

With transformative potential, generative AI is emerging as a game-changer across business, including the fields of incentives, rewards, recognition and events. Already, dozens of cases for leveraging generative AI in incentive program design, event planning and reward personalization have emerged.

Here, a use case for leveraging generative AI in brainstorming reward ideas for frontline hotel staff is explored using prompts and actual ChatGPT 4 responses. This practical example provide tips into the new 'art' of conversing with AI to build on its responses iteratively and arrive at new ideas that meet your needs.

Scenario: You have a new hotel industry client who wants to recognize and motivate frontline staff.

PROMPT #1:

“”

I am an incentive designer looking for unique and exciting reward ideas for frontline hotel staff, with each reward valued at \$100 or less. These rewards should be appealing and motivating for a diverse team, fostering a sense of appreciation and recognition for their hard work. Please suggest a variety of rewards that cater to different interests, such as personal well-being, leisure, or practical daily use. Additionally, consider rewards that can be easily distributed and utilized by the staff, keeping in mind the hospitality context of their work. The aim is to boost morale and show genuine gratitude for their dedication and service in the hotel industry.

This prompt should be effective because it is detailed, clear, and specific.

1. Clearly states the target audience (frontline hotel staff).
2. Specifies the budget constraint (\$100 or less per reward).
3. Asks for a variety of reward types to cater to different interests.
4. Emphasizes the context of the hospitality industry.
5. Focuses on the purpose of the rewards (to excite, motivate, and show appreciation).

CHATGPT 4 RESPONSE:

Sure. Here are some suggestions that fit within your criteria:

- **Wellness and Self-Care Packages:** Customized packages including items like aromatherapy candles, essential oils, and high-quality skincare products. These can help staff relax and rejuvenate after long shifts.
- **Experience Vouchers:** Gift vouchers for local experiences such as movie tickets, local theater shows, or cooking classes. These experiences provide a nice break and are something the staff can look forward to.
- **Meal Delivery Service Credits:** Gift cards or credits for popular meal delivery services, allowing staff to enjoy a variety of cuisines at their convenience.
- **Personalized Items:** Customized gifts like engraved pens, personalized coffee mugs, or monogrammed tote bags. These items can make employees feel individually recognized.
- **Fitness and Health Memberships:** Subscriptions to online fitness classes, yoga sessions, or memberships to local gyms. This caters to the physical well-being of the staff.
- **Book or Audiobook Subscriptions:** Memberships to services like Audible or Kindle Unlimited, catering to those who enjoy reading or listening to books in their downtime.
- **Quality Time with Family and Friends:** Tickets to local attractions, like zoos, museums, or botanical gardens, which staff can enjoy with their loved ones.
- **Practical Tools for Daily Use:** High-quality, durable items like insulated water bottles, lunch containers, or ergonomic support cushions for those long hours on their feet.
- **Professional Development Opportunities:** Covering the cost of online courses or workshops related to their interests or career advancement within the hospitality industry.
- **Recognition Awards:** Customized trophies or plaques acknowledging their hard work and dedication, which can be displayed with pride.
- **Flexible Working Hours Coupons:** Offering options for flexible shifts or a day off as a reward, which can be especially appreciated in the hospitality sector.
- **Tech Gadgets:** Useful gadgets like wireless earbuds, portable phone chargers, or digital planners to help with their personal and professional life.

Each of these rewards not only fits within the budget constraint but also adds value to the employees' personal or professional lives, showing that their hard work is genuinely appreciated.

PROMPT #2:

What about peer-to-peer recognition using points? Can this be effective in a front-line hospitality environment, and if so, what might it look like? For example, the technologies needed, the value of a point, how many points should be used by whom in what circumstances and how people might redeem points for rewards.

