



Donald Cooper is respected by clients in over 40 industries as both a “thought leader” and a passionate visionary in the areas of management, marketing and service excellence.

Drawing from his real life experience as a world-class manufacturer, award-winning retailer and business speaker, he has helped thousands of businesses throughout the world to add more real value to their customers’ lives...and more dollars to their bottom lines.

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Let's stop this Christmas Bonus nonsense!

Paying your staff a ‘bonus’ to coincide with the birth of a baby 2000+ years ago makes absolutely no sense at all. There...I said it!

Jesus wasn’t even born on December 25th. Most scholars agree that he was born some time around March 21st. The Church cleverly chose December 25th to celebrate in order to tie in with an existing pagan festival of “the sun god” in an attempt to interest pagans in Christianity. This was probably the world’s first example of “stealth marketing”...but I digress.

So, why not give your staff a “First Day of Spring Bonus”, a “Halloween Bonus” or, better yet, a “Thanksgiving Bonus”?

Bonuses should be earned based on performance and not based on scripture, time of year or some manufactured holiday. If you want to give your staff a Christmas ‘gift’, that’s great. I support that 100%. But it has nothing to do with performance and calling it a ‘bonus’ confuses the issue. Give them a turkey, a cheque, a box of cookies or a nativity scene hand painted in China.

Christmas Bonuses may be well-intentioned...but they’re mostly ineffective. They come to be expected and anything that’s expected is, by definition, not a motivator. To tie bonuses to performance, consider these 4 steps...

- 1) First, be clear about what specific things must happen in every part of the business, in the next year to deliver your commitments to customers, to your bottom line, to your staff team, to your community and to the planet...and your commitment to create an extraordinary, profitable and sustainable future.
- 2) Then, you need to engage your team in these clear and specific outcomes, get agreement as to what will be done, by whom, by when, measured how to make those outcomes happen. And then make absolutely sure that the training, processes and resources are in place to support the team.
- 3) You need specific performance commitments for each team member and department. Then there needs to be an effective way to measure that performance, not just at the end of the year but throughout the year so that corrective action can be taken, if necessary, before it’s too late.
- 4) Finally, everyone needs to know what their reward will be for success...and what the consequences will be for failure.

Sure, this is a lot more work than slipping into a Santa Suit and passing out Christmas bonus cheques based on some faint hope that the business actually made a profit this year...but the 4 steps outlined above are what effective management is really all about. It’s your choice!

For more information on how Donald Cooper can help you rethink, refocus and re-energize your business to create compelling customer value, attract a top-performing team and grow your bottom line, simply call us in Toronto, Canada at 1-(416) 252-3703 or email us at donald@donaldcooper.com.