

Holiday Recognition:

Sparking Enthusiasm and a Sense of Purpose

Holidays mean different things to different people, but gratitude, no matter how you translate it, is a universal connector. Gratitude and recognition will ALWAYS make the holidays bright for everyone.

According to BizEd, in *The Power of Moments*, Chip and Dan Heath “argue persuasively that any organization that creates peak moments--for its customers, its employees, or its students--will enjoy benefits that range from fanatical loyalty to revenue growth.”¹

The end-of-the-year holiday season is an ideal time to spark your teammates’ enthusiasm and recognize their accomplishments, while ensuring they understand how valuable their contributions are to your organization.



Here are a few considerations to maximize your success.

Look at recognition through the lens of your teammates.

Recognition provides a positive reinforcement to counterbalance any negative energy and emotional stressors your employees may have, leading up to or during the holiday season. You might not be aware of what’s happening; consider external factors that could be at play.

Think of recognition as BAU (business as usual).

Take advantage of the energy and excitement during the holidays and get employees in the mode of gratitude. This is an opportune time to call out successes, ramp up those manager-to-peer thank you notes, and surprise and delight your teammates. The more people get used to thinking about how they can recognize each other, share the wins, and embrace the recognition tools at their disposal, the greater the opportunity will be to deepen their emotional connection to the company.

Extra Touchpoints = Extra Connections

Best-in-class strategies leverage 8-12 recognition touchpoints per colleague annually. The holidays present (no pun intended) the chance to increase/turn up the fidelity of your recognition touchpoints – giving added reason to make deeper connections. Consider a year-end strategy that leverages multiple recognition touchpoints throughout a campaign of gratitude.

Institute a “Month of Thanks & Gratitude” focusing on colleague-to-colleague recognition.

Encourage team members to share their stories of inspiration.

Make it more personal - consider sending a message of gratitude and thanks to employee homes.

Highlight accomplishments over the past year, but also incorporate messages of optimism for the year ahead.



Distractions create interactions which create transactions.

Recognition can keep employees motivated and productive during the holidays, but let's face it - there can be a lot of distractions and employee productivity can decrease. Making a consistent effort to recognize and reward during these times can help keep employees energized and motivated to out-perform themselves – the positive “vibe” can carry a lot of weight. And this energy begets more energy ... which translates into interactions and these...can translate into financial benefits for the company. Just be careful of quick fixes. If you google holiday recognition, there is no shortage of tactical short-term ideas. These will only work if there's a foundation of appreciation present in the org – otherwise it feels totally disingenuous and out of character.

Recognition illuminates employees' self-worth and sense of purpose.

As employees, we innately want to feel a sense of purpose. Holiday recognition can help bring to light a valuable superstar who deserves to be recognized for his or her level of effort, which helps that individual feel like they know their path; they know why their role is important and they feel committed. Purpose is highly underrated! In fact, a recent article in Forbes highlighted just how important it can be in affecting retention and engagement efforts. “When companies generally and leaders specifically understand and live out their purpose, employees will self-select into the work environment that aligns with their values, mission and priorities. The results can be expansive and far-reaching, including increased employee engagement and loyalty.”²

The holiday season is often a time of reflection. The year-end gives us an opportunity to celebrate accomplishments, recognize individual and team successes, and express special thanks. Investing time and energy into employee recognition and gratitude can be paramount in positively impacting employee engagement and inspiring motivation for the new year.

¹ <https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/the-power-of-moments-chip-heath/1126606002>

² <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesbusinesscouncil/2022/06/22/employees-want-purpose-at-work-how-to-deliver-on-this-priority/?sh=48e5f9077b47>