



The National Association of Activity Professionals Celebrates

National Activity Professionals Week

January 21-27, 2018

The National Association of Activity Professionals
is proud to announce our theme:

People, Purpose, Passion

The definition of people is human beings making up a group or assembly or linked by a common interest and the National Association of Activity Professionals bring us all closer together.

The definition of purpose is the reason for which anything is done, created, or exists. The Activity Profession is constantly changing especially with the Federal Regulations and the Activity Critical Element Pathway and the one thing that never changes is our love and dedication for our fellow Activity Professionals.

The definition of passion is any powerful or compelling emotion or feeling, as love. ... a person toward whom one feels strong love, a strong or extravagant fondness, enthusiasm, or desire for anything and The National Association of Professionals are highly honored and privileged to share the love for you and your residents in your community.

The most important part of the National Activity Professionals week is acknowledging your Activity staff as well as yourself.

One of the greatest gifts you can give to the activity staff is to send the director and/or assistants to the NAAP Conference for education.

NAAP 36th Annual Conference Embassy Suites Philadelphia Airport April 24-27, 2018

This year the National Association of Activity Professionals Conference will be held in **Philadelphia** which is the largest city in the Commonwealth of **Pennsylvania** and the sixth-most populous city in the United States.

Things to do in Philadelphia



Liberty Bell



Philadelphia Museum of Art



Franklin Institute



Independence Hall

It's not the products, services, and profits that make a company great — it's the people who make them happen. Your employees are the ones who boost your marketing, talk to customers, and balance your books, but they don't always feel appreciated.

You want your Activity team feeling empowered, not discouraged. So, Activity Professional Week is a great way to tell your team how great they are. And don't just do it this week, but every day - show it all year long. To give you some ideas, we've assembled 10 affordable ways to show employee appreciation, including suggestions for employee thank you gifts.

These are just a few ideas to get you started.

- ♥ Offer the Activity Directors and Assistants a NAAP Membership. Go to www.naap.info and join on-line
- ♥ Educate your staff on the Federal Regulations and Activity Critical Element Pathway

1. Meet their needs

A \$5 Starbucks gift card isn't going to make people feel appreciated. Don't just hand out free lunch. Instead, think holistically about what your people need.

A [study by the Harvard Business Review](#) found that the most engaged, loyal, and positive employees felt that their emotional, mental, physical, and even spiritual needs **were being** met at the office.

To meet these needs, ask yourself the following questions, and come up with a list of things you can do to better serve your staff:

- *What are my employees' goals, not just in the office, but in general? How can I help them reach them?*
- *What are the biggest problems in my employees' lives? How can I help solve them?*
- *How can I make my employees' lives easier?*
- *Are my employees empowered? Do they feel they have responsibility and authority in their roles?*

Whether you decide on delegating some more responsibility, chipping in some wellness benefits, or offering flexibility, your employees will be more satisfied with their jobs and less stressed in general. That means a happy team and boosted productivity as a whole.

2. Say 'thank you'

Often, we're too busy to take a break, turn to the person next to us, and thank them for their hard work. Words go a long way. Whether you show your appreciation face-to-face or write an email or a handwritten card, your employees will be touched that you thought of them.



This one isn't just affordable — it's totally free. That means you can throw around 'thank you's' as liberally as you want.

With the fast pace of today's world, it's easy to forget the value of a few simple words. Just taking a few minutes out of your day to acknowledge employees and their contributions will go a long way in making them feel appreciated.

There are a few other little words that can make a big difference, too. Don't forget about 'please' and other general niceties. There's nothing like barking commands at your team to show your lack of appreciation, so always err on the side of politeness.

3. Encourage group love

As a business, you're stretched thinner than thin. If you create a culture of appreciation, the love will spread around. At one community, we have ['I Caught' cards](#) to encourage employees to appreciate each other. Each month, we read the cards aloud.

Another community encourages team appreciation by letting team members add \$50 to a co-worker's paycheck when they've done something great.

Employee led opportunities for appreciation let you pretty much off the hook. Your people want to feel appreciated by everyone they work with, not just the boss.

You can even tailor these kind of things to your budget. Anything from our basically free 'I Caught' cards to \$50 bonuses will get people to show each other appreciation.

4. Throw a party or take them to lunch

Everyone loves a party, whether it's at a fancy restaurant, a bowling alley, or in the office kitchen. Give employees a chance to unwind, and remember that genuine expressions of appreciation are more powerful than just words. Be sure to prepare a toast to share how thankful you are.

Office parties and team lunches are a great way to get to know your employees on a different level and in a different setting. This fosters a different kind of conversation that allows you to connect more.

Appreciation isn't just about what employees give to the community. Leveling with your employees and showing genuine interest in their stories means you can showcase your appreciation of more than just what they do, but who they are.

5. Celebrate milestones

Your employees' lives are full of big moments, both inside and outside of work. Taking the time to acknowledge and celebrate them can go a long way. Some milestones you can celebrate are:

- ✓ Work anniversaries
- ✓ Birthdays
- ✓ Life accomplishments such as marriage, moves, and children
- ✓ Work accomplishments, industry awards, graduations/certifications, etc.



