

Looking ahead to Christmas

It's never too early to start thinking about Christmas and now is the perfect time to start thinking about staff rewards. Whether you intend to provide a Christmas gift to all employees, to reward those who have gone the extra mile or to kick-start an ongoing motivation scheme, a little planning now can make all the difference. And of course rewards aren't just for Christmas - we can help you reward and motivate your staff all year round.

Why introduce a reward scheme?

The first step in any reward scheme is to decide who you want to reward and why. It's important to explore how you can offer rewards which will be truly appreciated by the recipients, and how you can ensure that your company or organisation also benefits from the scheme.

Gifts are traditionally a way of boosting morale and spreading goodwill, for example by providing every member of staff with a voucher to use at a retailer of their choice. Often all employees are provided with an equal gift at Christmas, with even relatively small amounts being received gratefully in the spirit of the season. However, there is also scope for using gifts to reward employees who have gone above and beyond the call of duty, for example by sending their reward with a personalised email which highlights their achievements, or by providing a gift of greater monetary value.

If you're not yet operating year-round rewards, Christmas gifts can be the perfect way of trialling a reward scheme. By whetting employees' appetites with a well-considered initial gift, you can encourage them to strive for future targets.

Whether you're looking for a simple Christmas gift scheme or a more complex ongoing scheme, we help to ensure it's rewarding for both you and your employees.



Including your own logo and colour scheme presents a strong corporate image to your employees.



What should you watch out for?

With all benefit schemes, it's crucial to understand the tax and National Insurance implications. Rewards which are considered by HMRC to be "trivial", such as a bottle of wine, can be provided without a tax liability, but most rewards, including gift vouchers, do carry a liability.

When employees face an unexpected tax bill at the end of the year, the motivational aspect of a Christmas gift can be completely eroded. For this reason, employers often elect to settle the tax liability on the employees' behalf. This can be handled easily by setting up a PAYE Settlement Agreement, which also has the advantage of avoiding the need to keep records of gifts for P11d's. We'll provide a template letter for you to send to HMRC Clearances Team, so you won't be caught out by nasty surprises.

It's also important to take care to ensure all employees are being treated fairly. Of course, it isn't necessary to provide all employees with the same level of reward, but you should be careful not to discriminate, for example by age or gender. Where rewards and targets are being set locally by managers, we recommend highlighting the need for equity, including checking that part-time workers are provided with a fair opportunity to gain recognition. To keep implementation easy for you, we offer a straight-forward guide which you can circulate to the relevant managers.



Getting the right guidance at outset can make all the difference for a successful scheme.



How do you balance choice with simplicity?

With employees often having wide-ranging tastes, it can be hard to pick a gift which is going to appeal to everyone. That's why our Wider Rewards scheme allows employees to choose their gift themselves, with gift cards and e-vouchers available from around 50 retailers. Our retailer selection includes popular brands such as M&S, House of Fraser, Boots, Argos, Pizza Hut and iTunes, as well as offering Red Letter Days and Virgin Experiences for those who prefer a more adventurous treat.

Wider Rewards allows employees to choose gift cards from multiple retailers, and if they'd like to save some or all of their reward for a later date, that's also easily accommodated.

All you need to do is choose which employees to reward and provide us with their details. We'll then handle all the administration on your behalf, so you get the advantages of offering choice without the hassle.



Wider Rewards offers a fantastic choice, from restaurants and retail to spa days and experiences.



How can you boost the feel-good factor?

Reward schemes offer a great opportunity for helping employees to feel good about your organisation. To support this aim, we offer to add your own branding to your employees' reward notification emails. We can also offer a bespoke message from you to your employees, for example referring to your organisation's successes over the last year.

We'll also provide free marketing and communications support to help make staff aware of your reward scheme, for example by offering a "Coming Soon" email shot to build excitement before your scheme launch, by providing bulletins for your staff magazines and by co-ordinating testimonials and thanks from employees once your scheme is up and running.

What next?

To start your reward scheme or to find out more, simply call us on 0800 612 6110 or email business.enquiries@widerplan.com.

We'll guide you through the scheme from start to finish, so you'll find gifts have never been easier!

