

# A Complete Guide to Rewards & Recognition



# EXPERT'S DESK

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The power of recognition in a modern workplace cannot be over-emphasized. Employee recognition is a proven way to spur motivation and development among employees. It is the primary ingredient for building an engaged workforce and creating a holistic employee experience.

However, in our experience of interacting with hundreds of companies over the last nine years, what we realized was that companies struggle with ways to recognize their employees in a meaningful and measurable manner, particularly in this rapidly-changing environment.

Organizations often wonder how to break the various initiatives into actionable components. 'Where do we start? What tools can help enable and sustain these initiatives? What are the new ways to recognize?' – are some of the common questions being asked on a regular basis.

So, we decided to create an e-book to help codify our knowledge and experience. It is a compilation of our learnings, our domain expertise through years of experience combined with some secondary research to come up with content that is comprehensive and actionable. Hopefully, you will find answers to some of your employee engagement questions. Employee recognition should be a continuous process and no matter where you are today, it can always be improved. This is a start and we hope to keep this document dynamic in nature by updating it with more material once we get your feedback.

**Let's get the wheel of employee appreciation rolling!**

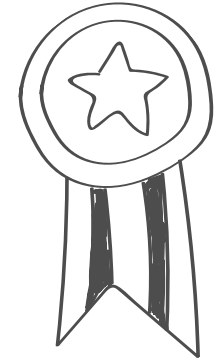


A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Partha P. Neog". The signature is written in a cursive style and is placed on a white rectangular background.

**PARTHA NEOG**  
CEO, Vantage Circle

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# Chapter **1**

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## INTRODUCTION

“  
*People work for money  
but go the extra mile for  
recognition, praise and rewards.*  
”

- Dale Carnegie, Leadership Training Guru

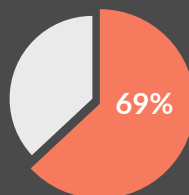
In the last two decades, rewards and recognition has been the driving force behind major companies' success in delivering near-perfect employee experience.

In a nutshell, rewards and recognition is the appropriate acknowledgement, appreciation and incentivization of an employees' effort in a timely manner. It's a time of war over talents out there.

To acquire and retain the top performers, you must build a workplace culture where employee recognition is the everyday norm.

As companies struggle to find a way to deal with the global economic slowdown, the simple act of recognising an employee in a meaningful and memorable way is the missing link that can transform the productivity levels, lower employee turnover, and create a sense of belonging to the company.

According to Cicero,  
69% of employees would work harder if they  
felt their efforts were better appreciated.



The power of appreciation:  
Mike Robbins at TEDxBellevue.  
(Source:  
[youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com))



## Changing Role of Human Resource Management

The Human Resources Management Department is responsible for all processes that revolve in and around the people of the organisation. Right from attracting candidates, hiring and recruitment to enhancing employee experience to their exit, all the events in the employee lifecycle fall under the umbrella of the HR department. They are also responsible for nurturing a good company culture and creating an overall safe and conducive work environment for the people.

Workplaces are going through a dynamic transformation. And with the changing scenario, HR functions are evolving massively. The need of the hour is to create a more employee-centric work environment where the needs of the employees are given special emphasis.

The entire job market scenario has changed over the last few years. The war for talent is real, and employees are now choosing their employers (not the other way round).

Not surprisingly, the current dominating forces (Millennial & GenZers) in the workforce are tough to please. They don't see recognition as a special affair. In fact, they feel they are entitled to receive recognition for a job well done. Giving recognition in a manner that would appeal to them is a necessity to attract, retain and satisfy them.

## TOP CHALLENGES IN REWARDS & RECOGNITION

- Personalizing employee recognition.
- Instant communication of employee recognition.
- Employee recognition is not visible across the company.
- Employee recognition is inconsistent.
- Misperceiving employee recognition to be expensive.
- The ROI of employee recognition is hard to measure.



## Chapter **2**

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# DIFFERENCE BETWEEN REWARDS & RECOGNITION

While you will find “rewards” and “recognition” being used interchangeably with each other, **it is anything but the same.** In order to use both of them efficiently, we must know how both differ from each other.



## REWARDS

- 1. Rewards are tangible.** Rewards are mostly monetary or have some monetary value that can be attached to it.
- 2. Rewards are transactional in nature.** For a particular input, you get an output in return. Thus rewards are an excellent way to attract the top talent to your organization.
- 3. Rewards are economical** considering that for investing in such small amounts of resources you get a much higher return in terms of productivity and ultimately business profits.



## RECOGNITION

- 1. Recognition is intangible.** Even though it's value can't be measured it remains an integral part.
- 2. Recognition is relational in nature.** It's a form of building an emotional connection between the employees and the organization. This makes recognition the ideal way to retain the said top talents.
- 3. Recognition is emotional,** a psychological event of feeling seen, appreciated and mattered. Proper recognition has the power to bring out the motivation even in the most dormant of employees.

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## Chapter **3**

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# POSITIVE EFFECTS OF REWARDS & RECOGNITION ON BUSINESS

Before we go ahead with the hows and whys of promoting an appreciative culture at work, let's look back at 7 most distinctive benefits of rewards and recognition in business:

## 1 Company Culture

Frequent and timely recognition profoundly impacts the culture of the company. A company's culture is the combination of a company's vision, goals and ideologies for achieving the greater good. An appreciative work culture builds trust and respect among the members of the workforce. Employees get a means to learn and praise their peers' strengths and unique qualities.



## 2 Give Competitive Edge to Organizations

Rewards and recognition promote healthy competition among employees. Implementing a culture of recognition in a structured and meaningful manner assures the employees that their hard work and efforts will not go unnoticed. Employees try to bring their A-Game to work, and it is always beneficial for the company. This not only helps the company in achieving its goals faster but is also aids to employees' personal and professional development.



### 3 Improves Manager-Employee Relationships

People don't leave jobs; they leave managers. As harsh as it may sound, this is often the truth. A big part of employee experience is dependent on the relationship that employees share with the managers. R&R practices give managers a way to connect with the employees and convey their regards. It helps both the parties to bridge the gap between them. It also makes feedback more effective.



### 4 Boosts Team Spirit

Recognition in the workplace is itself a culture-building initiative. One of the biggest challenges for leadership is to build a team that works collectively towards the greater goals of the company. The need to create a cross-functioning and collaborative work environment is huge in today's date. When recognition (especially peer-to-peer recognition) becomes a norm in the company, it builds camaraderie and enhances team spirit. Team/ Department recognition and rewards can play a significant role in boosting team-building.



## 5 Empowers Employees

An exciting benefit of recognition is that recognition sparks empowerment among employees. Recognising employees for their outstanding work gives them a clear idea about the expectations of their higher-ups. It inspires them to take autonomy and ownership in their work. They take pride in their job and their contribution to the success of the company.

Also, by praising and recognizing efforts, you offer them room to grow and learn.

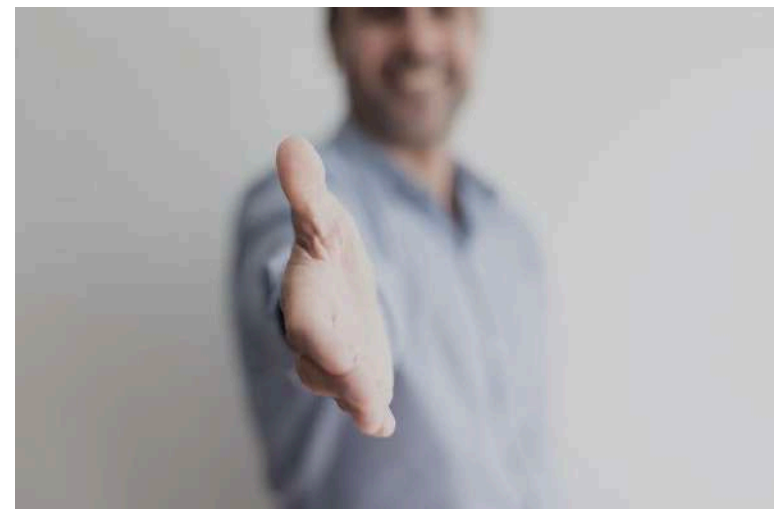


## 6 Employee Retention

Employees whose managers consistently acknowledge them for good work are **5x** more likely to stay at the company. Those whose managers consistently help them manage their workload are **8x** more likely to stay.

Managing high employee turnover is the biggest challenge of human resource departments worldwide. High attrition can derail projects, disturb the momentum of the ongoing work and incur high hiring and training costs. Although a lot of factors lead to an employee's decision to leave a company, employee satisfaction is a crucial one.

Employee satisfaction is mainly dependent on how people are treated inside the organization. When you make it a point to duly recognize your employees, they are emotionally invested in the job and the company as a whole. They naturally tend to stay longer.



## 7 Employer Branding

In today's competitive world, strong employee branding has become strategically important. Good employee branding attracts the right candidate and promotes positivity and employee engagement.

