



Maximize & Optimize Your Recognition Strategy

Recognition is a powerful tool to show and tell employees how much they are valued. It provides a meaningful way to reinforce your core values and behaviors, to recognize great work, and reward results. Additionally, when you share your appreciation, not only do employees see that you value their contributions, but it also builds morale and motivation. In turn, this creates a stronger culture which impacts employee engagement, retention, and loyalty to your organization.

It's a new year and a new chance to cultivate recognition and appreciation!

Not all recognition is created equally, but all recognition is equally important. Harvard Business Review shared “Recognition and appreciation. We often use these words interchangeably and think of them as the same thing. But while they’re both important, there’s a big difference between them”¹.

The article goes on to explain that employees need both. “Recognition is about giving positive feedback based on results or performance... Appreciation, on the other hand, is about acknowledging a person’s inherent value... ***In simple terms, recognition is about what people do; appreciation is about who they are.***”

Incentive Services’ Strategic Framework supports a mix of appreciation and recognition:

Foundational Service Awards

Incorporate a hire to retire approach recognizing milestones along the way.

Automated Recognition

Celebrate personal and professional moments.

Discretionary Recognition

Acknowledge and applaud behavioral reinforcement.

Performance-Based Recognitions

Reinforce organizational values and behaviors.



Maximizing and optimizing recognition with key events.

Building a foundation of recognition through an integrated strategy is key – service milestones, automated, discretionary, and performance-based recognitions are a must do. BUT - in addition, it's important to keep the momentum and energy alive throughout the year by identifying key, special events of relevance. Events relevant to your company offer additional reasons to inject positivity, show gratitude, boost productivity, and increase trust.

Examples of Key Events:

Employee Appreciation Day (March)

Hospital Week (May)

National Truck Driver Appreciation (September)

Holiday/Year End/Season of Thanks

Anytime Recognition (Goal achievement, acts of gratitude, organizational milestones, etc.)

Why the focus on appreciation?

Recognizing key events is a surefire way to make more moments that matter for your employees. This special recognition goes a long way in showing your appreciation and creating a sense of belonging for your teams - a very real thing with dramatic impacts on your culture.

In a recent McKinsey research study, over half the people surveyed cited a lack of belonging as a reason for quitting. There was a big gap between what employers felt was important to employees versus what employees consider important. Gallup has shared, "Employee belonging has moved front and center in the war to attract and retain top talent"². And further, Gartner believes a sense of belonging results in greater on-the-job effort and high employee performance.³

So, what can you do?

Building organizational culture is critical to your success. "Humans come to life when they feel needed, wanted, valued and appreciated by the people around them"². Implementing a strategy that incorporates both recognition and appreciation is a pathway to employee belonging, engagement, retention, and ultimately a stronger culture.

¹ <https://hbr.org/2019/11/why-employees-need-both-recognition-and-appreciation>

² <https://www.gallup.com/workplace/395102/drives-culture-belonging.aspx>

³ <https://www.gartner.com/smarterwithgartner/build-a-sense-of-belonging-in-the-workplace>

