

Now is the most wonderful time of the year... to show appreciation!

Ahhh, the end of the year - Q4, the home sprint, time to take a breath. There's a natural cheer in the air and uplifted spirits with feelings of progress. You can just feel the positive energy. For many employees, the end of the year is synonymous with holidays and a time for reflection, giving, and sharing thanks across all areas of their lives - at home and at work.

For others, the holidays may be difficult; employees may feel added pressure to close sales, wrap up inventories, use budgets, and some may be faced with the general anxiety that the holiday season may bring.

In either case, now is the perfect time to pause and share appreciation with your teammates. The closing of the year gives us the opportunity to celebrate accomplishments, recognize individual and team successes, offer special thanks, and inspire motivation for the new year.

Here are some quick tips!

Make it a two-way conversation.

Take advantage of the holiday cheer and tie it back to the great accomplishments made by your team. A simple and impactful way to gather that information is to ASK. It seems simple, right? Ask for input on what your employees are most proud of, what should be celebrated (things big and small), and who impacted them most at the company. This could be done through 1:1 conversations or a simple survey. A year is a long time; it's difficult to keep track of all individual and team accomplishments. Asking the team creates unity amongst the group and a chance for each employee to individually reflect and recognize the positives along the way. And, to ensure they feel their voice is being heard.

Balance your recognition efforts between business and culture.

To maintain strong employee engagement, it's important to balance recognition efforts between your teams' business accomplishments and the wins your employees experience every day that exemplify your culture. A culture of customer service or experience presents itself through the individuals who best reflect those pillars through their actions and words. This is equally important to recognize as much as business outcomes. The Disney Institute said it well: "If I do something well, and I am recognized for it, then I will likely feel good about that behavior and tend to repeat it ... and I can also be reasonably sure that it was the correct behavior because it was reinforced."¹

Be inclusive.

Eric Peterson, a diversity and inclusion trainer says, "the goal of most end-of-year celebrations is to show appreciation for employees. Leaders who want to be inclusive will focus on making workers feel that they belong and that their presence is valued."² It's okay to use a one-to-many recognition campaign to reach your employee population around the end of the year holiday season - this is just one of the approaches in a comprehensive recognition strategy. Coupled with manager-to-peer and peer-to-peer recognition, an inclusive (and sincere) message of thanks is key to ensuring you include everyone. Your employees need to know they are valued for their efforts. Show them you care and inspire them to experience an amazing 2022!

¹ <https://www.disneyinstitute.com/blog/employee-recognition-101-celebrating-things-that-really-matter/>

² <https://www.shrm.org/hr-today/news/hr-magazine/1118/pages/how-to-make-holiday-celebrations-more-inclusive.aspx>