

# The Ultimate Guide to Non-Cash Incentives

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# Workplace Rewards Are Having a Moment

**Non-cash incentives and regular recognition are table stakes in a work world that is increasingly remote, actively disengaged and unafraid to set work boundaries**

BY PAUL NOLAN

The phrase “may you live in interesting times” is frequently purported to be a translation of an ancient Chinese curse (though at least [one online source](#) says it was actually introduced in the 20th century and is decidedly not Chinese). There is agreement, however, that the word “interesting” is meant to be ironic, as the statement is typically used during a time of chaos.

These days, the verb “live” can be aptly substituted with the word “manage,” as in, “may you manage in interesting times.”

The role of managing others is certainly chaotic.

“I think this is the most interesting time we’ve had in the work force since the industrial revolution,” said Stephanie

Harris, president of the Incentive Research Foundation, an organization that produces research and education about the use of non-cash incentives. “Managers are faced with a lot right now, beginning with how to manage, motivate, recognize and give equal opportunity to a work force that might be both in the office and at home.”

And, Harris adds, just because someone is a manager doesn’t mean they have the skill set to manage a work force that:

- May be in the office half the time if at all
- May be asked to expand their responsibilities in light of a worker shortage
- May be among the more than 50% of workers that Gallup reports are disengaged

FEATURE STORY

- May be among the [more than 60% of workers](#) who report they are currently looking for a new job
- May have set limits on how much extra effort they're willing to put in so as to maintain work/life balance

Management's New World Order

How challenging is it to manage work teams these days? Just listing some workforce-related terms that have been introduced in the last two years provides a good idea: WFH, the Great Resignation, quiet quitting...

"We've been watching disengagement, which is really what 'quiet quitting' is, for a long time," Jennifer Moss, the author of "The Burnout Epidemic," told National Public Radio recently. "People aren't leaving for more pay. The reason why they are quitting is workload and lack of empathy from their employers. [Employers] need to be considering that people in the workforce want us to care about them. That means more upstream interventions around preventing burnout, increasing mental health and well-being, and analyzing what to do to help support those people who are very tired."

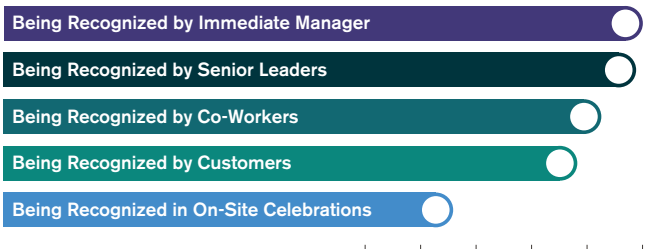
Showing that you care for your workers has never been more vital to increasing engagement and retaining top performers. The IRF polled 1,000 workers and managers in March 2022 and asked what they found most motivating. Being recognized by an immediate manager and being recognized by senior leaders were the top two responses, followed closely by being recognized by co-workers.

Richelle Suver, vice president of incentives and recognition at One10 LLC, a loyalty and performance improvement provider, says transparency and authenticity are important to making recognition programs feel genuine and not contrived or transactional. Giving recognition in real time and saying things that resonate with the recipient are a must.

Recognizing top-performers in front of their peers has been a best practice for decades. It's still wise to announce reward recipients to the whole team, but in a work world where co-workers often assemble virtually, respondents to the IRF survey on recognition said one-on-one praise from a supervisor or company executive is most meaningful.

"I think it speaks to the desire for meaningful recognition over ceremony," Harris says. "The pandemic had people stop and reflect. It's more important to someone that they have meaningful, thoughtful recognition from their manager than a moment on stage in front of a crowd."

What motivates you most?



SOURCE: INCENTIVE RESEARCH FOUNDATION

The Incentive Federation Inc. (IFI) estimates that total spend on non-cash incentives is \$176.16 billion. That's up from just over \$90 billion total spend the IFI estimated in a 2016 report. Other key findings of the IFI Incentive Marketplace Estimate Research Study include:

- 84% of companies with \$1 million or more in revenues have at least one non-cash incentive program.
- 92% of companies of \$5 million or greater have at least one non-cash incentive program, an 8% increase (up from 85%) since the 2016 study.