Recognition helps in building a strong brand identity. When employees feel appreciated in the workplace, they become active advocates for the company and its products. They organically indulge in positive word-of-mouth promotion. Because of the massive surge and engagement in various social media sites, they have now become the prime platform for company recognition and promotion.

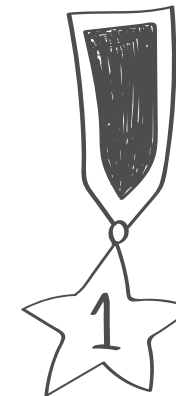
Recognition fuels good relationships helps to create a positive atmosphere at work and subsequently increases employee advocacy.



*“If you do not treat people with the respect they deserve, do not expect any kind of commitment to your productivity goals and target.”*



**– Ian Fuhr,**  
founder and CEO  
of the Sorbet group

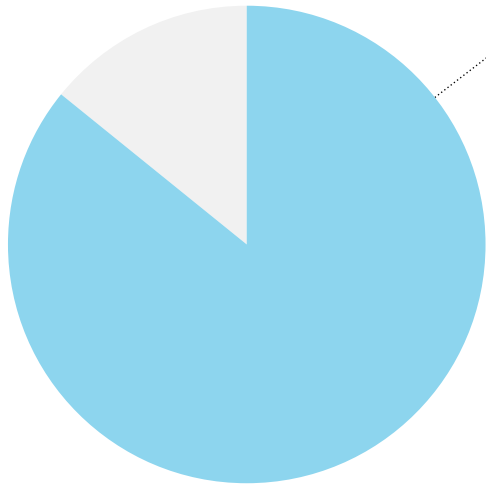


# Chapter **4**

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## STATISTICS ON REWARDS & RECOGNITION

## Some Eye Opening Statistics

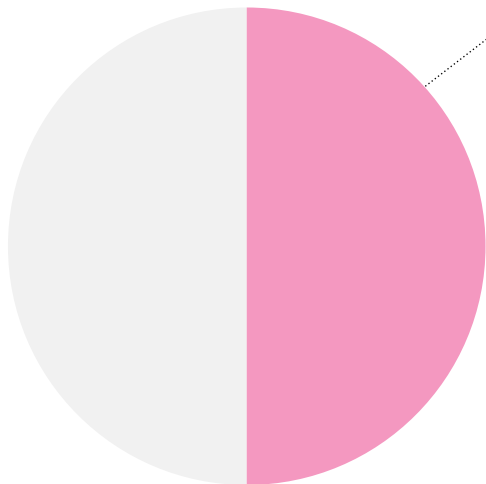


**83%**

**of HR Leaders say an employee recognition program benefits organizational values.**

**(Source: Globoforce)**

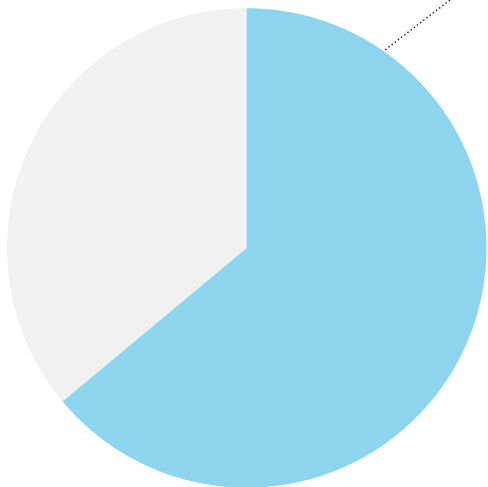
Organization values are the pillars for building a strong and stable company. It's important that a company's organizational values are not mere words but actions. A huge section of leaders of today believes that having a recognition program enhances and uplifts the organizational values of the company.



**50%**

**of employees believe they not only improve their work relationship but also develop trust in the higher-ups when appreciated by the manager. (Source: Cicero Group)**

When it comes from the supervisor, recognition becomes even more meaningful and motivating. When leaders are not just guiding but also appreciative, employees are more inspired to become more trustful which in turn originates loyalty and commitment.

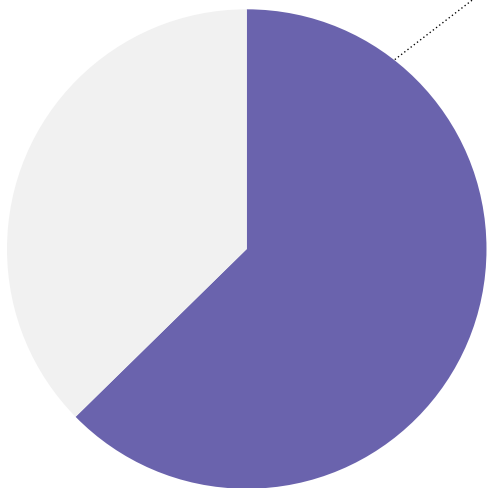


**69%**

of workers agreed they will work harder if their efforts are better appreciated”.

(Source: Socialcast)

It is a proven fact that organizations that regularly recognize employees, massively outperform those that don't. The reason is simple recognition boosts intrinsic motivation among employees. Motivated employees feel more invested and they often go the extra mile to complete a task.



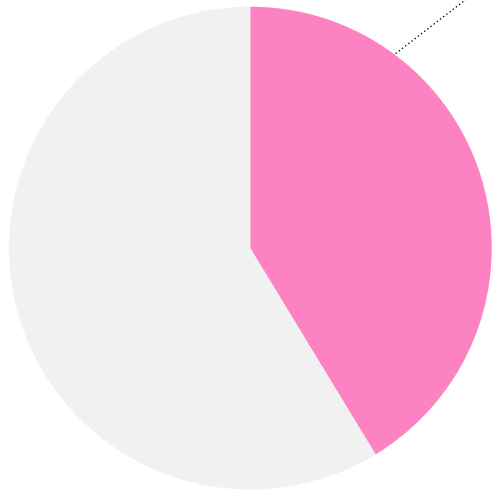
**66%**

of HR Managers agree that recognition helps towards creating a strong brand.

Brand messages reached 561% further when shared by employees vs the same messages shared via official brand social channels (MSLGroup). Content shared by employees receives 8x more engagement than content shared by brand channels. (Social Media Today)

Employee branding is now more important than ever. But how does it actually happen? A huge section of HR leaders says that good recognition practices have led to increased employer branding and a good online reputation for brands.



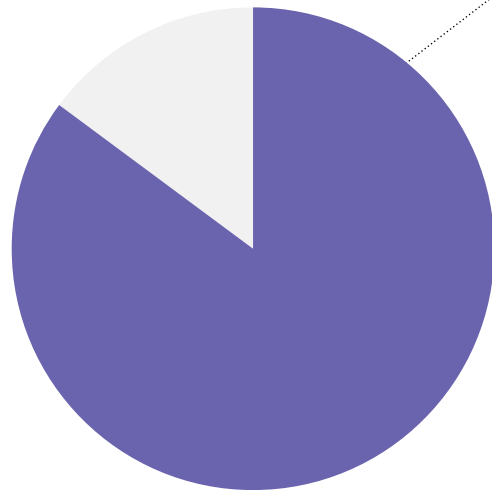


**41%**

**of workers agreed they will work harder if their efforts are better appreciated”.**

**(Source: Socialcast)**

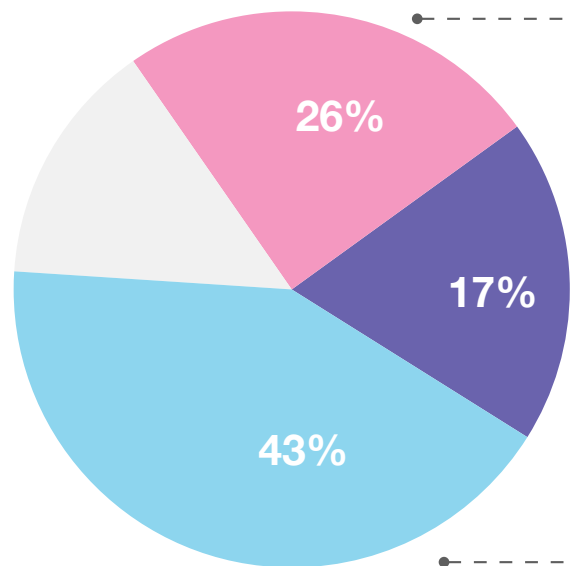
Managers often have only a top view of how the team is performing. Very often it is an employees’ peers who get an inkling of how much he/she is contributing to the organization. Additionally, appreciation from a manager might feel like he is “simply doing a job” whilst appreciation from one’s own peers may significantly matter more to us simply because it’s unbiased.



**80%**

**of workers said they would be willing to work longer hours for a more empathetic employer, and a vast majority would like to be praised more frequently at work.**

Greater pay and bonuses can only work up to a certain extent to motivate the workforce. Loyalty to an organization stems from the leaders who recognize and appreciate that the employees’ contributions are extremely integral to a company’s success.



