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They've done just that.

In 1982 and 1983, AT&T won the American Society of Landscape Architects award for environmental impact. Of course, Ayres stresses proudly, that's just two among "lots" of other awards.

The prize design prompts employees to arrive at work on weekends. Not to sit behind desks, but to bring friends and relatives for a tour of the grounds.

"We get a lot of tours. Local garden clubs walk through, even local landscape and architectural firms bring their new employees through," Ayres says.

30,000 shrubs

Ayres has the grounds down to a science. He can rattle off statistics as fast as an auctioneer can up the price of an antique desk: "...30,000 shrubs, six acres of ground cover, 1,200 trees including 30 around the pond, 40 acres of irrigated land including the 14 acres of terraces, and 2,500 pop-heads in the irrigation system..."

Within the rural setting is something you certainly wouldn't find in a back-to-nature documentary, a heliport.

The heliport implements a unique landscape architectural option: formal shrubbery defining restricted areas.

About four years ago, AT&T installed an "underground" roadway leading from the heliport to the pond.

The road is actually made of perforated cement blocks measuring 250 ft. by 20 ft. Because of the perforation, grass grows through the blocks, making the road invisible.

Designed primarily to allow fire trucks to reach the pond to pump water in case of an accident at the heliport, the road actually appears to be part of the lawn, although the concrete underneath can support the weight of a vehicle without excessive damage to the turf.

As a precautionary measure, Ayres puts styrofoam swans on Bariet Pond to keep flocks of Canadian geese away from the heliport so they don't interfere with a landing. The geese are tagged regularly for studies.

Basking Ridge is a wildlife area located near the Great Swamp. Besides the sometimes-pesky geese, wild deer inhabit the land. Their biggest crime is eating the tulip bulbs in the winter. "We tolerate that," Ayres jokes.

A storybook setting

The wildlife is a beautiful addition to the storybook setting. A security company tours the complex regularly to ward off any poachers.

The 30 trees around the pond are all flowering so that color is reflected in the water. The pond—six feet at its deepest point—is stocked with bluegill and bass, although fishing isn't allowed. Ice skating is also discouraged because of AT&T's liability.

The terrace area offers a unique combination of nature cushioning the harsh blows of industrialization.

The parking garage consists of two underground floors. Eight courtyard terraces rise above the garage. Trees, including one 45-foot honey locust, rise from the garage through the terraces.

The design allows light and ventilation into the garage. Courtyards are heavily landscaped with shrubs to combat car exhaust. Trees on the terraces include cherries, locust, maples, crabapples, and white and black pines.

Steve Lowry of Controle Maintenance says the architectural design of the building is "spectacular in itself. In very few buildings will you see terraces done that well."

No matter where you stand at AT&T Communication, you see greenery.

"It doesn't stop at the front door," Ayres says. Elaborate interiorscapes blend the outside with the offices inside. "We try to provide a healthy environment for the employees," Ayres says. "If they're happy, they'll perform better."



Mobil Oil's marketing and refining headquarters in Fairfax, Va., is located on 126 acres. Just 18 acres boast turf while the remaining acreage is natural woods.



AT&T's award-winning Basking Ridge, N.J., facility features eight terraces rising above underground parking garages. The courtyards feature many trees including cherry, locust, maple, crabapple, and white and black pine.

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Circle No. 117 on Reader Inquiry Card





A worker sprays trees near the entrance of Mobil Oil's Fairfax, Va., facility.

Lowry is a veteran of landscaping for major corporations. His company has worked for Allied Corp., Exxon Research and Engineering Division, and Arco Chemical.

He says there's really no common link between the companies. "They all have their idiosyncrasies," he says. He ranks AT&T "near the top."

"It's kept nice, but they don't do much with flowers," Lowry says. "Otherwise people would want to know why their phone bills were so high when they're spending money on flowers."

Lowry says the impact of the breakup remains to be seen. But he thinks the company might install more flower beds as profits increase.

Controle does maintain a small park (¼ acre) on the site, planted with perennials used for cut-flower displays inside. The company doesn't do the interiorscape. It is responsible for design, installation, maintenance, and snow removal.

Lowry says snow removal is often the most important part. "If the grass isn't mowed, it's not going to stop people from getting to work," Lowry says.

His favorite current project is renovating an old apple orchard into a working orchard. The orchard includes 48 apple trees from a farm which originally stood on the property. The apples will be sold by the AT&T Pioneers, a group of retired employees, to raise funds for charity.

Lowry's crew, sometimes as large as eight, also maintains two softball fields at the headquarters. For those who don't play in the company league, a nature trail winds through the area for lunch time jogs or lei-

surely walks.

"The management is very concerned with its corporate image in town," Ayres says.

A wooded setting

Mobil Oil's marketing and refining headquarters won an Associated Landscape Contractors of America

'We try to provide a healthy environment for the employees. If they're happy, they'll perform better.'

—Ralph Ayres
landscape supervisor
AT&T, Basking Ridge, N.J.

grand award and merit award for commercial contracting in 1982. The site was built six years ago.

The headquarters is located on 126 acres. Of that, only 18 acres is turf. Most of the property is natural woods.

Mobil employs its own staff of one grounds foreman, one assistant foreman and four laborers. Operations manager Bill Phillips oversees the entire staff.

All formal planting is contracted out to Chapel Valley Landscape Co. of Woodbine, Md. Phillips credits them with turning the property into a blue-ribbon site.

Chapel Valley also takes care of pruning and insect and disease control. The Mobil staff maintains the turf

and woods, and polices the entire area.

