O.C.TANNER

10 Essentials for Effective Recognition Programs

A step-by-step guide to achieving an engaging workplace culture through employee recognition.

In times of great change in the workplace, consistent recognition can help employees feel connected, fulfilled, and empowered to do their best work. It increases their sense of belonging and makes them want to stay. A consistent flow of employee recognition creates a workplace culture and community where people thrive.

How can companies maximize the impact of their recognition efforts? Here are 10 essential strategies for effective recognition programs.

(1)

Offer tools that are easy to use.

Incorporate recognition tools into the fabric of your employees' everyday experience and their flow of work. Use technology integrations like those in Culture Cloud so employees can easily and quickly give recognition when they see great work happening in the apps they use every day: while sending emails in Outlook, chatting on Slack or Teams, or working in Chrome. Embed training into your recognition tools so employees know how to create meaningful experiences when recognizing one another.

Beyond technology, integrate recognition into your company culture and everyday experience, so recognition is happening often, is visible, and is meaningful.

See how Capital One integrates recognition into their technology and culture.

(2)

Provide a variety of recognition.

Above and beyond recognition. Service anniversaries. Everyday extra effort. New hires. Retirement. Team success. Company milestones. Business performance. There's no end to the opportunities to give recognition. Your recognition program should include tools to recognize all types of accomplishments and be flexible enough for your entire organization to use.

Every team and department may have their own cadence of accomplishments, timelines, goals, or recognition needs. A flexible program allows each business unit to customize recognition for their area. Tools like Initiatives through Culture Cloud can enable individual leaders to set goals, define what great work looks like, establish specific rewards and timelines, and celebrate success together.
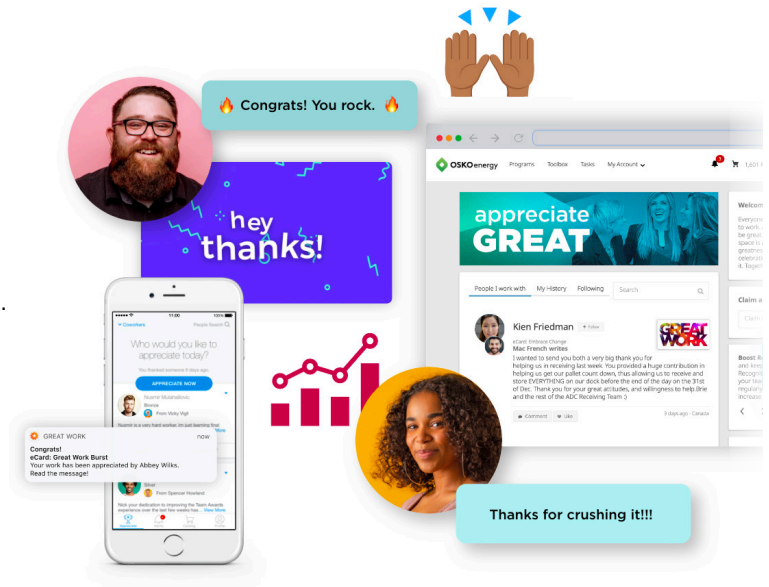
(3)

Include everyone.

Recognition has the power to strengthen inclusion, belonging, and workplace community, so it should be available to all. This includes offline workers, remote and hybrid workers, back-office workers, and leaders and employees of all levels, in all locations across the globe. Ensure all employees can give and receive recognition, no matter where they work. Provide offline recognition tools and include all your global locations.

Use recognition to celebrate, appreciate, and honor your employees' authentic selves at work. Enable peer-to-peer recognition in addition to recognition from leaders, so employees can appreciate one another. Service anniversary

and company-wide celebrations are particularly useful in guaranteeing everyone is recognized and appreciated for their great work.

4

Start at day one (or before).

Research from the 2023 Global Culture Report finds ideal onboarding experiences include time to thank others for their help and support during the onboarding process. And recognizing at the beginning of an employee's career helps them feel a sense of connection and belonging immediately.

