

Like A Boss: Motivating Employees With Fun



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Getting employees motivated to do an excellent job isn't always a simple feat. A lot of landscape business owners report that their employees are disengaged or simply don't "care." Jason Musch, owner and president of [Dutch Valley Landscape Contractors](#), a Chicago-area landscape maintenance company, was faced with the same concerns. He needed a way to get his employees more engaged in working hard and doing a good job. The solution came to him in the most unlikely of places.

"Like so many other landscape companies, we were experiencing issues with our employees being motivated and keeping them engaged," Musch shares. "I was paying my bill at a restaurant one day and as I was leaving the tip, it hit me. The waitress was motivated to do a great job because her tip relied on it. I took the concept back to my office and with my office manager, began to work on a rewards system."

Musch says he wanted the program to be simple – just like giving a tip. In other words, "if you do a great job, you get a great tip," Musch says. He didn't want something complicated or that seemed difficult to earn.

To reward employees, he implemented a monthly rewards system based on a simple point scale. At the beginning of the month, all employees are given four points. Employees can lose single points for mistakes such as failing to wear their uniform, damaging equipment, or being late to work. They stand to lose as much as three points for a larger mistake such as being a "no call/no show." Then, on the first Friday of the following month, each point can be turned in for a bean bag. Employees then have the chance to toss bean bags for monetary rewards in the classic bean bag toss game.

"I wanted to make sure that I kept the core purpose of the program being to motivate – not de-motivate employees," Musch says. "That is why, even if you

make a mistake, you are eligible to play with the rest of your bean bags.”

Musch says the rewards system has worked well – purpose even better than he’d hoped – and he has grown it into more of an event.

“We have enlarged the program by making it a team-building event,” Musch explains. “We’ve also added light snacks such as pizza or ice cream to help lengthen the event and make it more of a team experience.”

Our [Like a Boss](#) series highlights some common business challenges landscape professionals face and how they conquer them.