



Quarterly Competition Program Impact on Employee Engagement: A Case Study of the Quarterly Competition Program Materials Services Department Saudi Aramco

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Abstract

This technical paper documents the implementation and outcomes of the “Quarterly Employee Competition Program” introduced by Warehousing Organization that operates within Oil and Gas Industry. It serves as a case study to demonstrate how structured motivational strategies can improve employee engagement levels, drive performance, and align individual contributions with organizational goals. The paper also provides actionable insights for external organizations considering similar programs. Illustration from recent academic literature on employee engagement, this study highlights how engagement directly influences the organization’s productivity, innovation, and operational excellence. The program resulted in measurable improvements in accountability, self-development, and consistent employee engagement.

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Abstract

This technical paper documents the implementation and outcomes of the “Quarterly Employee Competition Program” introduced by Warehousing Organization that operates within Oil and Gas Industry. It serves as a case study to demonstrate how structured motivational strategies can improve employee engagement levels, drive performance, and align individual contributions with organizational goals. The paper also provides actionable insights for external organizations considering similar programs. Illustration from recent academic literature on employee engagement, this study highlights how engagement directly influences the organization's productivity, innovation, and operational excellence. The program resulted in measurable improvements in accountability, self-development, and consistent employee engagement.

Keywords: *accountability, employee engagement, Incentive Programs, Motivational Strategies, Organizational Productivity, performance improvement, Workforce Development*

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1. Introduction Background and Literature Review

Employee engagement is a critical driver of organizational performance, particularly in operational environments such as warehousing, where human performance directly affects safety, efficiency, and service quality. According to the mentioned studies in this paper, employee engagement is influenced by a combination of HR policies, leadership practices, and recognition mechanisms. Engaged employees are enthusiastic, dedicated, and willing to go the extra mile qualities that are essential in high-pressure, high-stakes environments like logistics and warehousing.

In early 2025, a comprehensive review of employee engagement levels within the organization revealed a lack of motivation, limited accountability, low development opportunities, insufficient recognition mechanisms, and inconsistent engagement.

In response, a “Quarterly Employee Competition Program” was launched by the Warehousing Organization in February 2025. This program was designed to recognize and reward employees based on performance across five weighted categories: Safety, Operations, Cybersecurity, Development, and Innovation.

2. Relationship between Employee Engagement and Organization Productivity

Engaged employees can demonstrate greater commitment, creativity, and willingness to exceed their job requirements, directly leading to improved operational outcomes. They are more likely to take

initiative and solve problems, follow safety protocols consistently, participate in innovation and process improvement, collaborate effectively with management.

These behaviors were clearly observed and reinforced through the Quarterly Employee Competition Program. By linking performance to recognition across multiple operational areas, the program shaped a culture of accountability and continuous improvement.

3. Research Methodology

This case study employed a mixed-methods approach to evaluate the implementation and impact of the competition program. The study focused on both qualitative and quantitative indicators to assess changes in employee engagement and organizational productivity.

Table 1. Quarterly Employee Competition Program Categories and Metrics

Operational Excellence				Safety Excellence				Development		Cybersecurity		Innovation	
Interim Clearance	HR Training Compliance	Customer Satisfaction	Materials Re-arrangement	Safety Suggestion	Safe Operation Compliance	Safety Training Compliance	Behavioral Observation Reporting	Safety Self-Development	Knowledge Sharing	Phishing Email Reporting	Process Efficiency Improvement	Innovation Submission	Idea
Clear one item/items from one of the interims valued between 50K-100K.	Achieve zero expired courses.	Obtain customer satisfaction through material service.	Re-arrange location bins of materials.	Submit high quality suggestions.	Achieve zero safety violation during operation.	Maintain zero expired safety-related courses.	Submit high quality safety observations per month.	Complete non-required courses.	Share business-related knowledge to the required stakeholders.	Achieve pass condition on phishing emails reporting.	Complete process or efficiency improvement projects.	Submit high quality innovative ideas.	
Exceeded: +5 Achieved: +3 Did Not Achieve: 0	Achieved: +5 Did Not Achieve: 0	Exceeded: +5 Achieved: +3 Did Not Achieve: 0	Exceeded: +5 Achieved: +3 Did Not Achieve: 0	Exceeded: +5 Achieved: +3 Did Not Achieve: 0	Achieved: +5 Did Not Achieve: 0	Achieved: +5 Did Not Achieve: 0	Exceeded: +5 Achieved: +3 Did Not Achieve: 0	Exceeded: +5 Achieved: +3 Did Not Achieve: 0	Exceeded: +5 Achieved: +3 Did Not Achieve: 0	Achieved: +5 Did Not Achieve: 0	Exceeded: +5 Achieved: +3 Did Not Achieve: 0	Exceeded: +5 Achieved: +3 Did Not Achieve: 0	