"Recognition at 30 days creates an 89% decrease in likelihood of attrition"

**EARLY TENURE RECOGNITION STUDY, 2022
O.C. TANNER INSTITUTE**

Send new hires a box filled with company swag to their home, even before day one. Give e-cards and recognition points in your system early and often. This tells new employees you are grateful for their decision to join your company, introduces them to your recognition program, and gives them opportunities to appreciate the new friends and leaders who helped them through their first day, week, or month at work.
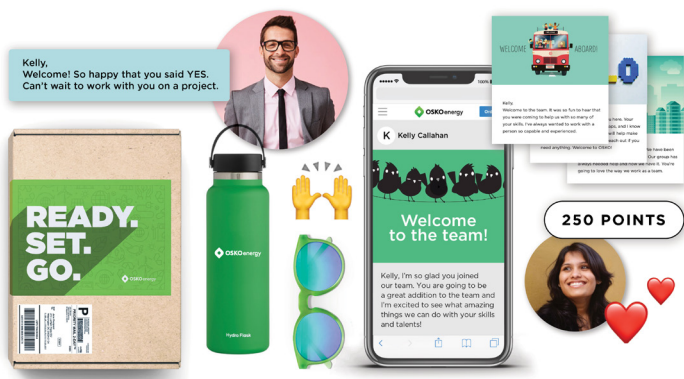
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Utilize symbolism.

Symbols help amplify recognition experiences by representing stories of achievement in tangible form. When done right, symbols become meaningful icons of culture that employees aspire to receive. And research shows that thoughtful, high-quality symbolic awards produce a stronger emotional recall than generic awards or cash and gift cards. Symbolic awards also increase connection between an employee and their teams, leader, and organization:

Incorporate symbolism early and often in your recognition efforts. Don't use generic trophies, and ensure symbols are presented as part of a meaningful recognition experience.

6

Celebrate together.

Some of the best recognition experiences are the ones everyone shares together. Group celebrations help strengthen connection and belonging. Whether you are celebrating company milestones or anniversaries, new product launches, meeting financial goals, Employee Appreciation Day, holidays, or team success, be sure to do group celebrations.

It may be as simple as giving everyone in your company a certain number of points to celebrate or giving meaningful company swag that surprises and delights. You could also let employees select a gift or hold a big company-wide event. Whatever you choose to do, celebrate together.

"**Success is better when it's shared.**"

HOWARD SHULTZ, CHAIRMAN AND CEO, STARBUCKS

(7)

Get executive support.

Executive support means more than a nod of approval. You need leaders who believe in recognition, understand why it's important, and will champion and role-model it to your people. Take the time to convince executives of the value and power of recognition, starting with your CEO down to your individual-level leaders.

Support also means resources. You can't create effective recognition experiences if you don't have adequate budget for technology

and awards. We recommend setting aside $200-$350 per employee per year to create impactful recognition experiences.

(8)

Include robust reporting and measurement capabilities.

Delivering results is important. The best reporting tools should have dashboards to help you understand what recognition is happening (or not happening), where, and for what. Reports should be visible, easy to use, real-time, and actionable, and include tools to help you budget.

Look for measurement beyond just program usage and impact on things like engagement, culture, flight risk, and business metrics. Culture Cloud can take your recognition data and integrate it with other HRIS software you use, like Workday or SAP, to maximize the power of HR data.

9

Use automatic reminders.

Great recognition programs have built-in reminders to recognize: email reminders, platform nudges, ongoing communication about and promotion of the program, and targeted communication to leaders and non-users.

Remind employees to recognize leaders too. After multiple years of pandemic and increasing job responsibilities, leaders of all levels need support and appreciation more than ever. 65% of leaders admit receiving more recognition from the people who report to them would improve their experience at work. A simple eCard or thank you note upward can make a big difference in the burnout of leaders, especially lower and mid-level leaders.

See how CIBC created a thoughtfully designed integrated recognition culture for their people.

Contact us to learn more about how to create an effective recognition strategy.

10

Thoughtfully design your solutions.

Don't just use a generic employee recognition software. Your recognition program should be thoughtfully designed and reflect your brand, purpose, history, and culture. But it doesn't have to be complicated.

Find a partner who can help. Naturally, we suggest hiring O.C. Tanner, because we lead the recognition industry in doing precisely what that last paragraph represents. But visit our Buyer's Guide to see how you can gain executive support, research top providers, and select a perfect recognition partner to create an effective recognition program that will help your people thrive.