

## Build a positive workplace culture by leveraging peer relationships.

Workplace culture, employee experience, diversity of workforce – these factors are converging to create new dynamics in our everyday work life. A common denominator for success across each of these is peer relationships, which can be fostered by peer recognition. As a major component of an overall recognition strategy, here's why peer-to-peer recognition can help support your company's business.



### Peer-to-peer recognition creates a sense of belonging, builds connections, and delivers a culture of trust and teamwork.

QualtricsXM 2020 Global Employee Experience Trends Report notes that one of the strongest drivers of employee engagement is a sense of belonging. In their report, they note that 73% of employees feel a sense of belonging - which is a good thing! Peer-to-peer recognition strategies help create this sense of belonging, because as noted in the report, "belonging is highly correlated to engagement. 20% of employees who feel they don't belong are engaged, vs. 91% of those who feel they do - that's 3.5x more."

On-the-job relationships help employees feel strongly connected to each other. It's been said that disconnection from peers is one of the three issues (lack of employee recognition, lack of transparency being the other two) "that are at the heart of substantive problems management often deal with," according to Forbes.<sup>1</sup> Team building has always been a part of the equation and peer recognition is a part of team building.

### Peer recognition and appreciation feed into a quality of workplace life.

According to a study by IDG<sup>2</sup>, employees with friends at work are more likely to be engaged than those who do not have friends at work, and 89% of employees felt work relationships are important to the quality of life. Recognition and appreciation feed into that. As well, peer-to-peer recognition can counterbalance and help mitigate/diminish the feelings of employee burnout that your teams may be experiencing at this moment in time.

In their book, "The 5 Languages of Appreciation in the Workplace," Gary Chapman and Paul White share the following list of why peer appreciation is so powerful:

Individuals know from personal experience the stress and demands their peers must deal with on a daily basis.

In many settings, there are far more peer interactions than manager-to-employee interactions.

Peers can sense the need for appreciation more quickly.

Happiness has been found to be closely correlated to connections shared with coworkers, especially within emerging generations.



## **Peer-to-peer recognition “recognizes” today’s workforce and its diverse needs.**

No matter what generation you might belong to, the underlying human need for appreciation is universal. With Gen Z making up around 27% of the workforce today, it’s vital to respond to and consider the values they hold to be important. For instance, Gen Z evaluate companies on the basis of their moral standard. If a company’s moral standard doesn’t line up to their own, there could be challenges. So if a company has a strong value system in place with a culture of appreciation and recognition, it’s fitting that Gen Z would find it appealing, since they have a strong need for connections; connections that are built through informal and formal recognition efforts.

Ellie Mae, a tech company, created a program called “Cheers for Peers” within their intranet to promote more peer-to-peer interaction, and offer teammates an easy-to-use tool for sharing thanks/talking about teammates’ impact on projects. According to the case study<sup>3</sup>, “Cheers for Peers had over 400 submissions in the first two months...You say ‘thank you’ to somebody, and if you take that extra effort and go to the home page and give somebody a shout-out, it’s like you’re putting your money where your mouth is... people really appreciate having that avenue.”

## **Today, recognition is more important than ever.**

Diversity in generations, ethnicities and workplace locations all feed the need for a solid recognition program to help with the unique challenge of building a culture of trust, solidarity, teamwork, and cohesion during stressful, uncertain times. Our experience demonstrates that ALL recognition plays a critical role in shaping high-performing cultures. By recognizing the people that support your business objectives and showing appreciation for their work, you make an investment not only in your team but also in the future of your organization. In return, when individuals and teams are recognized and valued for their contributions, they become invested in their manager, their peers, and their organization.

<sup>1</sup><https://www.forbes.com/sites/victorlipman/2017/02/01/3-reasons-employee-engagement-is-declining-and-how-managers-can-improve-it/?sh=6d5c74dc2dc1>

<sup>2</sup><https://www.idg.com/peer-relationships-in-the-workplace/>

<sup>3</sup><https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/hr-topics/benefits/pages/generation-z-and-millennials-seek-recognition-at-work.aspx>