want to know more about maximizing results from incentives? Contact me to set up a FREE 60-minute consult.

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*Mark James is the founder and President of Performance Advisors Group, Inc. He has over 40 years' experience in the design, deployment and measurement of business improvement programs. Performance Advisors Group helps B2B businesses achieve sustained growth and competitive advantage. This is accomplished through the application of precisely matched strategies and tactics that unlock the hearts and minds of employees, channel partners and customers.*