Average Company Spend and Growth by Category

Incentive Spend Category	2016 Average Per Company Spend	2016 Per Company Spend Adjusted for 2022 Inflation	2022 Average Per Company Spend	Adjusted 2022 Percentage Increase/Decrease
Sales Incentives	\$15,957.08	\$19,464.45	\$25,222.24	+30%
Channel/Distributor Incentives	\$12,087.04	\$14,743.77	\$11,653.30	-21%
Employee Incentives	\$15,893.12	\$19,386.42	\$19,434.12	0.20%
Customer Loyalty Incentives	\$11,191.08	\$13,650.87	\$15,371.07	+13%
Client Gifts	\$7,283.48	\$8,884.39	\$13,240.60	+49%

2022 Incentive Marketplace Estimate Research Study

Only channel/distributor incentive spend decreased from 2016, a factor of companies dropping some channel partnerships during the pandemic.

SOURCE: INCENTIVE FEDERATION INC. INCENTIVE MARKETPLACE ESTIMATE



## FEATURE STORY

- 65% of the companies in the study offer at least one of several non-cash incentives to their salespeople.
- The most used non-cash incentive are gift cards (80%), followed by award points programs (55%), merchandise (50%), experiential rewards (45%) and incentive travel (40%). (This marks the first time the IFI study has separated out experiential rewards — tickets to concerts, sporting events, cooking demonstrations, etc. — from the other categories.)
- When the total non-cash incentive spend is determined, sales incentives comprise 30% of total spend, followed by employee incentives (23%), customer loyalty incentives (18%), channel/distributor incentives (14%) and corporate gifting (14%).
- Non-cash incentive spending has increased significantly since the pandemic has subsided. In most cases, one-quarter of companies say they have “significantly increased” spending, with at least half saying they have increased spending “significantly” or “somewhat.” Less than one-in-ten indicate a reduction in spending since last year.

### Rewards as a Part of Corporate Culture

“The data suggest that incentives have become part of the normal corporate culture,” the IFI report states. “It is noteworthy that growth has come in two forms: (1) a higher percentage/number of companies adopting various incentives and (2) a higher per company spend. In the case of sales incentives, customer loyalty incentives, and client gifting, growth has come from both sources.”

Kristal Cardone, director of enterprise recognition events at Liberty Mutual Insurance, supports the notion that showing employees they matter with non-cash rewards is a must-have, not a nice-to-have.

“When I look at the intangible motivators, they holistically build up to employees not just going to their job. We need to provide things where they feel a true sense of place and belonging. That can sometimes outpace salary,” Cardone said. Here comments came during a panel discussion sponsored by the IRF.

“Getting employees is more difficult now than it has ever been. We need to be able to tie to the things that make people’s hearts beat. The intangible motivators are the things that are going to get us there,” she added.

Challenges around managing teams will persist as significant shifts in how we work evolve over the next 18 months to two years, says the IRF’s Harris. The push and pull of wanting people back in the office will continue to meet up with people settling into a new groove of working from home — and finding that in a lot of cases it can be very successful.

“The other challenge is a work force that has learned about themselves through the pandemic and is putting boundaries in place,” says Harris. “This whole phenomenon of ‘quiet quitting,’ which I think is a terrible moniker, is people putting boundaries

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**A joint study by Gallup and Workhuman found that when recognition practices hit the mark with employees, 56% are less likely to be looking for external job opportunities; 73% are less likely to feel burned out on the job and are five times more likely to see a path to grow at their organizations.**

.....

in place and having a more appropriate balance with work. That is a challenge, because you also have the dynamic in the work force where, if you can’t find people to do all the jobs you need them to do, the natural place to go is to expect the individuals who are there to do more. At the same time, you have the perfect storm of individuals saying, ‘I am going to put some limits on how much I will be working.’”

The tight labor pool has resulted in increased pay for workers across a broad spectrum of industries. However, how companies show their gratification to workers beyond paychecks is a critical element of retention and attracting new talent.

“Reward and recognition have become differentiators as people evaluate job opportunities they have in front of them,” Harris says. “It’s important that HR professionals include information about incentives and their culture of recognition inside job postings.”

A 2022 study on recognition by [Gallup and Workhuman](#) states, “recognition can be a practice, or it can be the way of life at an organization. The distinction between the two makes a noticeable difference in the daily experience of employees.

“Simply having a recognition program is not enough. A culture of recognition is one in which gratitude, praise and appreciation are freely given, regularly received and reach all corners of the organization. Where everyone feels empowered to take part in showing appreciation and commending achievements. Employees want to believe their organizations — i.e., their managers, coworkers and even senior leaders — care about them as people.