At some communities, we have a cake every month to celebrate all of the anniversaries and birthdays that took place during that month.

Celebrating milestones is an easy way to let employees know that you see them as more than faceless output machines. Don't just appreciate their work — appreciate them.

6. Create traditions

Employees who are committed to the community are a huge asset to you. The longer talented employees stick around, the bigger the benefits to the team and community. A fun way to encourage commitment is to create traditions.

One community designs different license plates with employees' names on them. Team members get a license plate for every milestone like 1 year with the community team, 5 years, 10 years, etc.

This is a fun example of getting people excited about their commitment to your company. Here are some other cool ideas:

One community gives the employees beautiful, personalized globes once they've hit 5 years.

Circulate a congratulatory card and have every member of the team sign it.

Offer an extra day of vacation time for every year of service.

\$100 voucher to revamp and redesign their desk or office space.

7. Host a friendly contest

Contests are a great way to rally employees together to show appreciation and have some fun. Other companies hold chili cook-offs, bingo tournaments, and pie-baking contests. As long as there's a great prize, employees are sure to participate in the fun.

8. Offer flexibility

Why make employees stick to a 9-5? Why get angry if they need to jet off to a doctor's appointment in the afternoon?

[82% of professionals](#) say they would be more loyal to an employer if they had more flexible options. And, according to a study by FlexJobs, 74% of people want these flexible work options so they can maintain a healthy work-life balance. And being flexible won't cost you.

Being flexible is the key to employee happiness and appreciation. If you can relax, employees will feel their 'life needs' are being met. No employee should be stressed or afraid to take time off if they need to go to the doctor.

9. Wow 'em with treats

Cookies, cupcakes, candy, and ice cream — nobody can resist a treat. Keep your office stockpiled with treats and snacks so that employees never go hungry, and surprise them once in awhile with something special.

10. Give 'em cool swag

Show employees you appreciate them with cool swag. Get t-shirts, stickers, and water bottles with your logo stamped on — think of them as employee thank you gifts.

Here are our favorite swag retailers:

- **StartupThreads** - StartupThreads specializes in cool startup t-shirts, hoodies, and other apparel.
- **StickerMule** - StickerMule is the best place to get custom stickers of all kinds, even bumper stickers.
- ♥ **Bonus Ideas!**
- ♥ Put some board games in the breakroom! It'll bring a smile to your coworkers' breaktime.
- ♥ Allow your office to leave early on the day before a holiday weekend. A simple way to make their day (and weekend!) better.
- ♥ Consider implementing summer Fridays at your office. It's a surprisingly inexpensive perk!
- ♥ Have a flexible parental leave plan.
- ♥ Have an employee appreciation program — a points system rewarding good behavior that they can cash in for small rewards, like leaving early.
- ♥ Surprise your office with a summer picnic for lunch.
- ♥ Start a mentoring program in your office. Build one that truly reflects the needs and wants of your employees.
- ♥ Say “thank you” often. It's a simple phrase that goes a long, long way.
- ♥ Treat everyone out to a fun company activity like bowling, laser tag, or karaoke.
- ♥ An extra day of paid time-off (PTO)
- ♥ A surprise bagel breakfast on you
- ♥ Handwritten **thank you note**
- ♥ Upgraded office gear (like an ergonomic chair or convertible standing desk)
- ♥ Employee of the month program
- ♥ Invest in a fitbit as a treat for employees, to inspire them to be more active and therefore more productive.
- ♥ Two words: sundae bar!
- ♥ Implement an employee of the month program, and have nominations.
- ♥ Say it with flowers!
- ♥ Be vocal. If a colleague praises a coworker in a meeting, let that coworker know. Spread the word that they are appreciated.



- ♥ Give a gift card to the local coffee shop after a particularly hard week to show your appreciation. Who doesn't love a good latte? Even a \$10 card would make their day.
- ♥ Be polite and friendly. It goes a long way.
- ♥ Take new employees out to lunch on their first day (or more often, if the budget allows)!
- ♥ Encourage and recognize those who participate in continuing education. It will benefit the employee and the company, and make them feel good about it.
- ♥ Plan a company potluck— it's a fun break from work that builds morale.
- ♥ Start a suggestion program about how to improve your office. It will help your employees feel heard.
- ♥ Allow employees to have flexible schedules. For instance, be open to employees leaving work to go to the gym in the middle of the day. It will boost productivity and they'll feel like you trust them. Just ensure they're getting their work done too.
- ♥ Celebrate small milestones, like birthdays. Have a calendar so you don't forget, get a cake, and/or have the office sign a card.
- ♥ Have a mid-week treat in the breakroom. Waffle Wednesdays? Tuesday afternoon cookie platter?
- ♥ Stock your office with a variety of snacks and treats. Believe me — I work at a snack-rich office, and it truly makes employees happy.
- ♥ Bring in a masseuse or manicurist for an office-wide treat.
- ♥ Have a pizza party.
- ♥ Ask your employees for input about fun activities — what do THEY want to do?
- ♥ Plan company happy hours or dinners. Even if your company can't foot the bill, employees will look forward to it and appreciate the fun event.
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Always remember that the **National Activity Professionals Week is the fourth week in January** every year. Be sure to write this date down and start planning.

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