

Give Employees a Standing Ovation

By Shirley Lee
All rights reserved

Are you in search of a recognition award idea that is different and inexpensive?

In one department where I worked, we did something a little different that worked well. The program involved using what was called a “Standing O”. O is short for ovation. This program was discovered by team member at a conference she attended. She suggested the idea to the department’s performance measurement team and they adopted it. They revised the program a little by giving both little O’s and big O’s, which represented the significance of a contribution. An element of fun was added by putting faces and hair on the O’s and personalizing them with accessories.

What is a “Standing O”?

The “Standing O” is an award given to group members who have made some significant achievement in the previous quarter. Members are presented with their O award at a department meeting. The presentation of awards is followed by everyone standing and clapping for all the award recipients. It can be a great recognition program and not as expensive as other types of trophies might be.

How do you make a “Standing O”?

To make a “Standing O”, follow the steps below.

1. From a craft store purchase: wooden letter O in the desired size(s) along with plastic or wooden feet or shoes in a size appropriate for the selected O. If a face on the O is desired, also purchase wiggle eyes in a size appropriate for the selected O. A red marker may also be needed.
2. If the O is to have a face, draw a red smile or mouth at the bottom of the wooden O. Then glue the eyes at the top of the O. Finish the O by gluing feet or shoes to bottom of the O so it will stand.
3. The O’s may be presented with a separate certificate acknowledging achievement or the specific achievement and date may be written on the back of the O. With large O’s, an option might be to print the achievement and award date on colored card-stock. The card-stock would be cut to fit the back of the O and glued on so text would appear in the open center of the O as the representation of trophy purpose.



Can the “Standing O” be used for other than business?

The “Standing O” trophy program can be used in any type of setting. For example, a program involving children’s sports may want to adopt the program but call it something different. For a girls program, the O might be painted pink (or painted team colors) and the trophy called “gO Girl!” Alternately, for boys the same trophy may be blue and called “Oh Boy!” The O is very versatile. Its application is just a matter of using the imagination to take it where it could go.

What are other ways to adapt this idea?

Although the idea was originally for a “Standing O”, it can be adapted using other letters. If the award is for team recognition, an adaptation might be to use a “T” instead of an O and calling the trophy “Top Team” or “Top Team Member”. Another idea would be to use a “Q” for Quality Effort/Improvement or an S for a Service Award. Consider the “Standing O” as an idea to start from. A recognition program can be anything that uses some sort of trophy to stand on the recipient’s desk or shelf as a thank-you for a job well-done. The program name can be whatever best fits the environment it applies to.



Author Biography: (not included in article word count)

Shirley Lee is a consultant/facilitator who helps organizations increase employee and system capacity to produce results. She has been involved with teams since 1985. She facilitates a variety of team building, problem solving, and productivity improvement events. Her programs include managing time, facilitating meetings, project management simplified, workspace organization, and the problem solving process. More information and a productivity newsletter is available on her website: www.shirleyfinelee.com or by emailing her at slee@shirleyfinelee.com.