“Organizations can show they care by celebrating who employees are and what they bring to the table. When employees are recognized for their contributions and achievements, they feel that they matter. In this way and others, workplace recognition is critical to building an employee experience that meets employees’ human needs.” **SM**

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# The Future of B2B Incentives Depends on ‘Just One Thing’

BY CHRIS GALLOWAY

In the 1991 movie “City Slickers,” the sage cowboy, Curly (Jack Palance), told the New Yorker, Mitch (Billy Crystal), that the secret of life is “[just one thing](#).” He went on to say that when you find that one thing, you stick to it and nothing else matters — though Curly used more colorful language. Mitch asks, “but what’s the one thing?” to which Curly replies, “that’s what you’ve got to figure out.”

Now, here I am claiming that the future of B2B incentives (and B2B loyalty programs for that matter) depends on just one thing? That’s a lot of pressure for one short article!

## What New Research Shows

In June 2022, the Incentives and Engagement Solution Providers (IESP, a division of the Incentive Marketing Association) conducted a market research study focused on the direction of B2B incentives and loyalty programs. The objectives of the study were to discover emerging best practices in the design and execution of these programs, and to reveal innovations that are powering new successes in program results. The respondents were a mix between corporate buyers of B2B programs and solution providers in this industry.

A white paper, which will be published in late September by the IESP, will contain a full breakdown of all the findings.

## EXPECTATIONS – What objectives are changing in corporate incentive buyers today?

According to survey respondents, the three most important objectives in running an incentive or loyalty program are:



- Motivating people/customers to achieve greater results for our organization
- Recognizing and rewarding members/customers for their continued loyalty to the brand
- Building deeper relationships with our most important business drivers

The next three objectives cited are:

- Celebrating and retaining our top performers
- Encouraging personal and professional development
- Capturing new data for personalization and segmentation

It is notable that the top three responses are all long-term and strategic in nature when compared to the other responses. Phrases like “continued loyalty” and “deeper relationships” signify an alignment with much broader brand goals.

The research also explores non-financial (soft) objectives and refines the list of program metrics from the standpoint of business value.

## TRENDS – What are the top three trends that are impacting incentive program strategy?

According to survey respondents, the top trends in program strategy (ranked by percent of respondents citing) are:

- Programs are increasingly issuing points for brand-related activities beyond just sales or purchase transactions, such as points for posting reviews, taking surveys, social sharing, training completions or content consumption (60%)
- Store-branded gift cards and prepaid cash cards are among the most popular rewards in loyalty programs (45%)
- Incentive and loyalty technologies are deeply integrating with ERP, CRM,

marketing automation, and data warehouse applications to share data and to activate engagement (39%)

B2B programs are increasingly a destination for brand connection, and not just for revenue. Brands are seeking deeper relationships with the people who impact their business, and they are using motivational platforms to help encourage and grow those relationships. That is not an easy task, however.

Enabling brand connection requires a broader data set than what is traditionally used in incentive and loyalty program design. Thus, it is critical to tie other data sources to a program to help with deeper segmentation and behavior tracking.

### INNOVATION – What is the most important capability that will drive the future of all incentive and loyalty programs?

Responses to this part of the IESP survey indicate that the future of incentive and loyalty programs is bright when they are designed to be more dynamic and more fully integrated with the broader marketing tech stack. Survey respondents were asked to select key emerging capabilities that will increase their ability to create engagement, increase efficiency, and improve the effectiveness of their broader marketing efforts. This chart shows the top four responses:

Capability	Respondents Citing
Ability to run many short-term promotions or spiffs under one annual umbrella program	56%
Offering reward experiences that really stand out from the crowd – one-of-a-kind, exclusive access, etc.	56%
Highly personalized journey encompassing the full member lifecycle	46%
Omni-channel integration for acquisition, engagement and retention	40%

Program owners are embracing newer technologies and services to maximize their impact and to maintain a competitive advantage. These innovations do not replace the core value of reward-based programs but serve to

increase overall program engagement and impact.

### Alright, City Slicker, What Is the One Thing?

In a word, personalization. Success today for B2B incentives and loyalty programs depends on the ability to make program experiences personally relevant. In many ways, this has always been true, but program participants have changing expectations based on how they relate to businesses today vs. when incentives were born. Simply put, rewards for transactions or achievement is old school and brands need to dig deeper.

