



# 2026

## Employee appreciation days

# Intentional recognition leads to lasting engagement

Consider this calendar as a habit builder to embed a culture of recognition. Recognizing any holiday can be an opportunity to celebrate your people—including their beliefs, interests and personal fulfillment areas. By celebrating your teams and their contributions, it reinforces a shared purpose, fosters a sense of belonging and leads to long-term loyalty.

## Prioritize initiatives that reflect your team culture

This calendar isn't exhaustive. There are many appreciation days and observances you can choose to honor. Use it as a starting point to elevate your employee recognition and well-being initiatives, and keep momentum year-round.



### SHOW GRATITUDE TO ALL YOUR AUDIENCES

We highlight several industry- and role-specific celebrations to expand the impact you can make. Take inspiration to thank specific teams, partners and clients.

# JAN

2026

## OBSERVANCES

National Mentoring Month

National Soup Month

National Blood Donor Month

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
28	29	30	31	1 New Year's Day	2 World Introvert Day	3 International Mind-Body Wellness Day
4 National Trivia Day	5	6	7	8	9	10
11 International Thank You Day	12 National Clean Off Your Desk Day	13	14	15	16	17 Customer Service Day
18	19 Martin Luther King Jr. Day	20	21	22	23 National Handwriting Day	24
25	26 Better Business Communication Day	27	28	29	30 National Fun at Work Day	31

### Customer Service Day | January 17

It's likely fair to say that each of your teams has an impact on earning happy customers. But when is the last time you specifically celebrated your frontline teams, inclusive of all customer-facing team members? Consider giving them a handwritten note or digital recognition thanking them for serving as the face of your brand.



# FEB

2026

## OBSERVANCES

Black History Month

National Cancer Prevention Month

American Heart Month

International Boost Self-Esteem Month

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> Groundhog Job Shadow Day International Networking Week (2-8)	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>8</b> Big Game Sunday	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> International Day of Women & Girls in Science	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> National Entrepreneurship Week (14-21) Valentine's Day
<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> Random Acts of Kindness Day Mardi Gras	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> National Leadership Day	<b>21</b>
<b>22</b> National Engineers Week (22-28)	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>

### National Leadership Day | February 20

Put renewed focus on leadership development. Connect emerging leaders with experienced managers and supervisors for a day of job shadowing that reveals key leadership skills like emotional intelligence. Then use a pulse survey to measure the demand for ongoing mentoring opportunities.



# MAR

2026

## OBSERVANCES

National Nutrition Month

American Red Cross Month

Women's History Month

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> National Employee Appreciation Week (2-6)	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> National Employee Appreciation Day National Day of Unplugging	<b>7</b>
<b>8</b> International Women's Day Daylight Saving (begins)	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> National Pack Your Lunch Day	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> National Freelancers Day	<b>14</b>
<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> Neurodiversity Celebration Week (17-23) St. Patrick's Day	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> International Client's Day	<b>20</b> Spring (begins) International Day of Happiness	<b>21</b>
<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>

### National Employee Appreciation Day | March 6

Encourage teams to say thanks via peer recognitions compiled in a public feed. Select a few recognitions at random to share in an automated communication the following week. It not only keeps the conversation going, but it also broadens the impact a single recognition can make.



# APR

2026

## OBSERVANCES

National Volunteer Month

International Customer Loyalty Month

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
29	30	31	1 April Fools' Day National Walking Day	2	3	4
5 Easter	6	7 World Health Day	8	9	10 Global Work From Home Day	11 National Pet Day National Marketing Operations Appreciation Day
12	13	14	15 Tax Day	16	17	18
19 Administrative Professionals Week (19-25) National Volunteer Week (19-25)	20	21 World Creativity Day	22 Earth Day Administrative Professionals Day	23	24	25
26	27	28 Global Pay It Forward Day	29 National Supply Chain Day	30	1	2

### Earth Day | April 22

Unite your people with a shared purpose—even if you're a hybrid team. Create an organization-wide challenge that encourages team members to clean up their local community with a "Trash Bash" incentive. The person who picks up the most trash and shares a photo wins a prize or reward. This can easily scale into a coordinated group give-back.