Over one-quarter of respondents (26%) ranked "recognition for my work" in their top three important factors for staying with their current employer.

but nearly 1 in 5 (17%) said their manager/employer was "horrible – they never recognize my work".

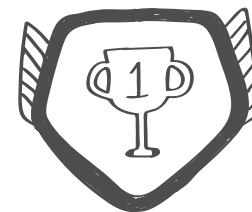
and the largest group of respondents (43%) ranked their manager/employer as just "okay" (recognizing them annually or quarterly at least).

Even though recognition is continually proven to be one of the most powerful tools to combat disengagement, it is still unused by most companies even today.

It's quite evident that a high level of recognition contributes to a lower level of turnover in your organization.

5 Languages of Appreciation in the Workplace Keynote or Workshop | How to Show Appreciation at Work  
Source: youtube.com

Dr. Paul White  
on the Importance of Appreciation in the Workplace



# Chapter **5**

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## TECHNOLOGIES IN REWARDS & RECOGNITION



*The first rule of any technology used in a business is that automation applied to an efficient operation will magnify the efficiency*



**– Bill Gates,**  
Founder of  
Microsoft

When it comes to getting recognition in the workplace, employees of today seek fast and instant recognition. That presents a problem for companies with a large employee base where it's less feasible for the leader to go up to each employee and congratulate them on their day-to-day achievements.

Constructive use of technology has made it easier to reward and recognize their workforce in an easier, faster and in a much more timely manner which makes the whole process smoother to operate. That's where having a rewards and recognition platform integrated within your company comes into the picture.

**Here's how having a dedicated R&R platform is making the act of recognizing your workforce easier.**

### Instant Recognition

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Recognition delayed is recognition denied. The modern workplace environment is fast, frantic and changing constantly. Achievements of today are most likely to be forgotten by the very next day.

Implementing a digital rewards solution provides an environment where employees can be appreciated over the high quality of their work potentially within moments of completing it, rather than having a note left on their desk a month after completing a project saying “good job”.



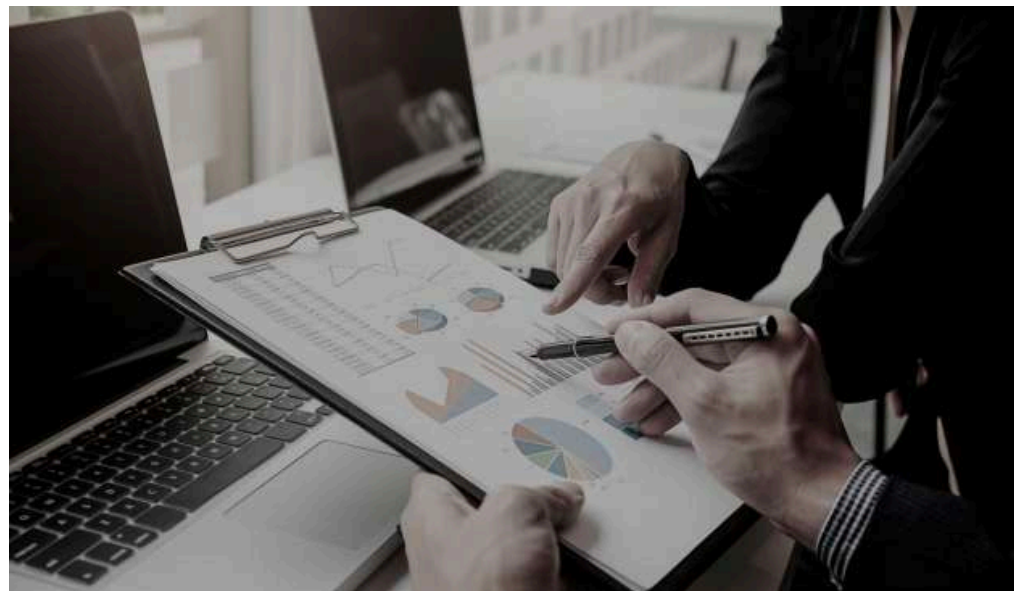
## Data-Driven Insights

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As data becomes more and more important, an R&R platform allows you to get insights on how employee performance and engagement are linked to the amount of recognition given.

This won't only help to show you the benefits of the program itself but will also help you identify the areas in which it particularly works and also the areas which doesn't seem to do much in terms of increasing the overall engagement.

Additionally, data-driven insights can help you identify gaps in the recognition giving pattern in your organization. Data can also highlight the employees with the highest contribution and influences in teams, thus making it easier for you to recognize them.



## Customization

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Not all organizations are created equal. Each one differs in terms of various factors such as the number of employees which means that recognition in itself has to be flexible to accommodate the various parameters.

Customization allows HR to add new changes or make a few tweaks to an existing program. Customization allows for greater flexibility and the ability to tailor programs as per the organizational need and the values they want to drive.

## Deeper Engagement

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Sometimes, the effort to complete a task is more important than the task itself.

Rewards and recognition shouldn't be limited to only the individual top performers. It must involve all employees across the company to build a sense of belonging and increase the motivation to do better.

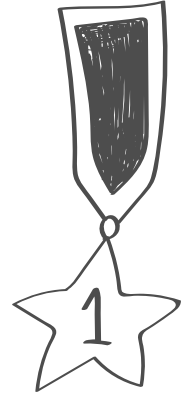
A dedicated R&R platform helps to make everyday tasks such as fixing an error or being on time an easily recognizable task.



## Greater Reach

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Traditional methods made it difficult to instill the company values in a consistent and continuous way to the entire workforce. It is even more evident when rewarding employees become a cumbersome and long-drawn-out task. The use of technology has resulted in a faster and more efficient way to recognize employees, thus making rewarding employees on the spot a reality.



# Chapter

6

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# BUILDING A CULTURE OF PEER TO PEER RECOGNITION



In today's high performing and diverse workforce, employees seek and want to get recognized by their peers at their workplace.

A peer recognition program opens up a great opportunity to create a company culture of increased communication. All in all, it helps a company to place value on every person's opinion.

According to **Globoforce**, **41%** of companies that use peer-to-peer recognition have seen positive increases in customer satisfaction.



**A successful peer recognition program can help you see a:**

- A boost in work relationships
- Promotes the overall team spirit
- Improves confidence and self-esteem





# Implementing Peer To Peer Recognition In Your Organization

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Here is how you can simplify peer recognition to work for your organization instead of the other way round:

**1** Firstly, to run a successful peer recognition program, you need to **choose the right platform**.

A platform serves as an essential base where the employees can get access to their own company network.

This helps to notify other employees when one of their peers gets rewarded or recognized. Furthermore, other peers can engage by further congratulating and recognizing the recipient.

**2** Have a **company-wide solution** that is more than just an HR initiative. When recognition is seen as a work culture norm, and not just another corporate feel good, you get more support from and more impact from your investment which allows you to construct a pleasant employee experience.

**3** Give everyone the opportunity to **give and receive recognition**. Ensure that every employee is aware of your peer-to-peer recognition program and that each employee is welcome to use it to give recognition to their peers.

**4** Make sure your peer-to-peer recognition program is **easy to use and has both mobile and offline capabilities**. Make it easier for employees to recognize on the go. 24/7. Additionally, account for your remote workers too and make sure that they have the tools and access required to be recognized too

**5** **Publicize recognition**. Whether it's a social media post or a "wall of fame" feature on your recognition program, **highlighting achievements** on monitors throughout the office and calling out successes, let others in your organization see the stellar performance that the employees are putting up.



## Implementing Peer To Peer Recognition In Your Organization

**6** Allow peers to **participate in employee achievements**. Whether you are congratulating a major accomplishment or celebrating a work anniversary, invite peers to gather, comment, and be part of the presentation. In best in class companies, employees take the initiative to put together and plan a peer's recognition moment.

**7** Leaders should continuously remind **their workforce** about the significance of recognizing great work. Try to keep it fresh and as a top priority. Remind employees to recognize their peers frequently. Set the example for your employees for what to recognize and how to show appreciation.

**8** An added advantage is the **sense of competitiveness** among team members. Seeing good work recognized by peers will encourage employees to elevate their level of work.

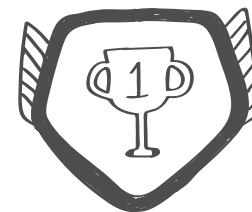
**9** Give **continuous feedback** to team leaders, based on data, so that they can take corrective measures in recognizing employees better. Also, share the best practices that'll make recognizing more impactful and benefit the team in the long run.

Simon Sinek, recognize when things are done right ([youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UJm31111111))



“  
Everyone wants to be appreciated, so if you appreciate someone, don't keep it a secret.

”  
- Mary Kay Ash



## Chapter **7**

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# HOW TO SELECT A RECOGNITION PROGRAM?

## Make Sure The Program Suits Your Organization



Digitization and technology have become a quintessential part of managing people. Chances are that your organization is already using an HRMS for various HR functions. It is important to make sure that the employee recognition program can be **seamlessly integrated** into the existing system. You might also want to look out if you can white label the program to give it company identity.