The research provided data that bears this out:

1. Program objectives and expectations are moving beyond immediate return and looking toward broader/deeper relationships.
2. Rewards for non-purchase activities is trending. This creates a need to provide content and new brand connection opportunities.
3. Programs are increasingly running segmented promotional offers and activations underneath the broader incentive or loyalty campaign.

Personalization doesn't just apply to emails or promotions. It will have an impact on the foundation of the program itself. The program rules structure, the

to can flow based on what they engage with, where they engage, and how often.

If you own or manage a B2B incentive or loyalty program for your organization, the things you need to be doing to enable your program to catch the personalization “gravity train” (continuing the Cowboy Curly analogy just a bit too far) are:

- Add new data to your program member database that will inform segmentation and promotions.
- Develop queries and algorithms that turn your data into intelligence for the purposes of putting the right content and promotions in front of the right people at the right time.
- Always leverage what you know already about members. Keep the relationship easy and let them know you value what they've shared already.
- Create new members-only content and make it as specific to the user as possible (e.g. don't send me a video on product line A when I purchased product line B from your brand.)
- Share all program data with other marketing technologies (CRM, marketing automation, ERP, etc.), as it makes those systems smarter and more efficient.

### Interested In Future Research from the IESP?

Anyone who is interested in incentive and B2B loyalty solutions to should look at the IESP website (<https://www.incentivemarketing.org/iesp>) and consider joining. There are many more resources and learning opportunities there to engage with, and it's the best place to have your voice heard related to our future research.

If you would like to join our content and corporate outreach committee, reach Chris Galloway via LinkedIn (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/christophergalloway/>) or email ([cgalloway@brandmovers.com](mailto:cgalloway@brandmovers.com)). **SMM**

Chris Galloway is Executive Vice President, Strategy & Design, for [Brandmovers, Inc.](#), and Board Vice President of the Incentive & Engagement Solution Providers.

# Merchandise Incentives Become More Meaningful In a World Spending More Time at Home

BY PAUL NOLAN



Money will likely always be the top answer when workers are asked what motivates them most, but new generations of employees who are more conscious of non-monetary factors on their quality of life have closed the gap in terms of what motivates most effectively.

Intangibles such as interesting work, growth opportunities and autonomy are primary motivators and key retention tools. When it comes to tangible rewards, surveys show that gift cards and points programs that can be turned into rewards of a recipient's choice rank more closely to cash than they ever have.

"It's really a challenge when you are trying to provide employees with something in addition to salary. The only way to top cash is with more cash. It becomes expected as part of the compensation," said Richelle Suver, vice president of incentives and recognition at One10 LLC, an industry leader in marketing, incentive and travel services.

Stephanie Harris, president of the Incentive Research Foundation (IRF), an organization that produces research and education about the use of non-cash incentives, said the type of merchandise that is popular in incentive and recognition programs has shifted with the times. For decades, consumer electronics was far and away the category king in terms of merchandise preference. The rush of home improvement projects spawned in the last two years as the pandemic-stricken world spent most of its time at home has resulted in home furnishings, patio accoutrements and other home improvement items knocking home electronics off its pedestal.

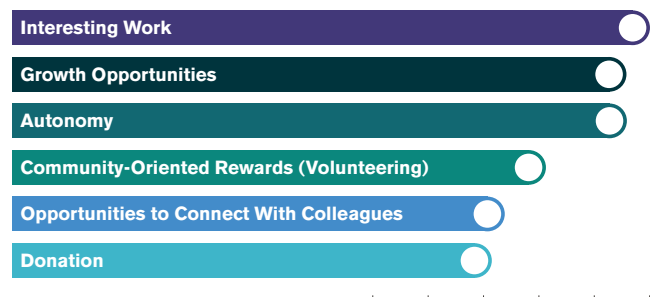
Home office equipment has also been a big benefactor of the pandemic. Many companies have provided gift cards or stipends to remote workers so they can improve the efficiency and effectiveness of their home work spaces.

Merchandise also plays an important role in incentive programs that revolve around travel. On-site gifting experiences add excitement during an offsite and give participants a

memento to remember the event long after it has ended. And for incentive programs with long-term goals that last a quarter or longer, merchandise that is awarded for accomplishments along the way can keep the excitement of an incentive program top-of-mind.