CHATGPT 4 RESPONSE:

Peer-to-peer recognition using a points system can indeed be effective in a front-line hospitality environment. It can foster a culture of appreciation, motivation, and team spirit. Here's how such a system could be structured:

Implementation and Technology

- **Recognition Platform:** Implement a digital platform or mobile app that allows employees to easily give and receive points. This system should integrate seamlessly with existing HR systems and be accessible on various devices.
- **Point Allocation System:** Each employee could be allocated a certain number of points to give out monthly or quarterly. The number of points can depend on factors like the size of the team, frequency of interaction, and organizational goals.
- **Real-Time Recognition:** Enable real-time recognition, allowing employees to immediately award points to their peers for specific actions or behaviors that align with company values or exceptional service.

Point Value and Usage

- **Value of Points:** Establish a clear value for each point. For instance, one point could be equivalent to a dollar, or a certain number of points could be required to redeem specific rewards.
- **Distribution Guidelines:** Provide guidelines on how many points to award for different types of contributions. For example, small gestures might warrant 1-5 points, while going above and beyond might earn 10-20 points.
- **Peer-to-Peer Focus:** Encourage employees to recognize not just big achievements but also daily contributions and teamwork efforts. This helps in building a more inclusive and supportive work culture.

Redemption of Points

- **Rewards Catalogue:** Create a catalogue of rewards that can be redeemed with points. This could include items like gift cards, extra time off, a free meal at a local restaurant, or company merchandise.
- **Tiered Rewards System:** Offer a range of rewards, with more desirable or valuable rewards costing more points. This encourages ongoing participation and long-term engagement.
- **Transparency and Accessibility:** Ensure that the process for redeeming points is transparent and accessible. Employees should easily be able to track their points balance and understand how to redeem them.

Considerations for Effectiveness

- **Regular Communication:** Regularly communicate about the program to keep it at the forefront. Celebrate milestones and share stories of successful peer recognition to encourage ongoing participation.
- **Feedback and Adjustment:** Collect feedback from employees about the program and be willing to make adjustments. This ensures the program remains relevant and effective.
- **Management Support:** Ensure management buy-in and participation in the program. Their involvement can significantly enhance the perceived value and legitimacy of the recognition system.
- **Inclusivity and Fairness:** Monitor the distribution of points to ensure fairness and inclusivity. All staff should feel they have an equal opportunity to earn and redeem points.

In conclusion, a peer-to-peer recognition system using points in a hospitality environment can be a powerful tool to boost morale, encourage teamwork, and recognize individual contributions. With the right technology, clear guidelines, and an appealing rewards system, it can become a key component of your workplace culture.

PROMPT #3:

Hmm, you made me think. What if the program were extended to hotel guests so that they could award points too? Would that work? If so how?

CHATGPT 4 RESPONSE:

Extending a peer-to-peer recognition program to include hotel guests is an innovative idea and can potentially work very well, especially in the hospitality industry where customer feedback is invaluable. Here's how it could be structured:

Concept and Feasibility

- **Guest Involvement:** Guests can be given the opportunity to award points to staff members who provide exceptional service. This directly involves guests in the recognition process, enhancing their engagement with the hotel's service culture.
- **Integration with Customer Experience:** The program can be integrated with the hotel's customer experience strategy, making it a part of the overall guest journey, from check-in to check-out.

Implementation

- **Simple and Accessible System:** Implement a user-friendly digital platform, such as an app or a feature integrated into the existing hotel app, where guests can easily award points to staff members. QR codes in rooms or common areas can link directly to the platform.
- **Clear Guidelines:** Provide clear instructions for guests on how the system works, including how many points they can award and for what types of service.
- **Limited Point Allocation:** Guests could be allocated a limited number of points to distribute during their stay to ensure the system is used judiciously.
- **Feedback Mechanism:** Along with awarding points, guests can leave feedback or comments, offering valuable insights for staff performance reviews.

Rewards and Recognition

- **Visibility of Rewards:** Make it clear to guests what rewards staff can earn with these points. This transparency can encourage more guest participation.
- **Incorporate Guest Feedback in Staff Rewards:** Staff rewards can be partially based on the points and feedback received from guests, ensuring direct recognition of guest-facing efforts.

