



## Divisions of General Practice

Information Management Maturity Framework  
(IMMF)

**Toolkit – Template for Division IM  
employee incentives structure**



# Information Management Maturity Framework

## Toolkit – Template for Division IM employee incentives structure

### Purpose

The purpose of the “Template for Division IM recognition/reward structures” is to assist Divisions to address the action tasks below.

Action Tasks	Capacity Task	Element of IM
Implement a recognition / reward structure for individuals and teams whose initiatives improve IM outcomes.	Reactive to Defined	Divisional Context

This task should have been identified from the Information Management Maturity Framework (IMMF) gap analysis and toolkit specification.

This tool provides Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) with a simple explanation of employee incentives and how they can be used as a management tool to improve information management (IM) outcomes for a Division by motivating individuals and teams within a Division. The team incentive is used in preference to recognition/ rewards.

Knowledge of employee incentive structures is a prerequisite for:

- Sample job descriptions for management, technicians, analysis and general staff.

### Explanatory notes

Employee incentives are used to motivate, communicate and reinforce desirable actions and behaviours that can be used to improve IM capacity and other business outcomes. Their use can also have a positive effect on behaviour, to redirect attention towards high priorities and to improve social outcomes such as team building activities.

An effective employee recognition system is simple, immediate and powerfully reinforcing.

There is a wide range of literature regarding recognition and rewards<sup>1</sup> and how each can be used as an effective management tool to improve the outcomes of an organisation. This tool attempts to outline the fundamentals of incentive structures and how the use of these can be used to support and enhance IM outcomes for a Division either directly or as part of other IM tools.

One key source for this tool is *Rewards, Recognition and Knowledge Sharing*, [www.alia.org.au/publishing/aarl/3e2.4/fulltext/milne.html](http://www.alia.org.au/publishing/aarl/3e2.4/fulltext/milne.html). Other references are cited at the end of the document.

### Instructional design

This tool consists of two parts:

- Part 1 – Guidelines for incentive structures
- Part 2 – Case studies of incentive structures

<sup>1</sup> For example refer to <http://humanresources.about.com>



**Part 1 – Guidelines for incentive structures**

CEOs should review the guidelines and the principles of incentive structures. CEOs should discuss with their Board and with senior staff how incentives can be used to support IM outcomes within the Division. CEOs should align incentives with Division business goals and consult closely with Division staff to match incentives with staff concerns.

**Part 2 – Case studies for incentive structures**

Examples of different incentives used in Divisions are described. CEOs should review these case studies to identify potential incentives for their own Division staff.

**Summary of outcomes and resources**

Workstreams	Outcomes	Resources
<p><b>New processes or procedures to be adopted</b></p>	<p>The Division adopts a formal incentive structure to improve IM outcomes.</p>	<p>This tool is mentored for the implementation of new processes.</p>
<p><b>Culture and change management requirements</b></p>	<p>All staff are aware of the Division’s incentive structure for IM. All staff are able to participate in the incentive structure for IM either as individuals and teams who improve IM outcomes.</p>	<p>Mentoring by CEOs of Divisions that have demonstrated a “defined” or “managed” capacity for IM Context. This tool is mentored for the implementation cultural adjustments.</p>



## Part 1 – Guidelines for recognition/rewards structure

### Overview

This tool attempts to outline the fundamentals of incentive structures and how the use of these can support and enhance IM outcomes for a Division either directly or as part of other IM tools.

Incentives should be aligned a Division's goals and should support any change management initiatives within a Division. Incentives can be used to change behaviour, redirect attention, increase motivation and to improve social outcomes such as team building activities.

The personal skills of Division staff, either as individuals or as team members, are a crucial resource to the achievement of a Division's IM outcomes. To effectively manage change in an organisation it is necessary to understand the culture of the organisation and how the culture of the organisation may resist any changes.

An effective employee recognition system is simple, immediate and a powerful management tool that can be used to achieve desirable outcomes in relation to staff behaviour.

Individual or team incentives can be used to assist IM outcomes such as the IM scope of work as described in "Guidelines for Defining IM outcomes".

Within a Division an effective incentive structure should:

- encourage and reinforce desirable behaviours;
- improve performance of employees and teams;
- improve staff retention by increasing job satisfaction;
- form part of a change management program; and
- promote knowledge sharing (which is an integral component of increasing the Division's IM maturity).

### What is the difference between recognition and rewards?

In general terms:

- recognition is a management tool that is a non-monetary or inexpensive award given to employees and teams in appreciation of an achievement or behaviour which is not dependent on a particular target; and
- reward is a form of compensation given to individuals or teams for achieving measurable outcomes or targets.

### What are the principles of an effective incentive structure?

The range and appropriateness of IM incentives should be proportional to other incentives that may be offered within the Division.

CEOs should ensure that incentives:

- are aligned and linked to a Division's business functions;
- align with human resource management (HR) policies including staff attraction and retention policies;
- are closely linked to performance;
- support the Division's IM and business plans;
- are timely, sincere and financially viable;
- are clearly communicated to staff;
- reinforce the Division's staff values (the qualities that employees admire and continually strive to exhibit);
- take into consideration workplace diversity (age, race, cultural background etc);
- are regularly reviewed and updated;
- are equitable, transparent and fair; and
- the nature of the reward is commensurate with the achievement.