Look for a solution provider who can provide complete customisation.

## Resonate The Core Values



A company's recognition program must suit the company culturally. Recognition programs can be a great way to spread and articulate your company's core values. So before choosing an employee recognition program, you must ensure that you can **customise your program** to tie with the company values and ideologies.

## Cost



One of the preliminary things that you should take care of before going for an R&R program is **planning the budget**. The budget for a large enterprise will be more than a medium-sized enterprise which in terms will be higher than a small-sized enterprise.

It is advisable to organize your expenses internally before selecting the right program. **SHRM** recommends that HR departments spend at least **1%** of payroll on rewards and recognition. You might want to choose a program that gives you freedom towards budget allocation and assigning how you wish to use the budget.

## Outcomes



It is essential to establish the outcomes that you expect from the R&R program. As mentioned earlier, one of the biggest challenges of building a culture of employee recognition is a lack of means to determine the ROI.

To tackle this, you must have quantifiable outcomes and expectations. And you should be able to capture the desired results with sound analytics. Ensure that the program you choose offers the data in a systematic and hassle-free manner.

## Make It Fun



The program interface should be simple, smooth and user-friendly. Since everyone in the company will be using the program, there shouldn't be complicated steps involved.

The program should be fun and easy to use. Gamification in the R&R module, where employees can exchange rewards or appreciation, have an internal leaderboard, points allocation etc. can help in boosting participation. These are some of the features one must watch out for a while choosing an R&R program.

**Note: Go for a tool that has mobile accessibility to ensure regular participation and engagement.**

## Choose The Right Vendor



Choosing the right external vendor for the organization's recognition needs is crucial. You should ensure that they are experienced and capable of delivering the results and meeting the goals. You might want to have a look at their industry presence and previous experiences with companies on the same scale as yours.



## Chapter **8**

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# HOW TO BUILD A SUCCESSFUL EMPLOYEE REWARDS AND RECOGNITION PROGRAM

Now that we have established that the need of the hour is to have a rewards and recognition program for your organization that actually works. **So how do you go about building one?**

## 1. Clarify Your Vision

Before you start implementing a rewards and recognition program, you must be clear about what it entails.

### • Goals

Be sure to document your goals, objectives, expectations and the intended result from the rewards and recognition program.

Identify the purpose of implementing the program. Is it to increase the level of employee engagement? Increase sales? Or to build a better company culture?

The reasons might be endless, but once you establish your prime motive, it will become a whole lot easier to build a program that'll work to fulfil your goals.

### • Benefits

Research about the possible benefits that a rewards and recognition program can bring to your organization. A good practice is to look for organizations that have already implemented it successfully in the past. Stock up on the studies, tips, and ways to maximize the program if and when implemented.

All in all, gather a better understanding of how such a program can be aligned to meet your company's goals and needs.



Motivating employees to work at their full potential is the main premise of successful management.

Eraldo  
Banovac



## • Cost

To ensure that there is no overspending, misplaced finances or negative ROI along the way, it's important to have a cost estimation (including hidden costs) in place.

Even more efficient is to do an intelligent budget allocation. For small organizations, estimating the cost of a rewards and recognition program might be easier. However, when it comes to mid-sized and large organizations, things might turn a tad bit tricky.

## 2. Build A Committee

For a rewards and recognition program to be efficiently implemented, the first step any organization should take is to form a committee.

Regardless of the size of your company, appoint a few people who will be responsible for the implementation, managing, and establishment of an R&R program. A well-chosen committee can not only help you implement the program effectively but can also help to communicate and reinforce the belief upon the R&R program to the entire workforce.

Once the committee is formed, keeping track of workplace milestones such as work anniversaries, employee birthdays and promotions are all excellent occasions to reward and appreciate.

**While building a committee, you must keep the following tips in your mind:**

- Good knowledge of the program
- Shows interest in the program
- Shows leadership initiative
- Believes in the company values



Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it.

**William  
Arthur  
Ward**



### 3. Define Clear Characteristics

Another important step before implementing any rewards and recognition platform is to understand the characteristics that should be the building block of the program:

- **Timely**

Recognition delayed is recognition denied. Delaying to appreciate good performance only results in the lessening of the impact of recognition when it is finally given. It is considered a good practice to recognize someone as soon as the deed is done. Create a culture of appreciation where every small and big performance standard set by someone is appreciated on the spot.

- **Frequent**

Recognition is just like motivation. It is only effective when handed out on a regular basis. Recognition should be a real-time process where no great work should go unappreciated. The beauty of an R&R program is the simplicity behind it. It's not about appreciating only the bigger milestones but about the appreciation of the tinier.

- **Specific**

Recognition is more meaningful when specific accomplishments are celebrated. Being specific means that employees know that a certain amount or kind of performance is rewarded. Furthermore, it makes the entire workforce aware that there is some sort of incentives to better performance and that you are paying attention to all the hard work they are putting in.



No duty is more urgent than that of returning thanks.

James  
Allen

- **Value-Based**

Maybe the most important of any form of recognition aligns with your company values. If your organization has a set of deep-rooted values, seek to incorporate the same in the rewards and recognition that you give out to your employees.

#### 4. Define Clear Criteria

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The key to meaningful recognition is to set the criteria for getting rewarded and appreciated by their peers and supervisors.

Recognition should be made attainable, easy and available for all the workforce. In order to make rewards and recognition meaningful, you need to decide what actions are to be rewarded and what form of work is to be recognized.

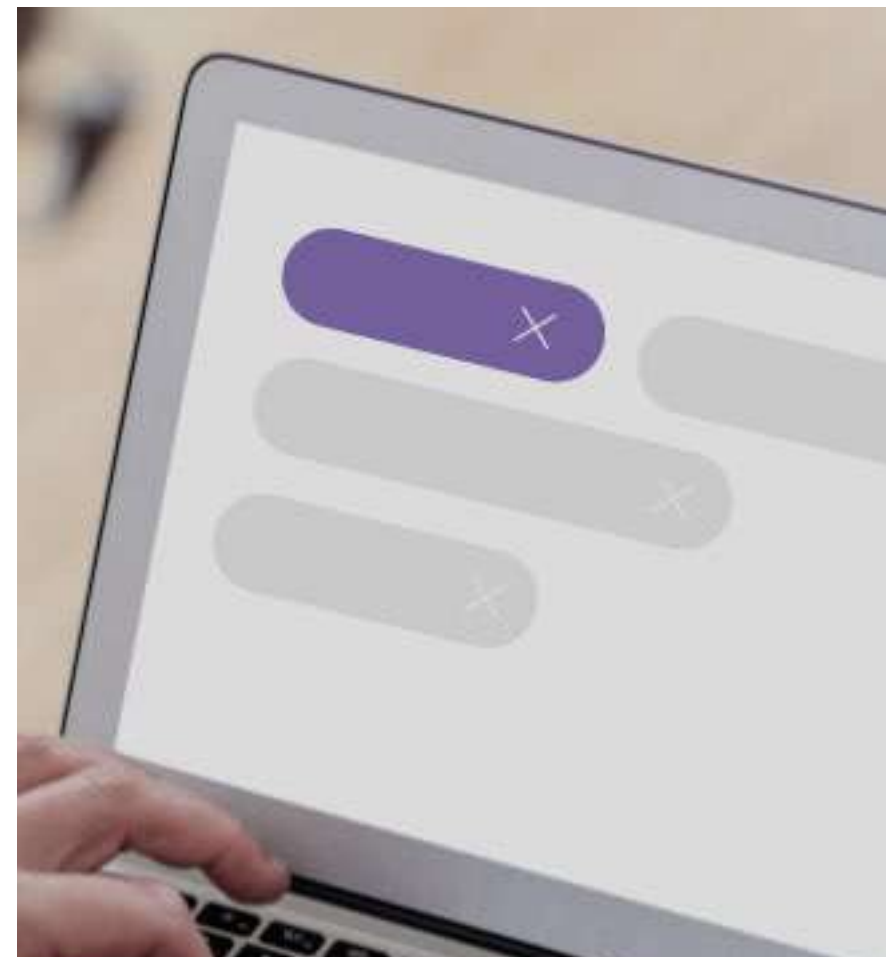
The idea behind creating criteria for recognition is to reward and encourage behaviors that you want to see flourish in your organization. Review a series of criteria such as below to find out what suits the best for your organization

- **What type of behaviors should be rewarded?**

Decide what type of behaviors and work should be rewarded and appreciated based on the values that you are seeking to cultivate in your organization. For example, if you are trying to tie productivity to your company core values you can reward behaviors when and where an employee tries to go above and beyond to get the job done.

- **How the said behaviors should be rewarded?**

It's important to set criteria for how recognition should occur and what kind of rewards to be offered. When desired behaviors are rewarded it sets a precedent for those behaviors to be practised throughout the organization.