"Seeing work purely as a transaction is not a good way to think about employees," states Andy G. Schmidt, CEO of mobile communication platform provider 6i Communication. "If money is the only employee engagement strategy we are offered, then the only way to keep the team motivated is to continue to offer more. To boost employee engagement, leaders have to understand the individual motivations and infuse them into the job regularly. That's real incentive." **SMM**

## Most important intangible rewards



## Most important tangible rewards



SOURCE: INCENTIVE RESEARCH FOUNDATION



## MERCHANDISE

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### TrendSpotting: Offsites Gain Importance

As the business world returns to travel and meetings while not necessarily going back to offices, author and NYU Marketing Professor Scott Galloway says corporate event planners are suddenly strategic assets.

“Companies with a high share of remote workers need to get people in the same place some of the time, so they're investing to make those moments an experience that sets an aspirational tone for the firm. They book the One Hotel in South Beach, fly in managers from around the globe, and charge the event planner with creating 2½ days that will make people feel better about their employer the other 363 days.”

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**A Gallup/Workhuman study found that creating a culture of recognition can save a 10,000-employee company up to \$16.1 million in turnover costs annually.**  
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## MERCHANDISE

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## MERCHANDISE



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## MERCHANDISE



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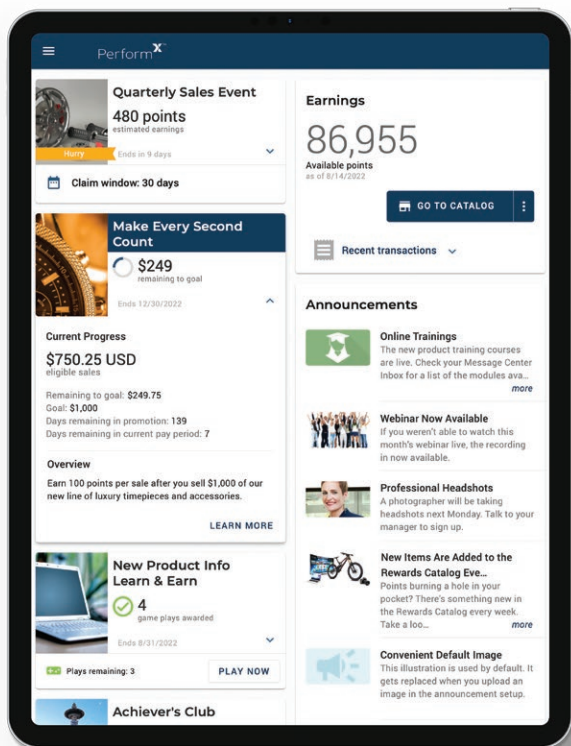
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# Gift Cards Are Tailor-Made for Today’s Remote Work Trends

BY PAUL NOLAN

The COVID-19 pandemic turned “Zoom” into a verb and proved to be a boon for sales of everything from alcohol and pets to home improvement materials and streaming content services. It also boosted the use of gift cards in employer-sponsored incentive and recognition programs.

The Incentive Federation Inc. (IFI) reports that among companies that offer incentives, eight in 10 use gift cards in their program. That’s an increase from approximately 72% in a 2016 IFI survey.

With much of the world shifting to working from home overnight in March 2020, gift cards became the go-to vehicle to keep remote workers engaged and allow employers to show their gratitude. They can be delivered electronically, fit into any size budget, and provide the instant gratification that became so important as workers were separated from their colleagues and supervisors.

Gift cards have been an increasingly popular element of reward and recognition programs over the past decade or more. Ease of administration and the broad choice they can provide to recipients in terms of reward selection add to their appeal. They also fit into nearly any type of program, whether it’s employee recognition, channel partner incentives, customer loyalty efforts or workplace safety initiatives.

If there is one confounding aspect of gift card use in recognition programs, it’s that companies continue to source gift cards through retail outlets rather than going through gift card suppliers that serve corporations and bulk purchases.

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If you purchase gift cards in bulk, there is an entire industry that can provide volume discounts, brand choice, personalization and more. Download the [Incentive Gift Card Coalition Buyers Guide](#).

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These suppliers can provide discounts and additional services that will enhance a reward and recognition effort.

