

# WHERE DO WE GO IN 2023?

## Recognition priorities for the new year and beyond.

2022 had a couple of road bumps – from quiet quitting to the great resignation - those real-life scenarios emerged, highlighting the need for strategies to retain employees. This is top of mind for us and it's no surprise that at Incentive Services, we look at life through the lens of “employee-first.” And with that lens, we see a clear path to success through long-term recognition strategies.



Here are some considerations to make 2023 your teams' best year ever.

### Lead, not follow, into creating a culture of belonging, fellowship, and camaraderie.

Be a leader and start it off right with an effective recognition strategy that creates a sense of belonging. Recognition done right conveys to employees that they are seen, heard, and that their contributions are acknowledged and valued. A recent Qualtrics survey on Employee Experience discovered that belonging was one of the strongest drivers of employee engagement. A “sense of belonging” is one of those factors that top the list of why people quit or stay.

### Meaningful managers make meaningful relationships.

Much has been written about the role managers play to ensure a positive employee experience. The recognition from manager to teams should be established as routine; personalized, authentic, and consistent. Respect the institution of recognition and meaningful relationships will spark. In a classic HBR article titled “What great managers do to engage employees,” the authors cite “When managers help employees grow, and develop through their strengths, they are more than twice as likely to engage their team members.”<sup>1</sup> Follow that up with a recognition routine and your teams will undoubtedly thrive.



Recognition doesn't need to be monetary.  
“You thank them for what they did, you let them know how that was meaningful, and the difference that was made because of their actions.”<sup>2</sup>



## Measure what matters to make your recognition strategy prove its worth.

One of the most critical components of transforming a recognition program into a recognition strategy is around measurement – and being able to make decisions based on data rather than gut. There are many reasons why measurements matter for a recognition strategy, and we're often surprised when clients don't realize the full potential for putting numbers behind actions.

- Measures that matter allow you to make informed decisions for continuous improvement
- The tangible data you capture is critical to help gain executive support and buy in
- Benchmarking against industry best practices and correlating your program results to your employee engagement and retention rates is the tip of the iceberg
- Tracking these measures allows you to understand where your investment is going and the return

## Recognition to engender trust.

Paul J. Zak, a professor and neuroscience researcher, found that there's a correlation between recognition and trust; not only from the perspective of building long-term engagement, but also as it relates to company performance. We talk about measures that matter and "return on trust" as a measure is important in the big picture. All it takes is collaboration, commitment, and connection.

Richard Edelman, whose company runs an annual Trust Barometer study, writes that employers need to "demonstrate trust in employees to earn their trust in return. Those employees who feel trusted by their CEO exhibit twice as much trust in their employer (92% vs. 46%). That trust is rewarded by greater loyalty, engagement, willingness to recommend, and commitment to excellence."<sup>3</sup>

The future is bright! ★ ★ ★

2023 will be the year of an amazing race to retain teams, embrace an "employee first" culture, and create the environment to thrive – and it all starts with a comprehensive, aligned and integrated recognition strategy.

<sup>1</sup> <https://hbr.org/2015/04/what-great-managers-do-to-engage-employees>

<sup>2</sup> <https://weoc.ca/resources/knowledgebase/operations/trust-and-recognition-necessary-to-keeping-employees/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.edelman.com/trust/2022-trust-barometer/special-report-trust-workplace/my-employer-last-one-standing>