4. Key Findings and Program Strategies

- I. Initially, employees tended to perform within their defined responsibilities, with limited collaboration or engagement. This approach hindered overall productivity. By implementing a recognition system that rewarded top performers in the competition program, employees became more engaged in different tasks, often going beyond standard expectations to improve their scores and contribute positively to the organization. The visible success of outstanding efforts further reinforced a culture of shared responsibility and continuous improvement.
- II. Certain employees were focused on their primary task in the warehouse while overlooking other contributing factors. By offering incentive to tap on other activities, employees were exposed to other aspects aligned with the corporate values and objectives. The program resulted in these employees contributing not only to safety initiative but also to cybersecurity, and innovation and process improvement. Efforts of reviewing current processes, and enhancing it were visible, and triggered by the competition weekly progress.
- III. The introduction of real-time performance updates and visible scoreboard created a culture of transparency and accountability. By consistently sharing progress and recognizing improvements, employees became more conscious of their contributions and how they aligned with wider operational goals. This improved awareness led to a noticeable increase in self-driven performance, especially in high-impact areas like quality control and compliance. Employees took greater ownership of their work, the overall reliability and consistency of operations strengthened, fostering a more disciplined and performance-driven environment.
- IV. Previously, there was limited emphasis on personal growth and skill advancement, resulting in minimal engagement with development opportunities. To address this, a structured category focusing on self-development was introduced, including internal training, external learning, and professional certification. This shift motivated employees to actively seek growth opportunities, leading to enhanced competencies, greater adaptability, and more effective problem-solving. The increased focus on continuous improvement contributed to a more capable workforce aligned with long-term organizational objectives.
- V. Before the program was launched, engagement levels among employees were inconsistent, with only a portion actively participating in broader organizational efforts. To bridge this gap, a competition-driven program and ongoing engagement framework was introduced, encouraging continuous involvement and accountability across all levels. This approach

fostered a more persistent culture of participation, where employees remained consistently invested in their responsibilities to seek out opportunities for improvement.

5. Program Implementation Journey

5.1. Understanding Employee Needs

In order to establish an effective program, it is critical to understand the employees in order to tailor the competition objectives to the employee needs. To achieve this, an analysis of the employee needs was established based on the four themes: enable, care, develop & recognize. These four themes were later translated into competition program categories.

5.2. Initial Review and Program Design

The program originated from a comprehensive review of employee engagement levels conducted in January 2025. Based on the findings, a set of weighted performance categories was developed, including Safety, Operations, Cybersecurity, Development, and Innovation. These categories were designed to reflect organizational values and operational priorities.

5.3. Pilot Testing

The program was initiated in a pilot phase to all employees, where they were evaluated based on the defined criteria, and top performers were recognized. The pilot phase revealed high levels of interest and participation. In Q2, the program was refined, resulting in measurable improvements in engagement and performance.

5.4. Formal Launch and Enhancements

Based on the success of the pilot, the program was formally published in July 2025. Enhancements included the addition of materials re-arrangement, customer satisfaction metrics, and HR trainings. These additions expanded the operational scope of the program in alignment with organizational goals.

5.5. Awareness and Communication

To ensure widespread understanding and participation, awareness sessions were held for Chief Position Holders (CPHs) and employees. A weekly scoreboard was introduced to provide real-time feedback and encourage continuous improvement. The scoreboard was later enhanced to include personalized performance insights, enabling employees to identify areas for growth.

6. Program Results and Impact

6.1. Enhanced Employee Engagement and Collaboration

The program fostered healthy engagement between employees and management across the organization. Employees have demonstrated increased motivation and willingness to go to the “extra mile” in their daily tasks, contributing to a more collaborative and proactive work environment.

6.2. Improved Organizational Performance

Key performance indicators (KPIs) related to safety and operations have shown significant improvement. This reflects the direct impact of employees’ outstanding contributions and their alignment with organizational goals.

6.3. Employee Self-Development and Skill Enhancement

Employees have taken the initiative to develop their skills both internally and through external training at approved institutions. This self-driven growth has enhanced their knowledge and directly contributed to improved daily operations and problem-solving.

6.4. Increased Accountability and Resilience in Critical Areas

Employees have demonstrated stronger resilience and accountability in maintaining safe operations and upholding cybersecurity standards. This cultural shift is vital for risk mitigation and long-term operational integrity.

6.5. Effective Communication and Continuous Feedback

The introduction of a weekly scoreboard, enhanced with personalized performance insights, has created a culture of transparency and continuous improvement. Employees are more informed about their progress and areas for growth, which supports ongoing development.

7. Conclusion and Adoption Recommendations

The implementation of the Quarterly Employee Competition Program has demonstrated a significant positive impact on employee engagement levels, organizational productivity, and workplace culture. The program has successfully addressed key challenges identified in early 2025 by introducing a structured framework that evaluates employees across specific weighted performance categories.

7.1. Recommendations for External Organizations

For organizations considering similar employee engagement programs, the following best practices are recommended:

- Tailor performance categories to reflect organizational values and operational needs.
- Conduct pilot testing to refine criteria and ensure fairness and relevance.
- Implement real-time scoreboards or dashboards to maintain engagement and transparency.
- Conduct training and awareness sessions to ensure understanding of the established program.

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