

THE POWER OF RECOGNITION – EMPOWERING YOUR DREAM TEAM

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Above: Administrator Coin Award-Image

There is nothing like a team that is ambitious, driven, and passionate about what they are doing. When team members give 100%, are ambitious, and driven ... the result is a dream-team ... one that will drive forward core projects for the business, as well as take the most complex problems and provide the best solutions. So, how do you get the right people and build such a team? Michigan State Industries (MSI) Administrator, Christopher Kamrada, implemented an Employee Recognition Program in January 2019 to award and recognize those staff who take ownership of their role and the organization as a whole. This program acknowledges commitment to the mission of MSI and rewards team members who embody the core values that have been created by the culture of the team.

MSI Core Values:

- **P**erseverance - Work to get the job done for our customers, co-workers, and staff.
- **A**ccountability - Hold ourselves, co-workers, and staff accountable.
- **R**espect - Show respect to all stakeholders.
- **T**rust - Accomplish great things by trusting our co-workers and staff.
- **N**et Income - Provide goods and services sufficient to support our operations.
- **E**xcellence - Demonstrate excellence in everything we do.
- **R**esourcefulness - Encourage "Outside-The-Box" thinking to find solutions.
- **S**ervant Leadership - Effective management to support staff and meet objectives.
- **H**onesty - Be truthful in all endeavors.
- **I**ntegrity - Strive to do the right thing.
- **P**rofessionalism - Conduct business openly, respect confidentiality, communicate timely.

The Administrator Coin Award was born out of Kamrada's desire and foresight to ensure that all staff that exemplify the qualities of a good leader are recognized. Everyone in our organization wholeheartedly believes in MSI's Mission, Vision, and Core Values. When team members are faced with immense project challenges, MSI is known to step up to the plate and hit a home run almost every time. During the recent and ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the staff at every level in the organization formed invaluable bonds, trust, cooperation, and collaboration to push through these challenging events. Various factory operations were manufacturing and shipping products in enormous quantities. The amount

BUILDING THE DREAM TEAM

of appreciation communicated by the Michigan Department of Corrections (MDOC) and other MSI customers during this pandemic was abundant. In moments like these, as well as other noteworthy accomplishments, an awards recognition program can empower staff to feel like they belong to a supportive team.

Building a dream team of engaged employees who can propel a business forward requires management to create a team-based organization that fosters trust and cooperation. Within our CI program, this concept is instilled at all levels of the organization and more importantly at each factory operation where staff provide the same team concept while motivating and developing work skills training for their incarcerated workers. MSI's Core Values are always front and center when on-boarding new team members and are reviewed multiple times throughout the employees first year. These core values represent our vision and partnership with MDOC, customers, and stakeholders.

Concise communication is a "must" for effectiveness. Successful teams communicate consistently to stay focused and on track to complete individual and organizational goals. Weekly conference calls are held with factory managers and staff to stay ahead of any issues, such as the new ERP system, interruptions in the supply chain, inventory discrepancies, work orders, and more. Open communication weekly among factory staff is an effective way to build trust and camaraderie while offering ideas, suggestions, assistance, and resources that may be helpful in future collaborative efforts. It also allows for an open dialog, where team members can hold meaningful discussions and resolve issues weekly as they arise instead of waiting for an issue to become an emergency.

Annual manager meetings also take place each year ... these highlight the staff training program and provide an opportunity for factory operations staff to come together in an off-site conference setting at various locations of interest. The most recent managers meeting took place at Michigan's Prison Museum located within the State Prison

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Above: Chris Kamrada shakes hands with Chad Guthrie, Admin Coin Award recipient

of Southern Michigan. Another meeting was held at the R. E. Oldsmobile Transportation Museum in Lansing, MI. During the roundtable sessions, held at the manager meetings, operations staff review and discuss new training materials, motivational presentations, operational accomplishments, along with discussions on innovation and new product development. Meeting participants also present their takeaways and lessons learned from previous NCIA National Training Conferences, and awards are presented for staff recognition.

Maintaining a positive attitude is necessary to minimizing dissatisfaction among team members working with MSI. Possessing a positive attitude, focusing on finding solutions to issues, building respect for each other, creating supportive working relationships, and encouraging an environment of collaboration ... these are all essential for building a strong team.

If trust has been established and positive attitudes exist within the team, cooperation falls into place and ensures that the team will work well together. A certain amount of

conflict may arise, but this conflict is not always negative in nature. Additionally, working through conflict in a professional way can help a team learn to resolve differences, compromise, and improve team performance through better cooperation. Team members must be committed to the organization and team goals to deliver on expectations. A favorite banner quote we have here at MSI reads, "Commitment is not measured by hours contributed but by the dedication team members show for the work, for each other achieving results, and milestones when expected."

The Administrator Coin Award represents leadership, and is a valuable attribute to help the team stay focused on the big picture and shared goals. A team leader must be able to delegate effectively and follow up to ensure that objectives are completed on time. It is the

responsibility of the team leader to build on the team's strengths as they emerge and facilitate communication, collaboration, cooperation, and commitment among all team members.

Each team member should be empowered to feel like they are working in a meaningful and active environment, as well as engaged in the team's goals. Empowerment is critical for learning and performance. Individuals, and even a team, that does not feel empowered are more likely to become passive and perform at a lower level. It is the leader's role to empower team members through individual communication and mentoring.

Teams must produce desired results and when a results-oriented culture is apparent across the team, its members are motivated to produce what is expected through team effort and collaboration. A well-established dream team within your organization can build trust and inspire teamwork among employees by enabling and empowering them to accomplish quality work that contributes to the overall business objectives.

Organizational success is linked to the quality of employees. By cultivating employees into dream team members, the result can be much greater than the individual parts and that's a big part of MSI's motto 'Building Bridges to Success.'



Left:
Deann Gallagher,
Operations
Manager, Admin
Coin Award
Recipient, with
Director Chris
Kamranda and
Chuck Beltz
(now retired)



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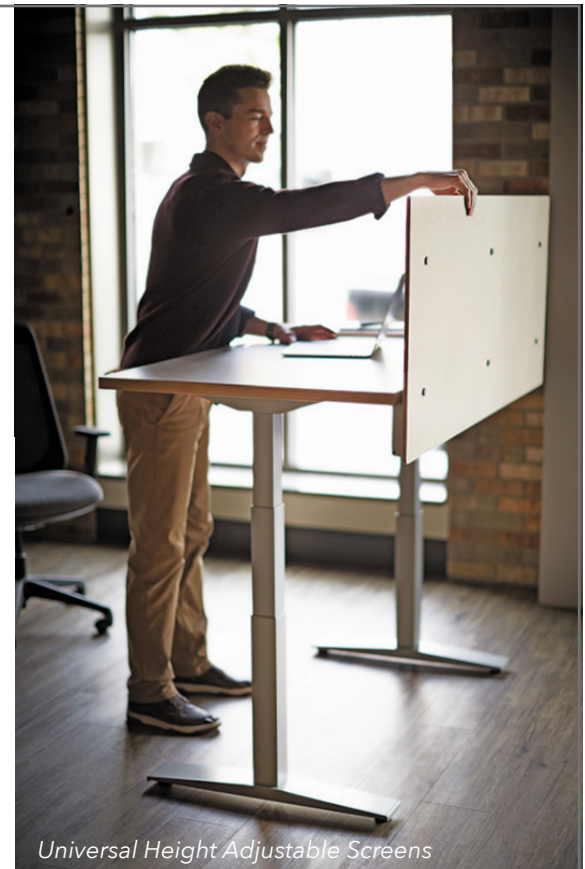
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