Because gift cards are easy to deliver, it’s also easy to fail to properly recognize a recipient and make the reward more memorable. Recognition should be personalized to each recipient. Some may prefer one-on-one delivery from a supervisor while others enjoy more public praise in front of peers. As much as possible, managers should strive to understand each employee’s preference and follow through appropriately when delivering a gift card or any reward. Both one-on-one presentations and more public recognition should include a personable message highlighting specific examples of the recipient’s stellar performance. **SMM**

## Recent Trends In Gift Cards As Sales Incentives

Revenue	% Significantly More	% ‘Somewhat’ or ‘Significantly’ More	% ‘Somewhat’ or ‘Significantly’ Less	Net: More–Less
\$1M – \$4.9M	14%	41%	14%	+ 27%
\$5M – \$9.9M	22%	54%	11%	+ 43%
\$10M – \$99.9M	22%	60%	8%	+ 52%
\$100M – \$999.9M	13%	53%	7%	+ 46%
+46%	26%	62%	7%	+ 55%

In a 2022 survey, companies of all sizes reported using “significantly more” or “somewhat more” gift cards as sales incentives. More than one-fourth of large companies (\$1 billion or more in revenue) reported using “significantly more” gift cards as sales incentives than the previous year.

SOURCE: INCENTIVE FEDERATION INC. INCENTIVE MARKETPLACE ESTIMATE



## GIFT CARDS & REWARDS



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Gift of College gift cards provide a simple way to contribute to 529 college savings funds or help pay down student loan debt. They're great for seasonal gifting, employee rewards, attracting and retaining talent, or incentivizing event attendees. Make people feel appreciated with the gift of a brighter tomorrow. Contact Anne Jetter at [ajetter@stonerbunting.com](mailto:ajetter@stonerbunting.com) or call 402-510-8851.



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### The U.S. Bank Rewards Card

U.S. Bank Rewards Cards are a convenient way to thank and motivate remote employees or allow them to purchase supplies and accommodate traveling expenses. Available amounts range from \$25 to \$1,000. For more information, contact [RewardsCommunication@usbk.com](mailto:RewardsCommunication@usbk.com).



### TrendSpotting: WFH and Productivity

The flipside of the flexibility benefit of working from home is that it leads to burnout because too many workers never truly end their workday. A study of more than 10,000 skilled professionals at a large Asian IT services company compared productivity before and during the WFH period of the COVID-19 pandemic. Total hours worked increased by approximately 30% while average output did not significantly change. That equates to a drop in productivity of about 20%.

In addition, time spent on coordination activities and meetings increased, but uninterrupted work hours shrank considerably. Employees also spent less time networking, and received less coaching and one-on-one meetings with supervisors. The study was completed by the IZA Institute of Labor Economics, which analyzes global labor markets.

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# The Enduring Impact of Travel and Experiences Is Unique

BY PAUL NOLAN

Perhaps more than any other incentive category, travel and experiential incentives foster the work/life balance and the employee-centric culture that is so pervasive in today's corporate world.

The experiences that employers can provide work teams away from the office and away from their homes can be impactful, enduring and unmatched by any other compensation. Here's Mei Yang-Mille, managing director of KARL STORZ Shanghai Ltd., a leading manufacturer of endoscope equipment for human and veterinary medicine, commenting about her company's incentive travel efforts:

"People are not living merely for the sake of money. They need to have emotional fulfillment, a sense of pride and visibility. When you're selected as one of the best employees for an incentive travel program, you're not alone: there's a mutual reinforcement and a synergy you create — something a cash bonus cannot build. The interactions, communication, the experience itself and the memories after — this is part of how we develop corporate culture. It lifts up people and gives a sense of honor and belonging."

Her comments are from a new report entitled "[How the C-Suite Sees Incentive Travel](#)" published by the SITE Foundation, the research arm of the Society for Incentive Travel Excellence (SITE).

In the same report, Jay Kvasnicka, executive vice president of field operations for US Foods, states, "Incentive travel creates networks inside of our company that are broader than the specific marketplace [an employee] happens to work in, and there's value in that. Not only is there value in retention, but there's value in sharing best practices."

### Experiences Can Happen Without Travel

Of course, impactful work group experiences can occur without travel. Offsite experiences, if even for a day or part of one, are increasingly important in a world that is increasingly working remotely and not interacting with co-workers regularly. A March 2022 survey by the Incentive Research Foundation of more than 1,000 employees and managers across diverse industries found that loneliness and loss of peer collaboration are the top concerns about the impact of remote work.

"Whether an employee works one day remotely or five, managers should take measures to address isolation and loneliness," the report states.

Work from home has become a perk itself — and a driver of lost workers for companies that choose not to offer it. It should

be recognized as the recruitment and retention tool it has become, but it also should be a motivator for companies to find new ways to bring their teams together.