Challenges and Considerations

- **Ensuring Fairness:** There should be mechanisms to ensure that all staff, including those not directly in guest-facing roles, have the opportunity to earn points.
- **Managing Guest Expectations:** It's important to manage guest expectations regarding the impact of their points, to ensure guests don't feel they are directly affecting staff wages or job security.
- **Data Privacy and Ethics:** Ensure the system respects the privacy of both staff and guests. Staff should consent to being part of this system, and guests should not be pressured to participate.
- **Feedback Monitoring:** Regularly monitor guest feedback and point distribution for any signs of misuse or bias.

Potential Outcomes

- **Enhanced Guest Engagement:** Allowing guests to participate in the recognition process can deepen their engagement with the hotel brand and improve their overall experience.
- **Motivation for Staff:** Knowing that guests can directly contribute to their recognition may motivate staff to consistently provide high-quality service.
- **Valuable Insights for Management:** The feedback and points awarded by guests can provide management with valuable insights into staff performance and guest satisfaction.

In conclusion, extending a peer-to-peer recognition program to hotel guests can be a powerful tool for enhancing guest satisfaction and employee motivation. However, it's crucial to carefully design and manage the program to ensure it is fair, ethical, and aligns with the overall goals of the hotel.

PROMPT #4:

Great points, I think my client is going to love this. But I want to back it all up with some facts. Where can I find the best research on incentives and rewards?

CHATGPT 4 RESPONSE:

To support your recommendations with robust data and research, you can explore several key sources that specialize in incentives, rewards, and employee engagement. Here are some places to start your search:

Academic Journals

- ***Journal of Applied Psychology***: Known for publishing empirical research on organizational and employee behavior.
- ***Journal of Business and Psychology***: Offers research that can bridge the gap between business needs and psychological insights.
- ***Human Resource Management Review***: Provides scholarly articles on human resource management practices, including incentives and rewards.

Industry Reports and Surveys

- **Incentive Research Foundation (IRF)**: A treasure trove for data on incentive programs, employee engagement, and motivation.
- **WorldatWork**: Publishes surveys and reports on compensation and benefits, including incentives.
- **Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)**: Offers extensive resources on employee benefits and recognition programs.

Online Databases and Libraries

- **Google Scholar**: A comprehensive database of scholarly articles where you can search for studies on incentives and rewards.
- **JSTOR and EBSCOhost**: These academic databases offer access to a wide range of journals and publications in the fields of business and psychology.

Conferences and Industry Forums

- **HR Technology Conference & Exposition:** Often features presentations on the latest trends in employee incentives and engagement.
- **WorldatWork's Total Rewards Conference:** A gathering of professionals discussing various aspects of HR, including rewards and recognition.

Books

- ***Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us*** by Daniel H. Pink: Offers insights into employee motivation.
- ***The Power of Recognition in Employee Engagement*:** Explores the impact of recognition on employee engagement.

Business and HR Blogs

- ***Harvard Business Review*:** Provides articles by experts on employee motivation and reward systems.
- ***Forbes Human Resources Council*:** Features articles and insights from HR professionals and business leaders.

Government and Educational Institution Publications

- **Bureau of Labor Statistics:** For data on employee benefits and compensation trends.
- **Reports from business schools:** Many leading business schools publish research on organizational behavior and HR management.

Remember, while gathering research, it's important to consider the date of publication to ensure the relevance of the data. Also, cross-referencing multiple sources can provide a well-rounded understanding of the topic.

This “conversation” with generative AI could continue indefinitely. Another prompt could ask about sourcing some of the rewards, price comparisons, quality, etc. Another could ask for communications and promotion ideas, and so on. By delving into how generative AI can be effectively integrated into industry practices, we hope this introduction serves as a starting point for readers who have not yet explored the uses of generative AI as a form of creative assistant in designing incentive and reward programs.