

# Incentives, Recognition and Rewards

## The Key to Building Engagement

One of the key hurdles that a business must conquer to improve its innovation efforts is employee engagement. The whole process is going to require buy-in from at least some of your workforce, so actively giving reasons for participation is a critical consideration for any innovation manager.

In this guide, we're going to look at the different ways in which organizations meaningfully engage employees in an innovation process. Remembering that monetary reward isn't the 'fix all' some may believe, we're also going to look at examples of other effective incentives.



## The Importance of Challenge Planning:

The starting point of getting an incentive right is communication. The greatest benefits can be attached to an innovation Challenge, but if the intended audience aren't made aware of what these are, they're less likely to engage in the process.



By discussing incentives during the Challenge planning process, the communication is much easier to manage. As part of our Challenge planning process at Wazoku, we recommend clients discuss this midway through the process.

To begin with, we establish who within the organization is responsible for running the Challenge, followed by a decision on how the question is phrased. Once these foundations are in place, the next stage looks at the audience, and that's where incentives come in. Operating in this way allows an organization to give enough context to the Challenge and attach an appropriate incentive to it, whilst also ensuring that this isn't an afterthought.

A lot of the basic elements of getting either incentives, rewards, or recognition right are the same. These three overlapping elements do differ slightly, so are worth going through in separate detail.

## Incentives:

Incentives are used before a Challenge has started, in order to motivate people to participate. When deciding on which incentives to offer, it's beneficial to remember that they should be affordable, deliverable, consistent, and related to your crowd or community.

The considerations needed to make these incentives successful form part of our Challenge planning phase. The Wazoku platform helps by managing the before, during, and after of the Challenge.

If a Challenge manager is looking to bring focus to a topic or highlight the benefits it can have then incentives are invaluable. For example, if a business is running a Challenge to speed up a process, the incentive used in that brief could look something like this:

***"By reducing the time needed to complete this process, this will open up more free time which can be used by the successful Solver to work on professional development."***

## Recognition:

The next element of this topic to discuss is recognition. This type of encouragement does away with material prizes altogether. It suggests that the acknowledgment that can come with Challenge success is the best way to get people to participate.

As part of our work with clients, we have found that these are best when run in conjunction with wider programs within the business. Establishing recognition events such as "once a month we celebrate top achievers" can ensure continuous motivation and engagement.

Recognition programs that are linked to specific Challenges can be a great way to introduce a competitive angle without needing to spend much. An example of how these can be included in a Challenge brief would be:

***"The successful Solver will earn points towards their leader board ranking. Those at the top of the leader board at the end of each month will feature in our company-wide bulletin, celebrating our top achievers."***



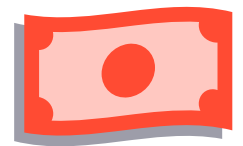
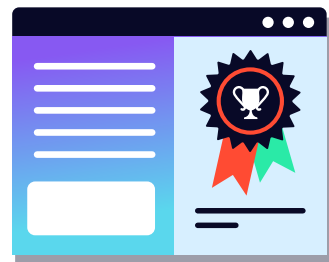
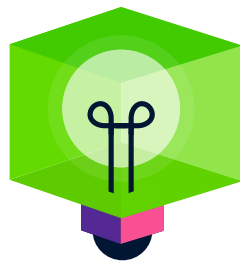
## Rewards:

The final element of this topic to discuss is rewards. As with incentives, these should be affordable, deliverable, consistent, and related to your crowd or community. However, these differentiate from incentives since they link to a specific Challenge being completed.

By contrast to incentives, rewards form more of a one-time prize. They don't have to be monetary. They can also come in the forms of vouchers, the latest technology, or discount on the organization's products.

They are a great tool to have to drive behavior changes. When communicating a Challenge that uses a reward, an example might look something like this:

***"The winning Solver for this Challenge can win £250 in vouchers to be spent in over 100 high street stores."***



In this guide, we've looked at the importance of incentives, recognition, and rewards as part of the innovation process. Having explained their importance in getting crowds participating, we've also explored how they can be used in different contexts.

The biggest struggle when starting a new way of working is getting people invested. Human beings are naturally resistant to change, so achieving buy-in can be tough. By effectively communicating the personal benefits of participation, a business is better positioned to deliver this buy-in. In turn, this allows the business to achieve the results that Challenge-Driven Innovation can produce.

## About Wazoku:

Wazoku is a pioneer in open innovation, crowdsourcing, and innovation at scale. For more than two decades, we've been helping our clients deliver sustainable and scalable innovation practices. As both for-profit and for-purpose, our software and expertise have been used to gain competitive advantage and overcome humanitarian crises around the globe, all of which are underpinned by the belief that anyone can be an innovator.