



Is Going Green Leaving You Feeling Black and Blue?

By Carol Ivchich, Director of Strategic Merchandising, Maritz Motivation

Are you trying to embrace the green movement but are struggling with what to do? Or perhaps you're not sold on the concept but feel pressured to conform? And how in the world can this topic have anything to do with your incentive or recognition programs and their associated rewards? Well, don't wave the white flag just yet! Going green is more than just a splashy trend – it's a mindset that encompasses so much more than just being environmentally friendly.

Truth be told, you may feel as though you have absolutely nothing in common with the organic food-craving tree hugger who sits in the cube next to you. And while you admire another co-worker for their commitment to recycling everything from newspapers to plastic to motor oil, you still don't really feel much of a connection there.

Then again, you're the poster boy for your company's wellness program. You eat right, watch your weight and work out five times a week. So what do the three of you have in common? Plenty.

It's all about becoming a good global citizen – a movement in which seemingly unrelated personalities and lifestyles slowly migrate together into a broader sense of good. And the beauty of this concept is that the word "global" doesn't have to mean you're doing something on a grand scale that's impacting hundreds, thousands, even millions of people. Quite the contrary. Even if your main concern is you, congratulations! You are still a part of this phenomenon.

Because what we're really talking about are the individual actions of individual people and how these actions transcend into a much larger scale. People are progressive by nature – so if your main concern is taking care of Planet Earth, eventually your efforts will filter down into something of a more personal nature. Conversely, if you believe strongly in taking care of yourself physically, ultimately your actions will become more altruistic in nature.

This cultural mindshift has led to a growing trend in incentive and recognition programs. Not only are more and more programs including criteria in these areas, but so, too, should your rewards mix reflect this significant flood of social consciousness. Just adding one or several of these components could significantly impact the results you see by providing more meaningful and personally fulfilling rewards to your people:

Wellness

A broad term describing a "state of being more". Wellness incorporates habits, choices, decisions and activities that directly impact a person's overall health and well-being. Ensure your rewards mix provides a variety of options that encourages healthier choices and lifestyles by including categories like nutrition, indoor and outdoor fitness, mind and body safety and health and beauty.

Giving Back

Provide participants an opportunity to do something for the greater good while still being rewarded for all their hard work. Establishing a Giving Back category allows participants to choose rewards whose manufactures/designers will donate a portion of proceeds to worthy causes.

Going Green

Anything a person can do to contribute to the environment is a great thing. Appeal across all generations and demographics by establishing a green movement category featuring products that are energy-efficient, recycled, natural, organic and environmentally-friendly.

But these are only just the beginning. Be on the lookout throughout 2008 and 2009 for a growing rewards trend centered around multi-culturalism as our workforce continues to evolve and diversity becomes even more prevalent.



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