If you don't create a great, rewarding place for people to work, they won't do great work.

Ari  
Weinzweig

- **How often should employees be rewarded and appreciated?**

Recognition is effective when it is frequent in nature. Public praise has the power of being more effective than recognition given in private. Amplifying the effect of recognition given by making it more frequent and timely. Additionally, employees feel better about recognition coming from their peers than their managers.

## **5. Ensure Successful Implementation**

Once you get the prerequisites out of the way, it's time to make the implementation of the rewards and recognition program successful.

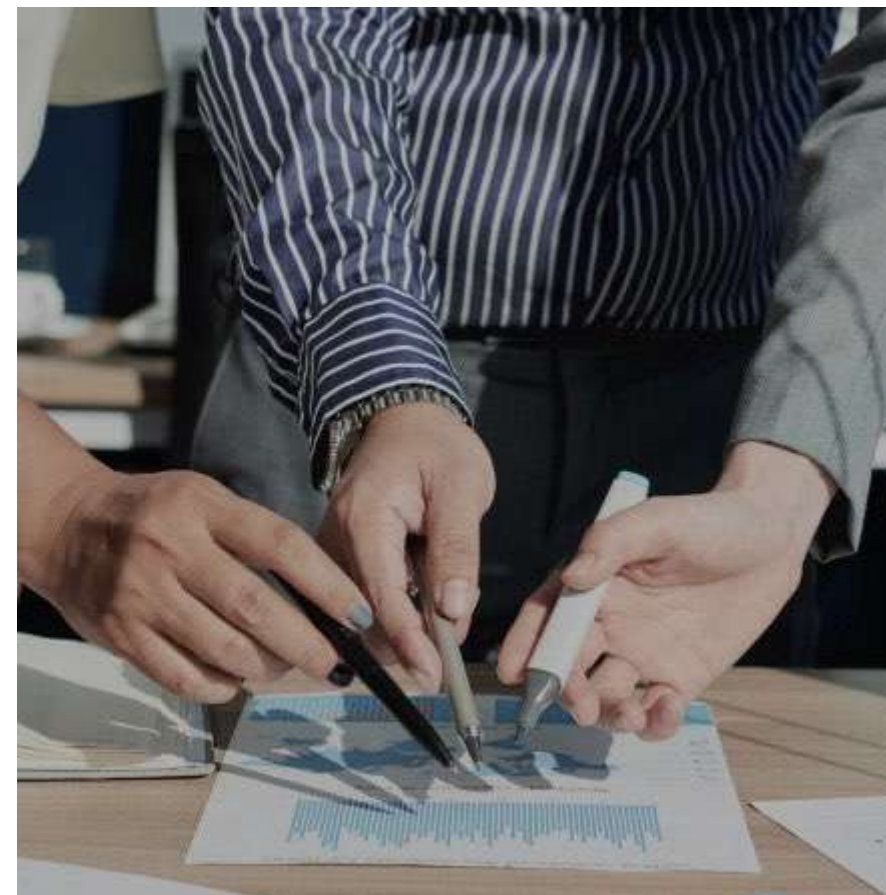
- **Get the employees onboard**

The main success behind the R&R program lies in how well the program is taken on by the workforce. Make employees aware of the program, how to use it, the benefits and encourage them to utilize it on a day to day basis.

Additionally, make the program easy to use and understand so that every employee in your organization can use it without any problem.

- **Senior management should advocate it**

The supervisors, managers and senior management should promote the use of the program and subsequently use it frequently. This will help to portray a scene where employees take the R&R program seriously because their manager is placing value on it.



The way your employees feel is the way your customers will feel.

**Sybil F.  
Stershic**

- **Align it with the company culture**

If you want to see successful implementation and positive results, then the most reliable way to do so is to align the program with the company culture. By doing so, you ensure that not only you manage you retain your present employees but are also able to attract the top talents.

## 6. Measure And Revisit

Your job doesn't end even after the rewards and recognition program has been successfully implemented and running.

- **Measurement**

Successful recognition programs are the ones which positively impacts the organization as a whole, including the productivity, business results as well as the brand value. But without any way to measure it, the effectiveness of the program is unsupported.

Organizations of today employ many methods to measure the after-effects of implementing an R&R program out of which the most popular seems to be an employee survey program. An employee survey tool is a relatively cost-effective and easy way to gather data from employees themselves about whether their engagement level has improved or not.

- **Revisit**

With changing business demands and employee needs, it seems unfeasible that your rewards and recognition should stay the same. On the contrary, it must continuously evolve and adapt accordingly to meet the requirements of the ever-developing workforce.

That's why it's important that you continuously revisit the areas of improvement to tailor it to the present-day needs.



Dispirited, unmotivated, unappreciated workers cannot compete in a highly competitive world.

Francis  
Hesselbein



## How Do Employees Wish To Receive Recognition?

### 1. Boost Peer to Peer Recognition

We, humans, are inherently social beings. We have an inherent need to be appreciated and treated well by the people in our surroundings.

In the work environment, your people spend a substantial amount of time with their colleagues. They have better interpersonal relations with their peers than say, managers and employers.

Also, modern workplaces are transforming from being competitive to collaborative in nature. Teams collaborate rigorously on a day to day basis to get the best results.

In such a situation where peer interactions are high and teamwork a necessity, peer recognition is something that companies should look upto. Employees naturally feel recognition is meaningful when it comes from someone from their peer group.

Moreover, when the organization promotes a culture of gratitude and appreciation, internal communication becomes better, and there are lesser chances of stress and conflict.

To sum up, employees share stronger bonds with their peers than their managers. They also feel that sometimes appreciation from managers is forced and not genuine. On the other hand, when recognition comes from peers, it is considered more meaningful. Companies should facilitate a culture where peer recognition becomes frequent and natural.



## 2. Leverage Social Media

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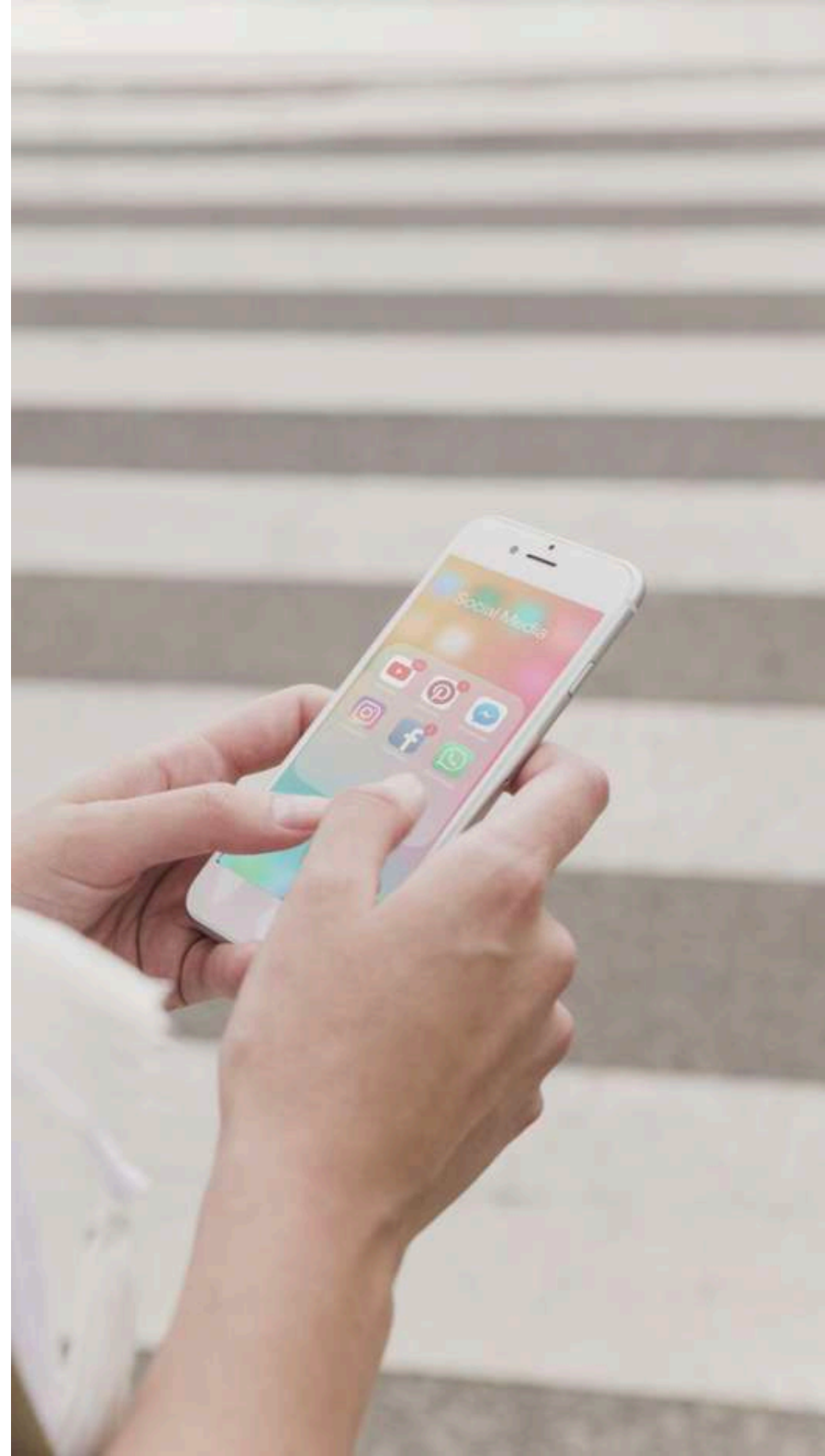
Why social media, you ask? Because everyone's doing it.

