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Companies frequently use awards and plaques as positive reinforcers to motivate their employees. However, reinforcers differ from person to person. A money-motivated employee, for example, may be less than pleased if presented with a plaque versus a bonus check.

It is important to keep in mind that individuals differ in what they consider to be a positive reinforcer. An employee who is independently wealthy, for example, may not view financial rewards as a positive reinforcer but may consider interesting work very reinforcing. In contrast, an employee with many financial needs and few financial resources may have exactly opposite preferences. Similarly, getting 5 percent credit for attending class regularly might be a powerful positive reinforcer for a student who is hoping to earn an A, but not a positive reinforcer for a student who is content with a B or C in the course. Thus, managers need to take into account employees' individual preferences for different consequences.

With a little creative thinking, organizations can use reinforcement to promote the learning and performance of a wide variety of desirable behaviors. Many companies, for example, are trying to encourage their employees to give equal opportunities to an increasingly diverse workforce, yet are having a hard time getting a specific handle on the best ways to accomplish this objective. Positive reinforcement for diversity efforts may be one strategy that organizations can use. At Colgate-Palmolive, for example, a manager's pay is linked to diversity initiatives through the firm's Executive Incentive Compensation Plan. According to the plan, incentive compensation (such as a yearly bonus) depends on the extent to which a manager achieves certain predetermined objectives—one of which is supporting diversity. Colgate's diversity efforts in the United States have focused primarily on giving equal opportunities to women, African Americans, and Hispanics by having managers recruit and hire these employees, and once hired, giving them meaningful job assignments and opportunities for advancement and promotion.[24]

NEGATIVE REINFORCEMENT As in the case of positive reinforcement, subordinates experiencing negative reinforcement learn the connection between a desired organizational behavior and a consequence; however, the consequence is not a positive one that an employee wants to obtain but a negative one that the employee wishes to remove or avoid. **Negative reinforcement** increases the probability that a desired behavior will occur by removing, or rescinding, a negative consequence when an employee performs the behavior desired. The negative consequence removed is called a *negative reinforcer*. For example, if a manager complains every time an accountant turns in a report late, the complaints are a negative reinforcer if they result in the accountant learning to turn in the reports on time. By turning in reports when they are due, the accountant is able to "remove" the negative consequence of the complaints. Just as with positive reinforcement, managers need to take into account that individuals differ in what they consider to be a negative reinforcer.

NEGATIVE REINFORCEMENT
Reinforcement that increases the probability of a desired behavior by removing a negative consequence when an employee performs the behavior.

When positive and negative reinforcement is used to promote learning, it is important for the consequences to be equivalent in magnitude to the desired behavior.[25] For example, even if pay is a positive reinforcer for an employee, a small increase in pay (a $5 weekly bonus) might not be significant enough to cause the employee to perform a desired behavior (say, make follow-up