Some examples of effective incentive structures are:

- the organisation uses performance based promotion;
- the manager publicly recognises employees for good performance; and
- the manager congratulates and thanks recipient(s) in person.

Recognition / rewards do not need to come from superiors. In many instances peer recognition is more important to recipients.

### **Some key factors to consider when developing a recognition/reward structure:**

#### **Teams**

There is a general trend towards teams becoming the primary work units of organisations. Consequently, recognition / rewards should be aimed at team, rather than individual achievements. The focus of recognition / rewards for teams should be on team member collaboration and team outcomes.

A desirable outcome of recognition / reward structures is to enable employees to see how their efforts contribute to the performance of the team and team member efforts are rewarded equitably. Team members will bring different skill sets to a team and will therefore make different contributions that may be at a different rate.

#### **Improving knowledge management**

Improvements in IM maturity require Divisions and staff to share knowledge. However, individuals, similar to organisations, have traditionally been 'encouraged' to hoard information as this is one way in which a competitive advantage (safeguarding jobs, raising self importance) can be maintained.

As described in "Guidelines for change management training, including use of PDSA cycles", change for incremental or continuous improvement is about doing things better, changing the workplace to improve on existing outcomes or objectives.

#### **Recognition / rewards suggestions**

Below is a brief list of some suggested inexpensive recognition / rewards that CEOs may consider using. There are many more recognition / rewards that CEOs may wish to use or feel are more appropriate.

#### **Non-monetary recognition**

- Communication of appreciation from senior management (can be simple e.g.: a telephone call).
- Credit an employee's ideas and suggestions by name (at meetings, in reports).
- Pass on gratitude through a colleague.
- Ask a person to share their accomplishment with others.
- Seek input from the employee.
- Name a continuing recognition award after an outstanding employee.
- Employee of the month award.

#### **Inexpensive recognition / reward**

- Certificate of appreciation / recognition.
- Movie tickets.
- Small gift, such as a book, lunch, engraved pen or plaque.
- Take the employee / team to lunch.
- Additional paid leave (such as a half day).
- Gift voucher.

#### **Higher cost recognition / reward**

- Variable pay structure.
- Bonus incentives for exceeding pre-determined targets.
- One off payment for achieving outstanding results.
- Skills based pay structure.

In general these types of recognition / reward structures should be across the organisation and developed by HR specialists.



## Part 2 – Case Studies for incentive structures

### Overview

This Part describes the staffing issues facing Divisions and how this affects their ability to offer incentives for good IM practice and presents three case studies on how Divisions are seeking to provide incentives to their staff for good IM practice.

### Staffing issues facing Divisions

The majority of Divisions are facing increasing difficulties in attracting and retaining staff. Those that are more dependent on project funding are particularly vulnerable to “staff churn” – staff leaving when the project they are recruited for is completed.

A general skills shortage of staff that are skilled and knowledgeable about information management also means that staff frequently leave for better opportunities.

Funding constraints limit the potential for Divisions to provide financial incentives for good IM practice and as a result most Divisions work actively to provide their staff with a range of non-financial incentives for good IM practice.

### Large Division

This Division is funded to manage a wide range of projects in primary health and the majority of its staff are project funded. As a result, it faces considerable staff turnover. Given the need to have new staff up and running quickly, the Division has spent considerable time and effort developing a culture of collaboration and knowledge sharing. Staff incentives for good practice tend to focus on:

- Peer group recognition for good IM practice in regular information sharing team meetings.
- Staff are provided with some amenities at team meetings – for example a fresh fruit bowl and espresso coffee.
- Access to training and skills development opportunities.
- Division management recognises individual achievements at team meetings and gives credit where it is due. Giving professional recognition is the main way the Division rewards good performance.

### Medium Sized Division (in a regional area)

This Division had less of a problem with staff turnover as very few staff wanted to leave the town and there were few comparable alternate employment opportunities. Like the larger Division it aimed to develop culture of information sharing and continuous improvement. This was done by having regular team meetings which incorporated a training and knowledge sharing component. Staff recognition and incentives for good IM practice included:

- Getting staff who completed a useful project to present at regular team meetings.
- Encouraging staff to write up projects and present them at conferences together with publishing them in relevant journals. This resulted in some professional recognition for the staff members involved.
- Providing access to study tours.
- Access to training opportunities in a similar manner to the larger Division.

### Small Division (outer suburban)

This Division in an outer suburban area had a similar problem to others of attracting and retaining staff. This Division has focused its activities around the collaboratives Plan Do Study Act (PDSA) methodology and staff incentives are based around evidence of continuous improvement. For example, greater participation in Division activities by practices, measured by attendance figures and evaluations.

When a milestone was achieved, e.g. all practice attendees at a training course rating it positively, staff members responsible would be either individually or collectively rewarded. The incentives included:



For a group:

- Staff breakfasts and lunches in restaurants.
- Special “days” e.g. Melbourne Cup Day, Fourth of July Day with activities and prizes.
- Regular team building activities.

For an individual:

- Gift vouchers (provided by local businesses and donated by General Practices).
- Attendance at conferences.
- Days off (for working long hours or meeting deadlines).
- Recognition at team meetings.



## References and further reading

Human Resources. Available at <http://humanresources.about.com>  
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