For the current generations, nothing actually is considered to have happened unless it's on social media. There's something really powerful about being recognised on social media from a company that has tens of thousands of followers. Social media recognition gives your employees the feeling of being truly in the limelight. Also, flaunting hard-earned appreciation on their good work becomes easier on these platforms.

For example, even the "employee of the week" or similar recognition ritual will immediately become more meaningful when you post a picture of them on the company's social media handle.

A big plus about going to social media for recognition is gamification. Employees can nominate or vote among themselves for important awards and recognition. You can reward the team or department that shows great achievement in social media together. It encourages employees to work together as a team and not just as an individual all the time.

Another great way of recognizing employees is through cloud-based internal employee recognition programs. Companies now have their own R&R platforms that can act as a mini social media where employees can indulge in staff recognition, exchanging good wishes on birthdays and work anniversaries, on-the-spot compliments and more. Also, it becomes easier to integrate reward points in such platforms. Managers can make the whole recognition process more effective by adding incentives and recognition leaderboard.



### 3. The Era of Instant Gratification

There has been a profound shift in our society in the past few decades. The millennials and the Gen Zers are dominating the workforce, and they are rightly termed as “impatient” and “fast-paced”. They want to get their job done quickly and they expect instant recognition for the same. Delayed recognition is as good as denied recognition for today’s multigenerational workforce.

Applying the correct encouragement tactics is crucial for any organization. Sincerity and timeliness of feedback and appreciation might seem like a trivial matter but it makes a lot of difference. When we talk about making recognition an innate part of the company culture, we must make recognition as regular and instant as possible.

Recognizing achievements in real-time or trying to schedule it as close to the actions you’re rewarding, reinforces the behaviors you want to encourage. Also, as a result, employees become aligned with broader company goals.

When employees know that they will be praised and their efforts wouldn’t go unnoticed, they are more likely to take up challenges and continue growing. It empowers them by giving them the extra boost of confidence.

Additionally, expressing interest in their professional development, sending them emails about their progress and assisting them in their journey helps you reach the broader company goals faster. It is a definite win-win situation for both employers and employees.



## 5. Power of Personalization in Rewards and Recognition

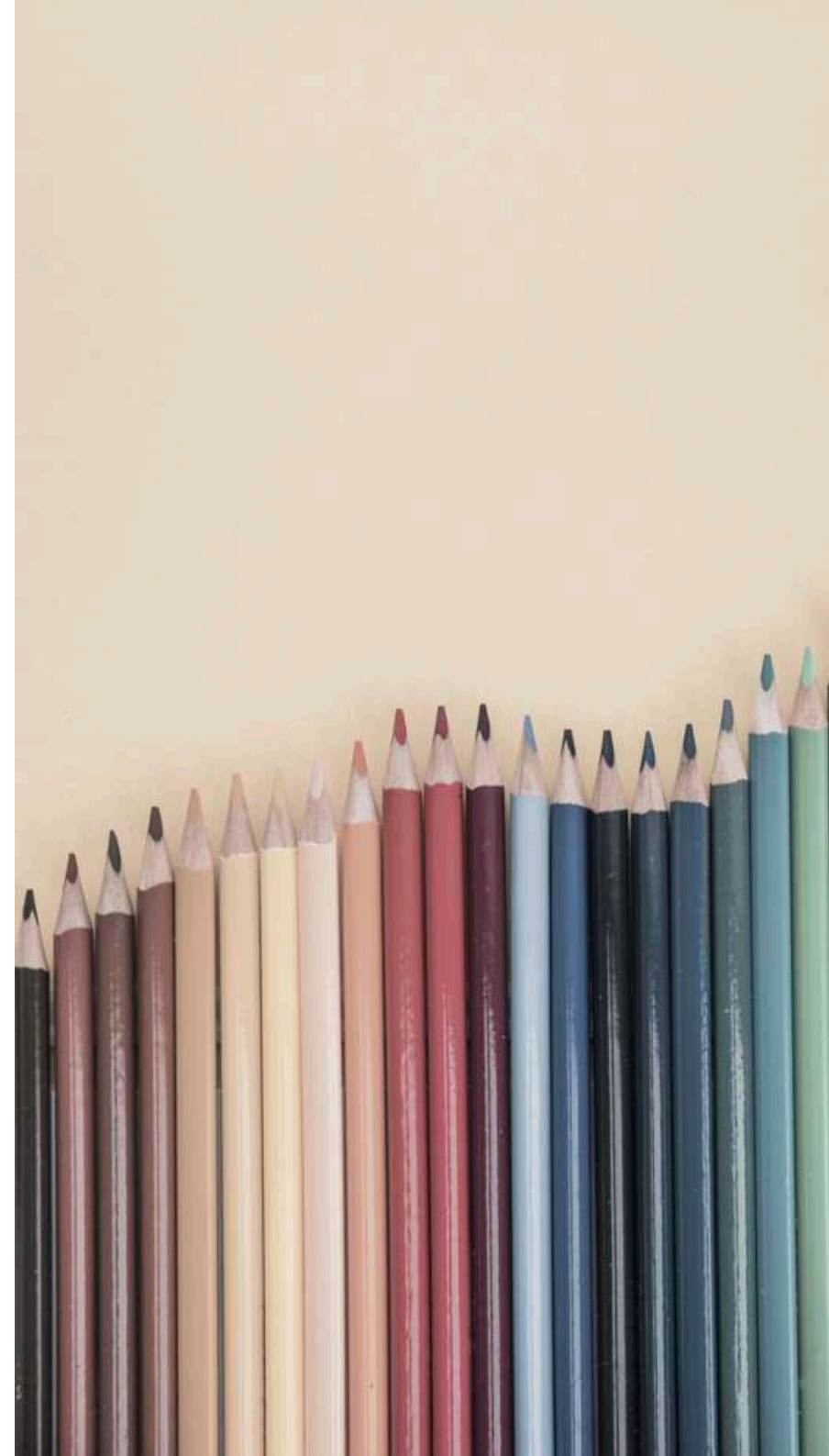
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Rewarding employees do not have a one-size-fits-all solution. Everybody loves a personalized approach. Employees have different expectations and different goals that they want to achieve in their career trajectory. If you're going to acknowledge your employees' hard work, it's important to get to know them personally and understand what motivates and drives them.

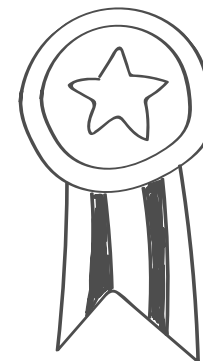
One of the main reasons behind recognizing employees is to encourage them to deliver similar results in the future. For this, employees must have the freedom to choose an award that's relevant to their personal lives.

Impersonal rewards are perceived as hollow and often does more harm than good. But the question is how to personalize rewards? How to find out what they would like to have?

The first solution to that would be by asking them through surveys and emails. A quick survey before the recognition program can help you learn a lot about their preferences. You can also provide them with a plethora of reward options to choose from.







