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BEST PLACES TO WORK

Employee will feel appreciated when a personal DVD is shown

Employee acknowledgement is one of the best tools a company can use for creating a work environment that fosters loyalty and stimulates high achievement.

Put simply, people appreciate and respond to recognition. They are motivated by praise, which validates and strengthens their commitment to a team.

Rewarding employees by paying tribute to them for a job well done also demonstrates to their co-workers that the company or organization truly does value them. It builds pride and reinforces a sense of belonging.

Traditionally, companies honor special accomplishments or milestones with newsletter articles, gifts, coupons or custom artwork like statues and plaques.

A meaningful, enduring, new way to acknowledge employees is an entertaining, professionally produced, in-depth multimedia presentation on DVD. If done right, it is an impressive method of celebrating a person — one that can be shown to fellow workers, important clients, and valued associates during a formal ceremony and viewed with pride for many years to come.

Regardless of scope or budget, following basic guidelines will help in creating an effective multimedia presentation to recognize, honor and celebrate people who have made special contributions to an organization.

- **Get personal.** Select video footage and still images that accurately represent significant virtues of the company. Use pictures of actual employees, not generic stock photography or clip art. The audience will relate much better to familiar faces and authentic settings.

- **Be professional.** Employ professional-level standards for all aspects of the project from research, scriptwriting and pre-production planning to video production, editing, special effects, voice overs, music and titles. If the content lends itself to an interactive format, create an attractive, easy-to-navigate menu. Include buttons on all screens for pausing, going back, skipping forward and returning to the main title or menu page.

- **Get creative.** Especially for special celebrations like retirement parties and major award ceremonies, the audience wants to be both moved and entertained. Some people are quite comfortable being the subject of good-natured fun and others are not, so be careful to use a style that both the honorees and their peers will ap-

preciate.

For example, when fiber artist Cindy Hickok was named 2007 Texas Master by the Houston Center for Contemporary Craft, a comprehensive DVD presentation celebrating her work included an insightful, revealing look into her artistic inspirations, her methods and her life, in addition to showing her creative embroidery works.

She appreciated the DVD as not only a memento of her honor but because, as she puts it, she now has "an efficient, effective way of communicating my ideas about artistic expression with the world."

"It does justice to Cindy as a gifted artist with a uniquely whimsical voice," says the center's communications director, Mary Headrick.

- **Add and remove.** If key people are not present in an existing photograph or they can not attend a scheduled group photo session, add them with digital technology. They can also be superimposed seamlessly against almost any background using programs like Photoshop.

In a production for CenterPoint Energy, the company wanted to illustrate its track record of employee loyalty by showing the same group pictured in an old photo from 1983 and a newer one taken in 1994. However, one im-



PROFILE DVDs

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portant person who couldn't make the photo shoot was missing from the more recent image. A separate picture of him was integrated the image into the group shot in a way that looked perfectly natural.

- **Think history.** Properly archive pictures and video footage that preserve a record of a company's past so that these materials are available when needed for a presentation acknowledging accomplishments of an employee or for retirement tributes, corporate anniversaries, executive bios, company histories and other milestones.

Given ease of access to the latest digital technology — which has dramatically lowered the cost of photo storage, retouching, video and sound editing — elegantly produced multimedia presentations are now affordable for almost any size firm, for practically any occasion. They're an impressive new way of paying tribute and expressing gratitude. ■

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