



## Embracing Peer to Peer recognition

  
**callista**

### OVERVIEW

*Creating cohesive teams through personalised acknowledgement and rewards from RedBalloon.*

Callista is a technology-based company that enables 24/7 access to student information in tertiary education centers across Australia. Callista's world class Student Management System offers project management and specialist consulting services and equips institutions with the technology to manage their students and administrative staff.

Callista employs 97 staff in Victoria, across two offices in Geelong and Richmond. Their reward and recognition program with RedBalloon launched in March 2008 and continues to this day and involves all employees from the CEO down.

### THE CHALLENGE

The results from Callista's staff satisfaction survey indicated employees wanted to be rewarded in ways other than their salary. Callista already had a bonus system whereby employees were awarded with an annual cash bonus, but there was no suitable reward to say thanks for a small job well done. The challenge was finding rewards for the small things that could be repeated regularly throughout the year.

Tina Price, Head of HR for Callista said "We didn't have anything other than recognition of people from time to time when the CEO was talking he might mention somebody who had done a great job on a project. We chose the RedBalloon Online Points Program to make sure we could reward people more frequently for the little things they do, because those little things can make a difference to the company overall."

*“ Since running the program we've had very positive feedback on our recognition and we have seen the difference non-cash rewards can deliver to our business. ”*

Fadzai Mugari, Human Resources Officer, Callista



## THE SOLUTION

The Online Points Program delivered several key ingredients for Callista's employee strategy:

- ✓ **A way of rewarding for all contributions, great or small for less.** "In the past we had avoided paying \$50 cash reward because we would lose \$30 in tax anyway" said Tina. Callista call their RedBalloon points 'stars', and through the system they can be used on any of the 2,200 RedBalloon experiences on the RedBalloon website. Depending on the task Callista's standard reward is an allocation of between 25-30 Stars. For outstanding achievement employees can receive 60 Stars.
- ✓ **Structure & creativity rather than random on the spot acknowledgement.** Employees received points for project completion, to celebrate the release of new software, birthdays, anniversaries, presentations, training completion, contract wins, helping out with morning tea, and from peer nominations.
- ✓ **Appreciation across all levels.** Using peer-to-peer nomination, employees could nominate each other for points from manager to staff, staff member to manager.
- ✓ **Minimal administration and simple functionality.** Fadzai Mugari said "the initial set up of the program was made easy with the support of Sarah; we simply used her instructions to navigate our way though the online system and we have had no problems".

### An 'Off Beat' party to launch the program

The launch of the RedBalloon program was kept top secret until the launch day. RedBalloon organised for professional drummers to sneak in to the building and set up a private area consisting of 100 drum kits for Callista employees.

That afternoon, employees were summoned to the drum kits and began a drumming workshop. As they drummed away in unison, the excitement filled the room whilst Callista's HR team went back to the offices decorating the space with balloons and streamers. After the drumming was over the announcement was made and employees were welcomed to take part in the RedBalloon Online Points Program. RedBalloon set up each employee with their own personal login and account, and a summary of the program and how it works.

### Living the program

To remind people of the program, Callista feature employees who have been on experiences in their fortnightly newsletter – including photos and short stories. This is a fantastic method to maintain momentum, awareness and to get people striving to do what someone else is doing.

## THE RESULTS

**Rewards that thrill and create bonds.** "You can see the excitement on people's faces when they come in after they have been on a RedBalloon experience. The first thing they do is get talking to their colleagues about it, and their colleagues love hearing what their peers are getting up to, what they've used their points on and what they can do. The result is it creates a real close-knit atmosphere." said Tina.

Fadzai agreed, "What's been great for us is the peer to peer nomination, because managers will often recognize that staff do a good job for something but for peers to recognise other peers has been very powerful. We have had brilliant feedback from people saying how they were made to feel appreciated for their contribution - even if it was only a small thing and they weren't expecting anything for it - but I feel really good that somebody acknowledged I did a good job with that."