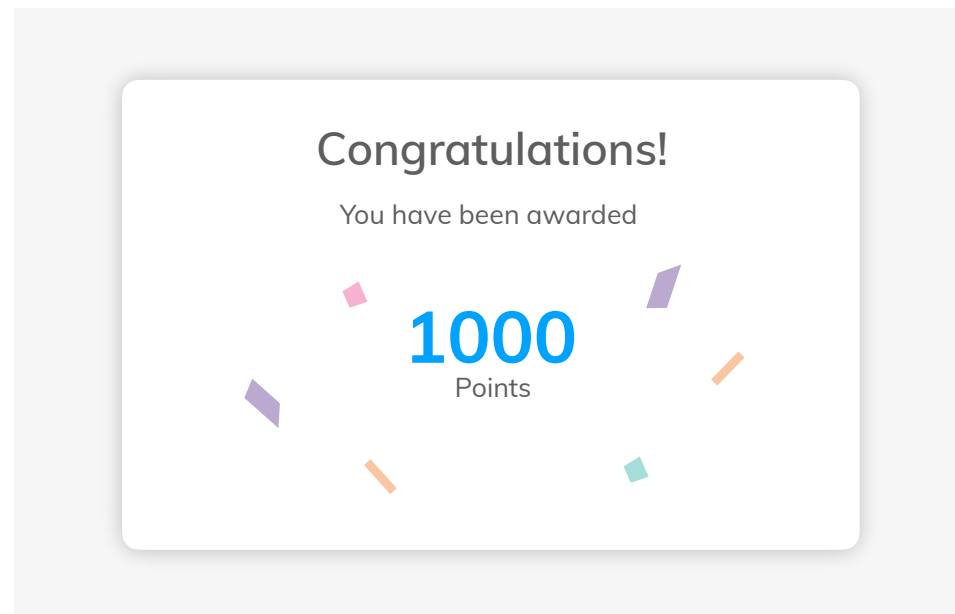
# Chapter **9**

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## REWARDS AND GIFTING IDEAS

## 1 Point-Based Reward System

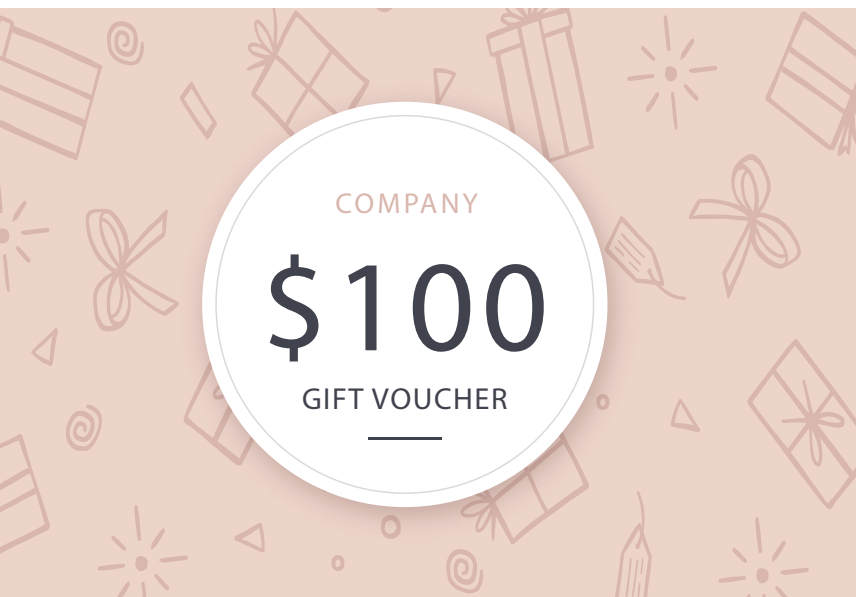
Developing a point-based reward system provides a perfect platform for ongoing recognition. Employees are awarded points for every time they go above and beyond. After accumulating a certain amount, employees can redeem their points for gifts. You could offer a variety of rewards for the employees to select from.



## 2 Gift Cards

Gift cards are available for all sorts of products and services. From shopping to travelling to dining. They are available for almost everything you can think for.

What makes gift cards unique and better than cash is that they ensure your employees have guilt-free spending. Monetary rewards get to spend on something trivial, which in turn makes the reward seem insignificant. Gift cards, on the other hand, account for thoughtful spending, which validates the reward better.



### 3 Surprise Grab Bag

It's always nice to get a surprise package. You can make the whole gift-giving fun by curating a few combinations of gift hampers for your employees. The hamper can have items such as movie tickets, gift vouchers, office essentials, phone covers, water bottles, etc. You can then ask your employees to choose a Surprise grab bag randomly.



### 4 Personalized Rewards

Gone are the days when you can apply a “one-size fits all” approach while rewarding your employees. They are individuals with different likes, dislikes, and preferences. It's a great idea to take the effort of going the extra mile to understand their needs and reward your rockstar employees accordingly.

A tailor-made reward naturally creates a lasting impact on the mind of the receiver. When you go out of your way to add a personal touch to your reward, it ascertains a connection between the receiver and the giver.



## 5 Online Classes

Offering sponsored enrolment to online classes on topic/course of their choice to employees not only makes for a great corporate gift, but it also presents a caring image of the organization. Additionally, it facilitates personal as well as professional employee development which will account for even better performance in the long run.



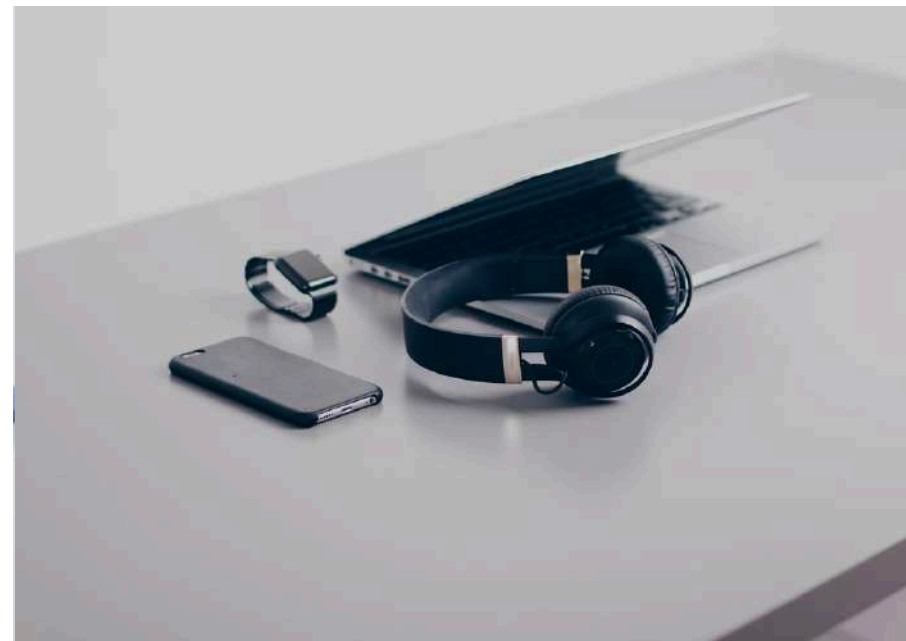
## 6 Charitable Donations

Multiple studies have shown that workers, especially those in the millennial generation, value brands and employers that emphasize doing good in the world. Find out what their favourite charity is and donate to it in their honour.



## 7 On The Go Electronics

Electronics such as smartwatches, fitness trackers, portable Bluetooth speakers, headphones, phone adapters, power banks are favorite gift items among millennials and GenZers. The receiver will always appreciate a good quality electronics product.



## 8 The Best Parking Spot

Like your office, a parking spot that's close to the office or in the shade is a high level of privilege to those who bring their cars to the office. Give it up to your winner for a week as a daily reminder of how you value them. As an added perk, you could even get a small sign with their name printed on it to show that space is really 'theirs' for the week.



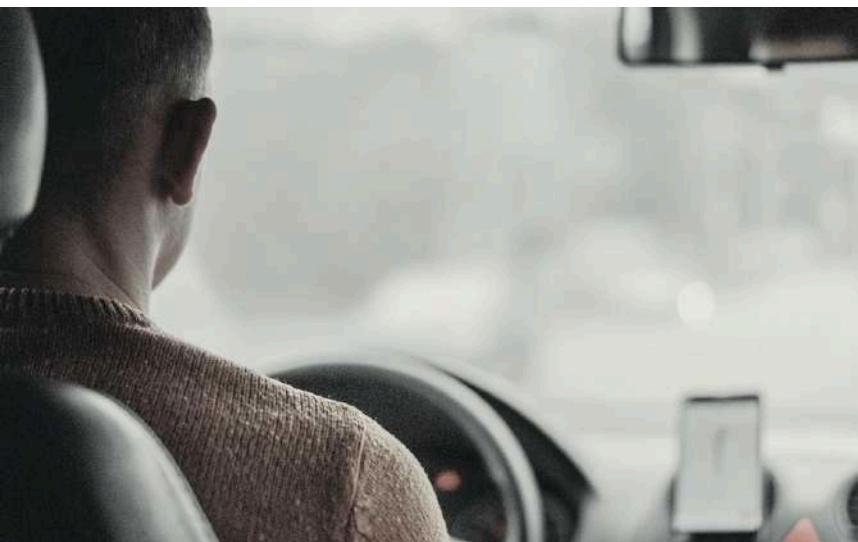
## 9 Free Event Tickets

Concert tickets are another great, custom-tailored reward you can offer to your esteemed employees. It's pretty much impossible to find someone who doesn't love either a certain kind of music or a specific sports team. Those would be some excellent rewards for a job well done.