Grounds foreman Bill Kempf says he uses Kentucky-31 tall fescue, but overseeds with perennial ryegrass and hard fescue.

"K-31 is a good grass, but it's coarse and doesn't do well in the shade," Kempf says. "I prefer hard fescues. They require more care, but are better looking. They have a better color and finer texture."

Kempf uses fescues because they're drought-tolerant. Just five acres of the land is irrigated and the turf browns easily in August.

Phillips says the architect designed it that way because of the limitation of the wells on the property. "Fairfax County has a history of water shortages," Kempf adds.

Kempf's crew uses only walk-behind mowers. "We're not here to do it fast, we're here to do it right," he says.

The woods is primarily a hardwood forest with white, red and black oaks, poplars, evergreens, and standard American holly. A 1¼-mile nature trail winds through the woods around the building. Employees use it for exercise and fresh air at lunch. "Some are so religious that the only time they don't use it is during snow or rain," Kempf says.

The trail is left wild, except for some pruning of the trees for growth and shape. Dead or diseased trees are removed.

Occasionally, the crew will move wildflowers closer to the trail. The first year, an attempt to make wildflower beds around the trail looked unnatural.

The site is designed for spring color only. More than 10,000 azaleas bloom each spring in 34 flower beds next to the building. Also in the beds are three varieties of more than 300 crabapple trees and a cherry tree.

Mobil is adjacent to a hospital, apartment project, and office building. Kempf says he's seen some "friendly competition" develop between the landscapers at the various places. "We've improved the entire neighborhood," he says proudly.

Not only that, but there may be some psychology behind good landscaping. "Management supports us 100 percent," Kempf says. "The employees utilize the place and they're very happy. I think it makes a difference in their work."

More corporate executives also are discovering that a pleasant atmosphere makes a difference in employees' work. And more corporate divisions are moving out of the stifling city and into the open country. **WT&T**



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PAY AS INCENTIVE

Good salaries alone are not enough to motivate employees. Special incentives should be required for exceptional performance.

by Rudd McGary and Ed Wandtke

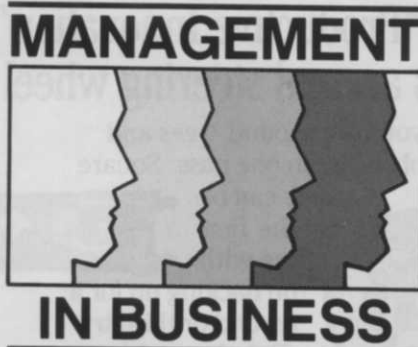
Salaries, in and of themselves, are seldom major motivators, as was noted here last month. Salaries come with regularity, don't reward special performance, and are expected by the employee.

Given these reasons for salaries being neutral (at best), managers who want to motivate through compensation had better find alternatives different than regular pay.

Here are some incentive plans that we've seen work in the green industries. They should be modified to meet your specific organization, but the basic ideas and practices remain the same.

1. Define "exceptional" performance, and pay for it. Most people are paid for doing an average workload. When compiling working objectives for the year, you should tell employees not only the "acceptable" work to be performed, but also the "exceptional" performance. This rating system gives the workers, even part-timers, goals for earning above the average pay base.

Though this can be used in both short-term and long-term time frames, it does not have to be over an



extended period of time.

2. Pay incentives for "team" performance. Take one unit of your workforce and give it a task requiring all its members to perform well. Pay a bonus to all of the members if the team is able to achieve a high performance rating. This creates a strong peer pressure to perform, and that can be highly motivational to team-oriented workers.

(One caution: if you are paying an incentive for team performance and you give the team several under-performers, you will find that even peer pressure will fail to motivate these people. The team must understand the goals and be willing to function as a team in order to achieve rewards for all the members.)

3. Always base compensation, paid as incentive, against a written and measurable goal. Instances exist of managers saying things like, "if you do a good job, we'll take care of you." What does this mean? That they will take their employees to the Bahamas for a six-week vacation, or that they will buy them an ice cream cone?

The above statement has two ambiguous phrases: "good job" and "take care of you." If you can't write down what a "good job" means to you and what "taking care" of someone means, it's highly likely that whatever reward you give will be disap-

pointing to many of the employees. Always spell out what is expected as well as the possible incentives with each given time frame and task.

4. Leave some room in your budget for the unexpected reward. As we wrote last month, unexpected payments for exceptional performance can be extremely motivational. They should be a part of your budgeting process whether you put in a special line for them or simply have them under a miscellaneous expense.

If you already have a line in your budget for rewarding certain types of performances, you're more likely to give them than if you have to find the funding in another budget line. While this is not a formal "plan" for incentives, it can be a factor that will force

...Unexpected payments for exceptional performances can be extremely motivational.

you to think of incentive plans as you do your budgeting.

Motivation depends on the individual to be motivated, the types of motivation available and logical, and the timing of the motivation.

Incentive plans can be motivational.

It takes a strong management effort to come up with plans that truly motivate both part-time and full-time employees. The interaction of the manager with his/her people will probably be the key to understanding what types of compensation and incentive plans will work. It's not easy to motivate employees, but the manager who is aware of the personal psychology and financial constraints imposed by the organization will be the manager who is able to have the workforce performing at its peak. **WT&T**



Wandtke and McGary are senior consultants with All-Green Management Associates in Columbus, Ohio. Dr. McGary focuses on marketing and management issues. Wandtke focuses on operations and financial questions.



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