# MAY

2026

## OBSERVANCES

Mental Health Awareness Month

Small Business Month

Global Employee Health and Fitness Month

Better Sleep Month

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
26	27	28	29	30	1 International Workers' Day	2
3 World Laughter Day Public Service Recognition Week (3-9)	4	5 Cinco de Mayo National Teacher Appreciation Day	6 National Skilled Trades Day	7 World Password Day	8	9
10 National Small Business Day Mother's Day	11	12	13 National Night Shift Workers Day	14	15 National Bike to Work Day	16
17	18	19	20 International HR Day	21	22	23
24	25 Memorial Day	26	27	28	29	30
31 Web Designer Day	1	2	3	4	5	6

### International HR Day | May 20

Celebrate your own hard work! HR teams champion the employee experience, including the days of appreciation and observances included in this calendar. Use your team channel or chat space to share your proudest achievement from the past year and give peers visibility into your work. Your work is vital to a strong culture!



# JUN

2026

## OBSERVANCES

National Safety Month

Pride Month

Great Outdoors Month

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
31	1 Global Day of Parents National CPR & AED Awareness Week (1-7)	2	3 World Bicycle Day	4	5 World Environment Day Doughnut Day	6
7 National Cancer Survivors Day	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19 Juneteenth	20
21 International Yoga Day Father's Day Summer (begins)	22	23 National Hydration Day	24	25	26	27 National Bingo Day
28	29	30 National Social Media Day	1	2	3	4

### Juneteenth | June 19

Use "Emancipation Day" as a chance to engage all team members in discussion around what inclusion looks and feels like at your organization while also centering Black perspectives. Consider hosting a team-member led panel discussion followed by a resource that peers can post in their workspaces.



# JUL

2026

## OBSERVANCES

Social Wellness Month

Disability Pride Month

Parks & Recreation Month

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
28	29	30	1 National Postal Workers Day	2	3	4 U.S. Independence Day
5	6	7 World Chocolate Day	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17 Park and Recreation Professionals Day	18 World Listening Day
19 National Ice Cream Day	20	21	22 World Brain Day	23	24 International Self-Care Day	25
26	27	28	29	30 National Intern Day	31	1

### National Intern Day | July 30

Celebrate interns! Plan a mentorship day where they can set aside their normal responsibilities for a day dedicated to learning and development (L&D). Ideas include hosting a small group with an executive, where they can ask questions and offer insights, or designing a sample individual development plan (IDP) that you use with full-time employees. The goal is to make L&D fun while highlighting career opportunities at your organization.



# AUG

2026

## OBSERVANCES

National Immunization Awareness Month

Black Business Month

National Wellness Month

National Back to School Month

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
26	27	28	29	30	31	1 Start-Up Day Across America
2 National Friendship Day	3	4 National Chocolate Chip Cookie Day	5	6	7	8
9 International Coworking Day	10	11	12	13 Left-Handers Day	14 National Financial Awareness Day	15 National Relaxation Day
16	17 National Nonprofit Day	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26 Women's Equality Day	27	28	29
30	31	1	2	3	4	5

### National Friendship Day | August 2

Show appreciation for work friendships! Close peers not only offer an emotional outlet, but they also increase employee engagement and company loyalty. Challenge team members to nominate a coworker for demonstrating your core values. Randomly select winners and make a donation on their behalf to a local business (a bonus tie-in to Black Business Month).



# SEP

2026

## OBSERVANCES

Intergeneration Month

Yoga Awareness Month

Global Company Culture Month

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
30	31	1	2 Global Talent Acquisition Day	3	4	5 Franchise Appreciation Day
6	7 Labor Day	8	9	10 Swap Ideas Day	11 National 401(k) Day	12
13	14	15 National I.T. Professionals Day	16 Working Parents Day	17 Citizenship Day	18	19
20	21 World Gratitude Day	22 Fall (begins) American Business Women's Day	23 National Field Marketers Day	24	25	26
27	28	29 World Heart Day National Coffee Day	30	1	2	3

### Working Parents Day | September 16

Foster dialogue on what it's like to integrate work and personal responsibilities. Create an online affinity group for parents to share their experiences and tips. The space can be used as frequently as parents desire. Digital affinity and interest groups are great for culture-building.



# OCT

2026

## OBSERVANCES

Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Emotional Wellness Month

National Disability Employment Awareness Month

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
27	28	29	30	1 International Coffee Day International Music Day	2	3
4	5 World Teachers' Day Customer Service Week (5-9)	6	7 World Financial Planning Day	8	9	10 World Mental Health Day
11	12	13	14 National Dessert Day	15	16 National Boss Day	17
18	19 National Parenting Week (19-23)	20 Talent Transformation Day	21	22	23	24
25	26	27 National Mentoring Day	28 National First Responders Day National Immigrants Day	29	30	31

### Customer Service Week | October 5–9

Make the full week a “people-first celebration.” Recognize the role each team member plays in creating standout customer experiences, whether they’re a frontline worker or not. It’s a great time to send a pulse survey and measure employee satisfaction, host a remote-friendly meditation session or offer career development tools.