## 10 Uber Ride Credit

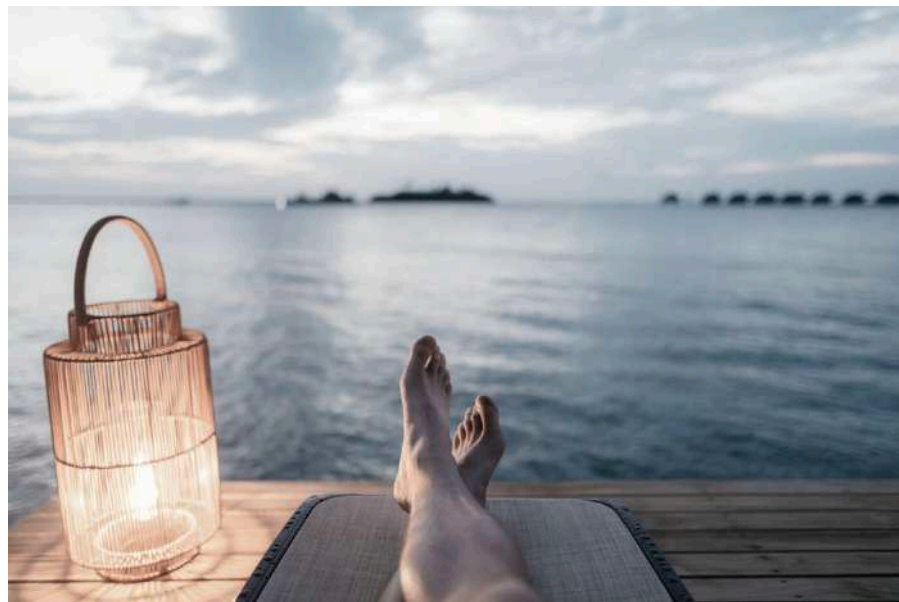
If you live in a city with ride-sharing, your employees most likely use it. They might even use it to get to work every day. Give them credit with the service they use the most that will cover a month or two of trips.





## 11 Vacation Benefits

Allowing your star employees to take time off not only gives them a well-needed rest but also signals that you care about the well-being of your employees which in turn results in a can help create a happier and more productive work culture.



*The deepest principle in human nature is the craving to be appreciated.*



**- William James**



# Chapter **10**

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## RECOGNITION IDEAS



## 1 Gift of Gratitude

One of the most obvious yet incredible ways of recognizing employees is by showing gratitude to your employees. Everybody craves for some appreciation and the impact of a verbal or handwritten “Thank You” is unparalleled to any other form. So, make sure you don’t miss out on saying thank you to your deserving employees.



## 2 Sing Those Happy Birthdays

Sending a generic email on birthdays of your employees (although it is better than nothing), is not enough. You've got to make them feel special on their special day. And the good old “Happy Birthday” song and a cake never fail to make your employees feel recognized. If you have a huge workforce and it isn’t possible to do so, at least make it a point to send a handwritten note.

Also, celebrate personal milestones like wedding anniversaries, Work anniversaries, Promotions with your employees.



### 3 On the spot Recognition

Recognition delayed is recognition denied. Your employees are digital natives, and they are used to experiencing instant results in all spheres of their lives. They want to be recognized, and they want to be recognized right away.

If you notice anything recognition-worthy, do it right away. Sometimes small gestures like a “well done” or “Congratulations” text at the moment is more effective than something relatively bigger done later.



### 4 Gift of acceptance

Employee recognition is all about emotionally connecting with your employees. A great yet simple gift that you can give others is the gift of acceptance.

Practices like proving Business cards to your employees, putting your staff on your company’s websites make your employees feel accepted by the organization. These are lesser-known drivers of employee recognition.

Business cards are generally handed to employees who need to have face-to-face interaction with clients. But the rest of your employees might want to have them too. (They definitely do!) Business cards hold social stature, and they come in handy and serves many purposes. Same goes for putting your team on the website. They feel part of the bigger picture.



## 5 The Classic Wall of Fame Moment

Having a wall of fame in the office where the achievements or accomplishments will be displayed for the entire staff to see will be a perfect topping on the employee recognition cake. It will make the appreciation even more notable and valuable.

You can also have digital screens with a live feed on Recognition, Birthdays, anniversaries etc. in prime locations of the workplace.



## 6 Celebrate Work Anniversaries

Celebrating employee milestones like their work anniversaries is a great way to acknowledge your employees. Most of the times, employees tend to forget how far they have come in their professional lives while remaining busy with their work. However, surprising them with an anniversary present or throwing them a small party at the workplace will, sure enough, do the job here. The job of instilling the thought of how important they are and how much their work has helped in business growth.



## 7 Gamify Your Rewards And Recognition Program

Gamification is everywhere!

It is basically incorporating elements of gaming into a non-gaming situation. Gamification in your employee recognition can be a great idea. It will spur interest and lead to a more effective performance by your employees.

### How to do it?

The idea is to make employee recognition an instantaneous and continuous affair. The next step then will be keeping track of rewards and recognition earned by your employees.



### You Can Create

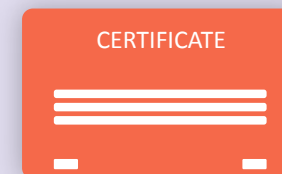
#### Badges



#### Leaderboards



#### Certificates



Create leaderboards, badges, certificates to acknowledge recognition earned by employees in different spheres of their work-life. Competition can be a great driving force as long as it is healthy. A point-based reward and recognition system which makes it easier for you to quantify and manage your R&R program.



## 8 Performance-Based Recognition and Mentions

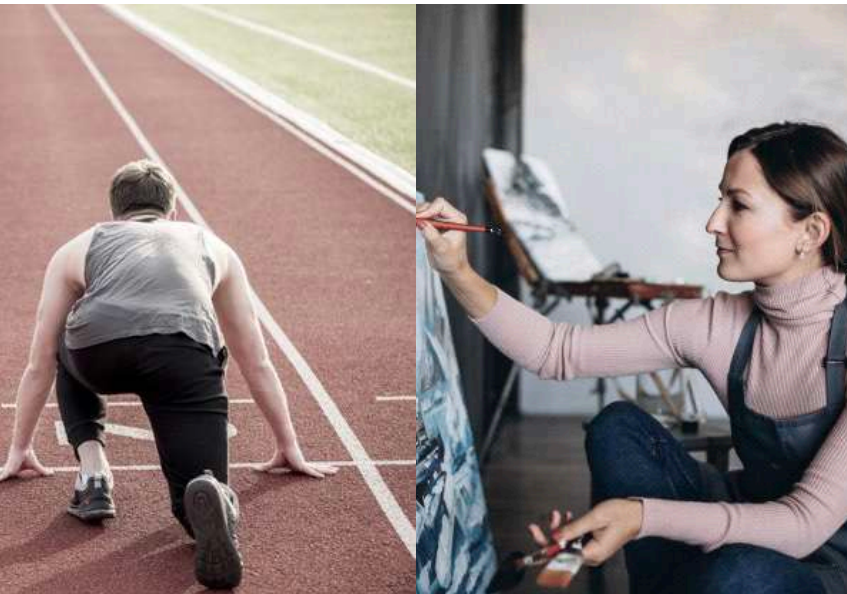
Do not knock out the good old Employee-of-the-month, Employee-of-the-year awards. They still work very well as tools for enhancing employee recognition.

Performance-based awards have a charm on their own and they have continuously proved to be a compelling source of recognition from a long time. Such a time-honoured practice that drives motivation must not be ignored.



## 9 Acknowledge Non-Workplace Achievements

Who knows if there's a sports champion or an emerging artist in your workforce. Therefore, you must always make it a point to acknowledge an employees' outside achievements as well. This ensures everyone in the workplace is aware of each other's capabilities. And support them in their endeavours as good colleagues strengthening workplace relationships.



## 10 Gift of “Time-off”

Striking the perfect balance between work, career, family and having fun has been the biggest challenge for employees. Work schedules are getting busier and personal time is getting shorter.

Naturally, a healthy work-life balance in terms of flexible timing and time-off is the top-seeking benefit for employees everywhere.

Giving a bit of extra time-off not only shows your appreciation but it is something employees really want at the end of the day.

To make recognition truly meaningful, you must break off from traditional practices and adopt modern ones. When an employee goes above and beyond to get a particular piece of work done, you can give them an extra day or two off or a short paid-holiday, just to show them that they truly deserve a pat on the back. Doing so will boost their motivation and at the same time present a caring image of the company.

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## ABOUT US

**Vantage Circle** is a unified employee engagement platform that provides solutions to leaders, managers and HR professionals who are seeking ways to transform company culture and elevate the employee experience.

The four modules of Vantage Circle namely, Vantage Rewards, Vantage Pulse, Vantage Fit and Vantage Perks are designed to look after four major concerns of Human resource management.

**Vantage Rewards** is the cloud-based Rewards & Recognition program that helps organizations in building a culture of mutual appreciation and trust.

The second module, **Vantage Perks** is an employee discount platform that offers a wide range of deals and discounts for employees to choose from and earn cashback on every purchase they make.

**Vantage Fit** is a customizable mobile-first health and wellness application designed specifically to suit the health needs of corporate workers.

The final product, **Vantage Pulse** is a powerful employee survey tool that lets you collect, measure, and act on real-time employee feedback.



*Thank You For Reading!*

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