"Work from home is polarizing," says author, podcaster and NYU Marketing Professor Scott Galloway in one of his weekly "[No Mercy/No Malice](#)" essays. "If you're an employer, the office is your primary tool for facilitating culture. Holiday parties and post-work drinks aren't sunk costs — they're investments in happiness, innovation and relationships. The greatest driver of retention is if someone has a good friend at their workplace. Without a workplace, your employees have fewer points of contact. [Sixty percent](#) of remote workers say WFH makes them feel less connected to their colleagues."

Travel and experiential rewards also increasingly include options for individual experiences — tickets to concerts, sporting events, adventure outings and the like that recipients can experience on their own time. Although the bonding possibilities between co-workers is absent, the enduring goodwill between workers and their employers remains intact.



In an advertisement for the online travel website Expedia, actor Ewan McGregor captures the zeitgeist of valuing experiences over possessions. "Do you think any of us will look back at our lives and regret the things we didn't buy, or the places we didn't go?"

Any business that helps its workers, channel partners or loyal customers avoid those kinds of regrets is on the right track. **SMM**

## TRAVEL & EXPERIENCES

### For Recognition to Register, Be Authentic

Authenticity is a word that is mentioned frequently when discussing recognition in this quirky, ever-changing work environment. Authenticity is one of the five pillars of recognition identified in the 2022 report “[Transforming Workplaces Through Recognition](#),” a project by Gallup and Workhuman, a provider of cloud-based, human capital management software solutions. (The other four are fulfilling, equitable, embedded in the culture and personalized.)

Black and Hispanic employees are especially attuned to authenticity, according to the report. Black employees are 79% more likely to be thriving, and Hispanic employees are 69% more likely, when they can strongly agree the recognition they receive is authentic.

“What makes recognition impactful is what it means to individuals – about themselves, their job, their teams or workplace – and the organization. If recognition is not perceived to be authentic, it can undermine the experience,” the report states.

When employees perceive that their employer’s recognition is authentic, they are more likely to believe their organization cares about their well-being and see a path for growth at the organization. They are also more likely to believe their organization is thriving, and more likely to recommend it as a great place to work.

Unfortunately, the Gallup/Workhuman survey found that only about one-third of employees strongly agree the recognition they receive is authentic.

“Recognition becomes more meaningful when it is clear why it is being given,” the report states. “Telling employees how their work made an impact takes the words ‘good job’ to a new level.”

Managers and leaders should assess whether the recognition in their organization is given impersonally or unceremoniously as a matter of routine or obligation. Personalization – another of the five pillars of recognition – is key to bringing authenticity to your recognition. As the report states, “Optics matters but so does sentiment – and employees can tell the difference.”

### Turnkey Travel Incentives

Gift A Trip is a reward and recognition platform for turnkey individual travel certificates direct from the biggest resort and cruise brands. Unlike dollar-denominated gift cards, these travel certificates are fully inclusive of accommodations, taxes, fees and gratuities, providing a variety of lengths-of-stay, price points, and destination options. Perfect for sales incentives, service rewards and more. Contact Lori Cassidy [lori@giftatrip.com](mailto:lori@giftatrip.com), 800-876-5046, or visit [www.giftatrip.com](http://www.giftatrip.com).



### TrendSpotting: Resortainment

Offsite planners take note: Resorts have become about a lot more than a comfortable bed and a nice pool. The Wall Street Journal reports that big-brand resorts are transforming themselves into one-stop entertainment venues, with on-site theme parks, interactive theaters, virtual reality games and other unique experiences for guests. Meetings in the morning and roller-coasters in the afternoon.

### Making Travel Memories

Resort Vacation Certificates offers a diverse portfolio of resort, membership and lifestyle travel brands within the Travel + Leisure Co. family. The wide range of options in inventory provide the perfect complement to any incentive and rewards program seeking to add travel. Contact: Lorraine Tillie of Resort Vacation Certificates at 973-879-6882 or visit [www.resortcerts.com/demo](http://www.resortcerts.com/demo).

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## INCENTIVE SOLUTION PROVIDERS

# Turnkey Programs Meet Demands of the Times

Just as gift cards surged in popularity when the pandemic sent a majority of workers to home offices, incentive points programs also found new audiences. The ease of administration, touchless reward delivery and flexibility of reward choices helped incentive and engagement solution providers (IESP) increase business in the past two years.