# NOV

2026

## OBSERVANCES

Adoption Awareness Month

National Philanthropy Month

National Family Literacy Monthly

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
<b>1</b> Daylight Saving (ends)	<b>2</b> National Diabetes Education Week (2-8)	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> National Stress Awareness Day Project Management Day	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> International Accounting Day	<b>11</b> Veteran's Day	<b>12</b> National Happy Hour Day	<b>13</b> World Kindness Day	<b>14</b>
<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> National Hiking Day	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>22</b>	<b>23</b> National Brand Day	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b> Thanksgiving	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> Small Business Saturday
<b>29</b>	<b>30</b> Cyber Monday	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>

### World Kindness Day | November 13

“Be kind” is a core value to live by, whether it’s your brand value or not. You can’t create a sense of belonging without it. Use peer recognition as a tool to honor the day. Set expectations through leaders’ examples, encouraging managers to recognize their team with group recognition.



# DEC

2026

## OBSERVANCES

Write a Friend Month

National Giving Month

Universal Human Rights Month

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
29	30	1 World AIDS Day Giving Tuesday	2	3	4 Extraordinary Work Team Recognition Day Hanukkah (starts)	5 International Volunteer Day
6	7	8	9	10	11 National Salesperson Day	12 Hanukkah (ends)
13	14	15	16	17	18 National Ugly Sweater Day	19
20	21 Winter (begins)	22	23	24 Christmas Eve	25 Christmas Day	26 National Thank You Note Day Kwanzaa (starts)
27 National Call a Friend Day	28	29	30	31	1	2

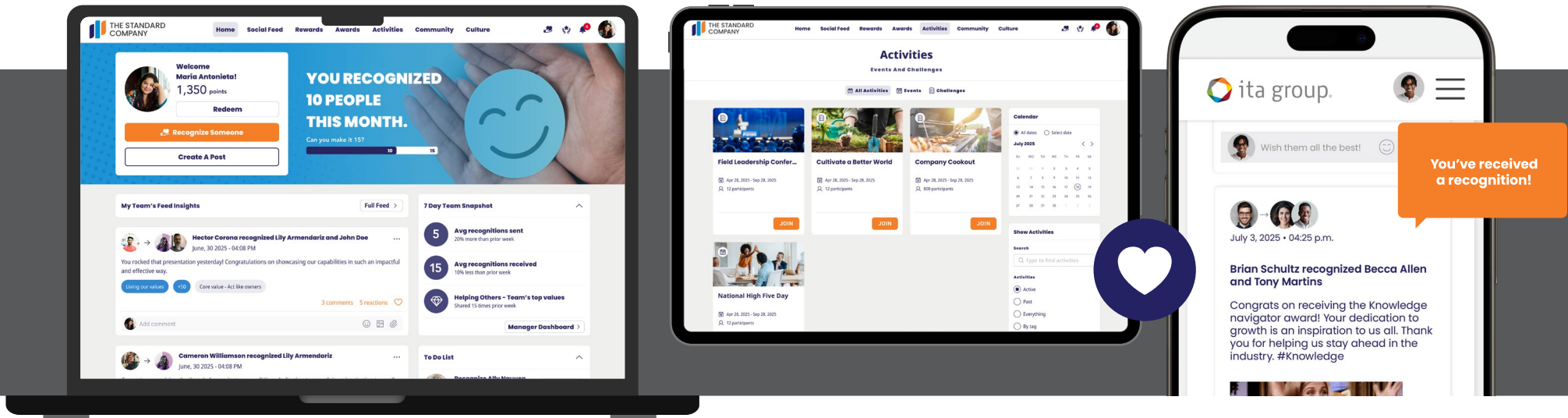
### International Volunteer Day | December 5

Coordinate meaningful give-back opportunities. You can work with established nonprofit partners or let team members coordinate small groups at local nonprofits. Just remember to measure your impact and communicate it back to team members. Set a goal number of total volunteer hours to motivate team members to participate.



# Turn work culture into measurable successes

Employee recognition and well-being initiatives aren't just for boosting team morale. They're also trackable indicators of the health of your organization's culture.



## Demo our employee recognition and rewards software

ITA Group's Cooleaf platform (and mobile app) creates genuine moments of appreciation, whether your workforce is hybrid, global or always on the move. The software ensures recognition happens in the moment to support increased engagement and sense of purpose. The demo explains the benefits of built-in tools like recognition, incentives, social community building, activities and employee listening/pulse surveys.

Let's talk—[itagroup.com](https://www.itagroup.com)

