

Chances are you've seen the invitation, whether you got it through company email or it was posted in the break room: someone's work anniversary was being celebrated. And while the time-honored tradition of celebrating those who have put in the time may be fading in today's business world, we're looking to reverse that trend. That's why in this edition of *The GeoSampler*, we'll share some thoughts on ways to help celebrate old times. We'll also take a look at how people showed allegiances from a historical perspective (hint: it certainly didn't involve telling funny stories about past Christmas parties). So enjoy, and when you're done, there are refreshments in the conference room.

MUCH ADO ABOUT LOYALTY

Longevity is an idea that seems to be disappearing from today's workplace. There was a time when company loyalty was a much more admired trait. However, with younger generations of employees moving from job to job about once every three to five years, the chances of celebrating the value of an individual's long tenure seem dwindling. That's why it's important to understand what appreciating employee longevity is and why it's done. And along those lines, we'll also offer up a few tips and pointers for a more meaningful celebration.

For starters, recognizing employee longevity is an older tradition that sprung from a time when it was more common to have people stick around for decades. That, in turn, gave the higher-ups in a particular company a chance to publicly thank those certain employees for their wisdom, knowledge and experience, as well as their continuing contribution.

But recognizing longevity was seen as a vital function for not just those whose career at the company has spanned many a bad fashion trend. Executives also knew that it was important to convey to the younger employees that their company was a great place to work and that loyalty would be rewarded, leading to hopefully greater productivity. And it turns out that if you can get an employee to stay for

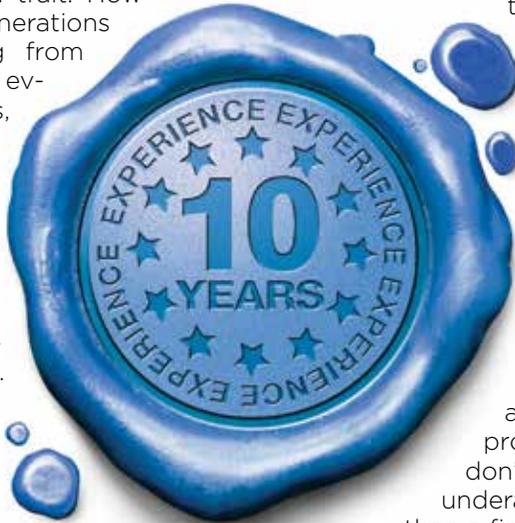
the first three to five years, your odds of keeping them greatly increases.

With that in mind, it's probably a good idea to not only recognize the big anniversaries like 10, 15, 20, 25 or 30 years, but also the first, third and fifth years. "But won't celebrating every employee early on in his or her career cut into our budget?" you ask. Not at all. Put together a team to come up with ideas and give them an appropriate budget—just don't skimp. Nothing says underappreciated more than a first-anniversary-chuck-on-the-shoulder.

If you do offer up a gift package, make sure one piece of it will specifically honor the recognition of the milestone, like a certificate for newer staff members or a plaque for the more seasoned employees. Money and merchandise are nice, but cash gets spent and an item like a leather briefcase will lose its significance (and luster) over time.

Finally, it's also important to be consistent. All employees who reach a particular time with the company should be recognized the same way. In other words, if Nancy from PR is celebrating her 25th anniversary one year and Stan from Accounting is hitting his 25th the next, don't have a big shindig for Nancy and simply get Stan a card. Honor fairly.

Now, who wants cake?



"After Tuesday even the calendar goes WTF."



One percent of U.S. employers allow employees to take naps during working hours.

No piece of normal-size paper can be folded in half more than seven times.

During thinking, we only use about 35% of our brains.

Tuesday has the lowest percent of absenteeism for American workers—11%.

More people walk to work in Alaska than any other U.S. state.

Americans now spend more than 100 hours a year commuting to work.

The average office worker spends 50 minutes a day looking for lost files and other items.

Remember to always take notes during meetings, as the brain retains less than 5% of what is said.

"Stewardesses" is the longest word typed with only the left hand.

Refrigerating rubber bands makes them last longer.

People spend one in every four and a half minutes online on social networks and blogs.



A TRIBUTE TO TRIBUTE

In the modern business and industrial world, loyalty to a company may be considered unique, but is always appreciated. And in the best-case scenario, it is rewarded, sometimes handsomely, from the top down. To that we say, thank goodness we live in the modern business and industrial world, because that wasn't always the case when it came to loyalty—or as it was known in ancient and medieval times, tribute.

Simply put, tribute (from the Latin word “tributum” meaning “contribution”) was a token of wealth that one party gave to another as a sign of submission or allegiance. You either paid it after being conquered or, in the case of alliances, you would pay a more powerful state as a sign of loyalty. This was basically protection money against a potential foreign threat or to keep the more powerful state from conquering your land.

However, the level of rule or control one state had over another after receiving a loyalty payment could vary greatly. For instance, the Roman republic exacted tribute from other states in what would be considered today as proportional property taxes. In response, Rome felt it necessary to closely control the territories from which it received those payments.

On the other hand, the ancient Persian Achaemenid Empire made relatively few demands on its non-Persian subjects, that is, outside of regular tribute payments of gold, luxury goods, animals, soldiers or slaves. Likewise the medieval Mongol rulers of Russia only expected tribute from other Russian states, which would be allowed to govern themselves. Swell guys, eh? Well, not really, because failure to pay up would result in grave consequences—and the operative word there is “grave.”



In ancient China, which received tributes from places like Japan, Korea, Vietnam, Cambodia, Indonesia and Central Asia, loyalty payments also took on the role of providing exclusive trading priorities. They also had a more spiritual aspect to them as an integral part of Confucian philosophy. That is, the Chinese saw tribute as younger sons looking after older parents by devoting part of their wealth to that end.

So here's to today's workplace when it comes knowing the true meaning of loyalty to both the company and its employees. We've come a long way since having to recognize loyalty.



Jim Moyer *joined Geotechnics in 1989. In addition to Triaxial and permeability testing, Jim also helps our clients travel the many roads of laboratory testing. In his spare time, Jim is an avid runner, having completed several marathons including the Pittsburgh, Boston and Marine Marathon in Washington D.C. Jim can be found on most summer weekends floating in his boat on the three rivers of Pittsburgh.*



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