Respondents to a survey by the Incentive Research Foundation ranked points programs behind only gifts, gift cards and cash as the most preferred tangible rewards.

According to research by the Incentive Research Federation Inc. (IRF) points programs saw increased use in the past year compared to the year before across all types of incentive programs — sales incentives, channel partner/distributor programs, employee incentives and customer loyalty efforts. More than half (55%) of the companies that offer sales incentives use points programs.

According to the IRF, the average spend on points programs by companies that sponsor sales incentive programs is \$207,556. For channel partner/distributor programs, it's \$66,277 and for

employee incentive programs, the average spend on points programs is \$186,993.

The allure of points programs is their turnkey nature. Program providers typically tackle or assist with campaign kickoffs, administration and tracking, program structure, communication to program participants, and the sourcing of rewards (including merchandise, gift cards, and travel and experiences).

These programs can also adjust to a sponsor's changing needs, whether that is the program timeline, adjustments to rules, implementation of new goals or broadening the list of participants.

The popularity and effectiveness of incentive points programs will likely keep them as a top option for incentive program sponsors whether or not a wide-scale return to offices occurs. **SMM**

### Let's Rally!

Quality Incentive Company (QIC) creates and administers recognition and incentive programs that motivate people, inspire higher performance and deliver results. Contact QIC at 800-621-9745, email [letsrally@gqic.com](mailto:letsrally@gqic.com) visit [www.QualityIncentiveCompany.com](http://www.QualityIncentiveCompany.com).



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## INCENTIVE SOLUTION PROVIDERS

### Optimize Channel Incentives

360insights is a leading provider of cloud-based channel incentives ecosystem designed to elevate and optimize partner engagement. The platform helps brands manage, measure and optimize consumer rebates, SPIFs, volume incentives, MDF/CO-OP, sales allowances, points programs and associated spending using data-driven channel insights to optimize business performance through their channel partners. Learn more at [www.360insights.com](http://www.360insights.com) or call May Fong at 866-684-2308.



### Making Work Mean More

CarltonOne empowers you to create extraordinary incentive programs to motivate, recognize and reward employees, customers and teams. Its Global Reward Solutions, Kart and Power2Motivate platforms inspire over 5 million members in 185 countries, funding its Evergrow eco-action program with every transaction. CarltonOne has funded 13 million trees and will plant 100 million every year by 2024. For more information, contact Mike Love at 905-477-3971 x257, [mlove@carltonone.com](mailto:mlove@carltonone.com), or visit [www.carltonone.com](http://www.carltonone.com).



### Recognition for Today's Work Force

Xceleration is a full-service rewards, incentive and recognition agency, delivering recognition and incentive programs that drive motivation and performance. Xceleration partners with its customers to build reward strategies that exceed expectations to excite and impress your top performers. Contact Marisa Haehnlein at [MarisaH@xceleration.com](mailto:MarisaH@xceleration.com) or visit [www.xceleration.com](http://www.xceleration.com).



### The Importance of Recognition Hasn't Changed

The team at One10 believes in the power of human potential and that every employee, channel partner or influencer can have an exponential impact on improving results. One10 works with leading brands to develop programs that inform, engage and reward stakeholders. Contact: Robin Williams at 937-824-8191, email [robin.williams@one10marketing.com](mailto:robin.williams@one10marketing.com) or visit [www.One10marketing.com](http://www.One10marketing.com).



### Personalized Recognition Solutions

C.A. Short Company is an awarding-winning sales incentives solution provider that specializes in sales performance and channel incentives. Its incentive platform is configurable based on your needs with an array of reward options, including travel and experiences, merchandise and gift cards. Contact: Kevin Gergel at 770-861-1975, email [kgergel@cashort.com](mailto:kgergel@cashort.com) or visit [www.cashort.com](http://www.cashort.com).



### All-Purpose Motivation Solutions

For nearly 50 years, All Star Incentive Marketing has provided its clients with solutions that help maximize the value of human capital. Through world-class engagement solutions in the form of incentive, recognition and reward programs, All Star can motivate behavior change and, in the process, create more effective and loyal employees and customers. Whether it's workplace wellness, safety, and years of service recognition, or employee appreciation/loyalty and peer-to-peer recognition, All Star provides programs to drive employee performance. For more information, call 800-526-8629 or visit [Allstarincentivemarketing.com](http://Allstarincentivemarketing.com).

