

Why Do Lifestyle Incentives Work?

Items we might not purchase on our own have emotional value, and thus greater motivational power.

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Emotional Value Is The Bottom Line

For every person whose reach exceeds his or her grasp, there are lifestyle incentives. For the man who lusts after his brother's Sony plasma screen, there are lifestyle incentives and awards. For the woman who envies her sister's Howard Miller grandfather clock, there are lifestyle awards. It is human nature to covet thy neighbor's Weber 6-burner gas grill with stainless steel cooking grates. And it is in answer to this basic instinct of wanting what one does not have (and perhaps is unattainable) that lifestyle incentives and awards exist.

Cash Is Unemotional. Cash, as a motivator, is an unemotional award. Its value is concrete, and while it could be used to purchase a lifestyle award, most likely it will be charged against a burgeoning pile of bills or deposited into a leaky checking account where it soon ceases to exist. With the demise of the cash award goes the memory of its origin. Desire for a lifestyle award is emotional, almost palpable for some people. It is the camcorder on a dog-eared catalog page that is the perfect thing for when the baby arrives. It is the urgency of desire for a set of fine china for the holidays, when your everyday set consists of plastic plates. It is the deep unsatisfied need to reward yourself for working hard by choosing a set of suitcases capable of withstanding an airport's most sadistic baggage handlers.

Lifestyle Awards Make The Unattainable Attainable. It is this hunger for what is just out of reach that a lifestyle incentive feeds and nurtures. A lifestyle award evens out the playing field, and what has previously been unattainable is now within grasp. The importance of hope based on desire is the core of a lifestyle incentive and the heartbeat of the incentive industry.