Recognize & Watch Them Thrive:

An Employee Recognition Program Guide

So, you're ready to start a recognition program? Maybe you're starting from nothing or you have something in place, but it isn't quite meeting your (or your employees') expectations. Either way, your new program will only be as effective as the planning you put in up front! These expert tips will help you structure and build a program that's right for you. Let's go!

WHERE ARE YOU NOW?

Think about any initiatives you already have in place — how are your employees responding? And what is the state of morale, retention, performance, and engagement in your organization? Be honest in your evaluation. You know a recognition program can help improve your employees' experience and help your business thrive. Acknowledging your pain points will help you craft a plan to ease them!

Even if you're confident you know which areas your program needs to address, an employee survey can help you confirm them.

We've created a comprehensive underline engagement survey based on Gallup's Q12 questionnaire. This survey will provide the initial information to build a responsive program, while also establishing a baseline to weigh future benchmarks against. This information will be important in measuring the success of your program and proving there is a return on your investment.

VIEW ENGAGEMENT SURVEY ❯

SET GOALS

You have multiple reasons for starting a recognition program, and you will likely need more than one approach to satisfy all of your needs. Your business goals, whether they are financial, performance, service, or satisfaction-based all hinge on one another. Improving in one or more areas will positively impact the others. Some examples of goals include:

- Reducing turnover
- Increasing engagement
- Improving customer service
- Boosting sales
- Increasing productivity
- Retaining customers
- Promoting safety
- Improving morale

Employees who are engaged AND thriving report:

INCREASED
hope, happiness, energy, interest, and respect

health problems, worry, stress, sadness, depression, and anger
DECREASED

Jim Hater, Thriving Employees Create a Thriving Business, 2021

WHAT'S YOUR BUDGET?

According to WorldatWork®, the majority of companies spend 1%-3% of their payroll budgets on recognition programs. Some have open budgets, while others are fixed. Each has its merits.

FIXED

- Allocates dollars according to specific parameters, with rewards often going to a percentage of top performers.

- Encourages competition through the concept of scarcity.

- Keeps budgets at a predetermined level, but may exclude some employees from earning rewards.

OPEN

- Delivers a reward to employees every time a desired behavior is met.

- Allows for virtually limitless rewards, with equally limitless opportunities to earn them.

- May incur higher costs, but also higher potential for engagement among all employees.

HOW WILL YOU RECOGNIZE?

Ah, the magic question. And the answer is probably not what you're thinking. While service awards are the traditional employee recognition solution, we've learned that once-a-year programs just aren't enough. And milestone programs that only start recognizing employees at five years are simply a thing of the past. Frequently and consistently recognizing your employees in different ways is what will keep them engaged and motivated—daily, monthly, yearly. A blend of the following initiatives creates a comprehensive program that consistently connects managers with employees, employees with their performance, and teams with one another. It's the formula for building a great culture, a great place to work, and greater engagement.

- **Incentives** to motivate performance and encourage positive behaviors. These are typically points-based, with points earned for demonstrating a core value, or achieving top sales. Points can be redeemed for items like merchandise and digital rewards.

- **Day-to-Day Recognition** to consistently and frequently appreciate employees and engage them with their everyday work. Recognition is informal and given on the spot using notes, eCards, and low-cost gifts.

- **Peer-to-Peer Recognition** to build relationships, respect, and teamwork among employees. Like incentive programs, these are often points-based, with points earned through peer nominations.

- **Service Awards** to reward loyalty and commitment to the organization. But as fewer employees stay at their companies long term, these types of awards alone won't generate the impact you desire. Used in harmony with other programs, they help encourage greater longevity.

HOW WILL YOU IMPLEMENT IT?

Properly introducing your program is critical to its success. If the concept of recognizing employees is new to your managers, they will need training to get into the regular habit, as well as learn how to deliver it to make the most impact. Manager training should occur before the program is launched and include tools, tips, and prompts for incorporating it into their daily routines.

You also need to communicate explicitly to your employees about the program. They need to know which behaviors, activities, and achievements are important and merit recognition. Whether you're reiterating your mission and values, or you have specific initiatives you're rolling out, no amount of communication is too much!

Communicate to
leadership & managers

Train managers
& provide tools

Communicate to
employees

Communicate
even more

HOW WILL YOU MEASURE SUCCESS?

Every three to six months after program implementation, you should go back to the goals you identified at the beginning and evaluate how well you're achieving them. You can do so by measuring:

Participant Satisfaction.

Conduct periodic surveys to learn how the program is perceived by participants in terms of fairness, communication, expectations, and results.

Long-Term Behavior Change.

Identify habit changes, like increased productivity, higher employee satisfaction and retention, reduced absenteeism, and improved performance.

Immediate Behavior Change.

Review and assess program metrics, like participation, performance, and progress on goals.

Impact on Financial Performance.

Evaluate whether the program has impacted your company's bottom line, through results like reduced turnover, increased worker safety, improved processes, greater sales, and higher production.

HOW WILL YOU KEEP IT EFFECTIVE?

Checklist:

✔ Survey participants

✔ Introduce new goals & initiatives

✔ Abandon old ideas

Any program needs to be continually assessed for effectiveness and altered to make sure it stays fresh and relevant. New programs in particular require scrutiny and adjustment to ensure they're running as anticipated. You should conduct an engagement survey every six months to one year, re-evaluate goals regularly, and diversify your programs to keep your team interested and enthusiastic about participation.

With these guidelines, you have the information you need to build a strong program. When you're ready to choose a solution, our experts will be ready to walk you through every step!

Ready to get started?   REQUEST A DEMO ›