



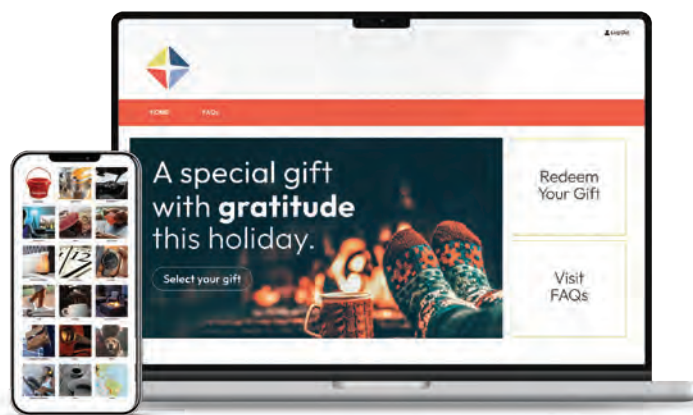
Rethinking Rewards as an *Experience*— Not Just a Transaction

As the holidays approach, many organizations are preparing to recognize their teams. The focus often centers on what employees will receive—points, gift cards, merchandise—but far less attention is paid to how they'll receive it. Yet it's the experience of redeeming a reward **that transforms a simple transaction into a powerful interaction**—one that deepens connection, reinforces culture, and sparks lasting engagement.

Too often, rewards are treated as transactions: something given, something received, end of story. But the most successful recognition programs are built on the idea that **the moment of recognition—and the act of redeeming a reward—should be an interaction**. It's a two-way exchange that affirms value, builds connection, and sparks emotion. And we know from both psychology and business outcomes: when people interact, impact grows.

That's why redemption is more than a checkout screen or a checkbox—it's a psychological touchpoint. When done well, it becomes an extension of the original recognition moment. It not only reinforces appreciation, but it also reshapes how people feel about their contributions and their company. And in a season already rich with sentiment and reflection, this emotional dimension matters more than ever.

Customer-experience research shows that touchpoints shape perception, influence behavior, and build loyalty. The same is true in the workplace. When employees engage meaningfully with recognition—especially in redeeming a reward—those moments drive engagement and strengthen culture. Just as a great customer journey creates brand advocates, **a thoughtful recognition journey creates connected, motivated employees.**



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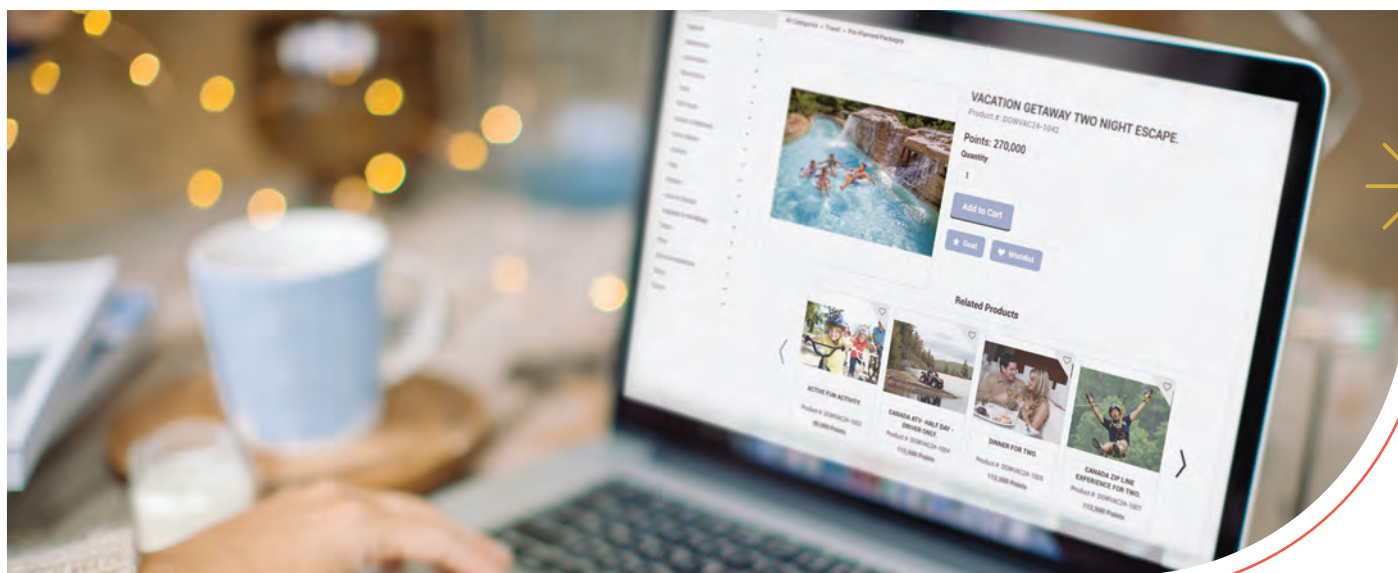
This shift—from rewards as **things** to rewards as **experiences**—unlocks a new level of engagement. It puts the employee in the driver's seat and makes the act of redeeming feel like a continuation of being seen, valued, and celebrated. It's no longer "something the company gave me." It becomes, "This is what I chose because of what I accomplished."

To deliver this kind of experience, consider three key strategies:

Enable the power of choice. One-size-fits-all rewards often fall flat. Empower employees with a wide selection that accommodates different tastes, cultures, and lifestyles. The ability to choose adds personalization and increases perceived value.

Create continuity. Recognition moments shouldn't end with a click. Extend the emotional arc by weaving in messages that connect the reward back to the accomplishment. Reinforce the "why" behind the "what."

Make it memorable. Consider how your platform or program can elevate the act of redeeming. Are there moments for employees to share their experience, how a reward was used, or who it benefited? Consider creating special curated packages and kits that add to a meaningful redemption experience.



As year-end approaches, we know you want to look for meaningful ways to say thank you. By rethinking how employees experience rewards—not just what they receive—you can make those **thank you moments** last well beyond the holidays. Because in the end, a reward isn't just a gift. It's a reflection of your culture, your values, and the relationship you're building with every person on your team.

