



Revitalizing your employee recognition experience

How to improve impact through personalization

Recognition influences employee sentiment

No matter when, how and where work happens, the ability to recognize any worker, anywhere is an employee expectation.

Employees who are highly satisfied with recognition are more likely to feel satisfied with their organization, believe their employer is committed to keeping them and recommend their workplace to others. In a competitive talent market, those attitudes matter.



Employees who don't feel adequately recognized
are 2x as likely to say they'll quit in the next year

—GALLUP

Increased recognition spend doesn't guarantee greater impact

Forrester reports budgets for recognition programs are up to 2% of total compensation for the most committed organizations. But if that spend is put toward a one-size-fits-all approach, even well-funded recognition programs underperform. And those that fail to invest properly in recognition risk missing out on attracting and retaining talent.

Recognition programs often resonate the least with remote and frontline teams. These employees are at a disadvantage because it can be harder to observe and acknowledge their efforts when they go above and beyond.

Program clarity creates employee buy-in

When work gets rewarded, people notice. But some employees might start to ask: "Why not me?" For a recognition program to be meaningful, employees must believe in its intent.

AVAILABILITY

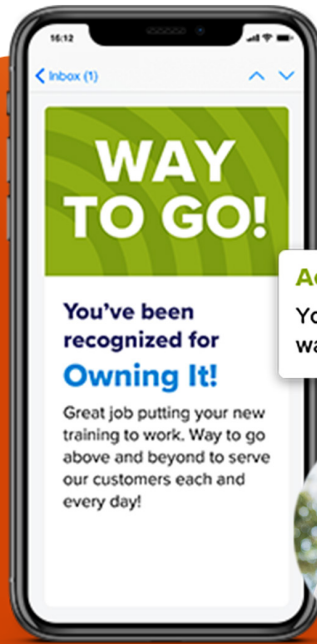
Can every employee earn the opportunity to be recognized, irrespective of role or location?

UNDERSTANDING

Are eligibility, criteria and processes for earning recognition clearly communicated to all employees?

FAIRNESS

Are steps taken to remove bias from recognition opportunities and ensure equitable access?



Happy 5th Workaversary!

Thanks for all you do day in and day out! You are an invaluable part of our team.

Accountability

Your expertise on our new product was really helpful today. You rock!



EMPLOYEES WHO RECEIVE FULFILLING, INDIVIDUALIZED & AUTHENTIC RECOGNITION AT WORK ARE

5x

as likely to feel connected to their work culture, and ...

4x

as likely to be engaged

—GALLUP

Perceived inequity hinders adoption and issuance

Employees who question the fairness of the recognition process are voicing these concerns. In response, many organizations make bias mitigation a priority. Equitable recognition is both an employee expectation and a business priority. When recognition is consistent, clearly understood and fair, it reinforces three critical cultural behaviors: showing appreciation for effort, recognizing contributions in meaningful ways and building trust in leadership intent. **So how do we improve employee perceptions of recognition processes and programs?**

All employees seek recognition, regardless of environment

Employee attitudes toward recognition are heavily influenced by job function, work location and interpersonal relationships among peers and leaders. With more hybrid and remote jobs available, companies must focus on improving recognition availability for *all* workers.

Traditionally under-recognized workers

Improving equity for under-recognized employees requires more than expanding access to tools. Managers must consistently practice appreciation and recognition in ways that build trust, regardless of where work happens.

REMOTE, DESK-BASED EMPLOYEES

Increased flexibility in where and when work is completed is an employee win. But hybrid, remote and deskless work can reduce visibility into day-to-day contributions, ultimately exacerbating existing issues (e.g; trust in recognition and rewards programs).

DESKLESS EMPLOYEES

Communicating with on-the-go workers forces employers to rethink accessibility and workflow nuance. If your engagement strategies rely heavily on desktop engagement or routine check-ins online, your program won't resonate or feel equitable. Instead, it's an opportunity to align with how deskless workers already collaborate with peers.

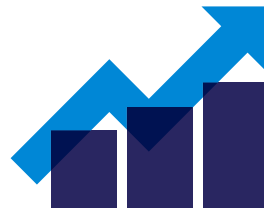


Use journey mapping to revamp employee recognition

Journey mapping gives you a comprehensive idea of what matters, and what doesn't, to employees in their recognition experiences. First, understand the recognition journey and perceptions of specific employee segments.

SURVEY EMPLOYEES

1. Collect both **qualitative and quantitative** feedback to understand when, how and why these workers are currently recognized.
2. Ask about both informal and formal recognition employees receive from their leaders and peers. Breakroom shout-outs, platform-based spotlights and performance-based rewards can all factor into the overall recognition experience.
3. Seek sentiment around employee recognition experiences currently happening within your organization but don't forget to dig into employees' prior experiences, too.



Quantitative feedback helps you know how employees feel.

Qualitative feedback helps you uncover why they feel that way—and what to do about it.



You want to learn

- > Current recognition experiences that meaningfully convey your company's appreciation
- > Factors contributing to poor recognition experiences
- > Ideas for new types of recognition that could resonate more effectively based on where your employees work

COLLECT FEEDBACK BEYOND SURVEYS

Survey tools are a starting point to uncover consistent themes around employee perception. But qualitative methods like focus groups, interviews, meetings with local-level leaders and site visits will contextualize perceptions. The stories that direct feedback provides can better illuminate how to improve rewards and recognition within your organization.

Identify employee personas to learn motivators and pain points

Persona development is an important next step in your strategy. It prevents you from overgeneralizing employee experiences and needs.

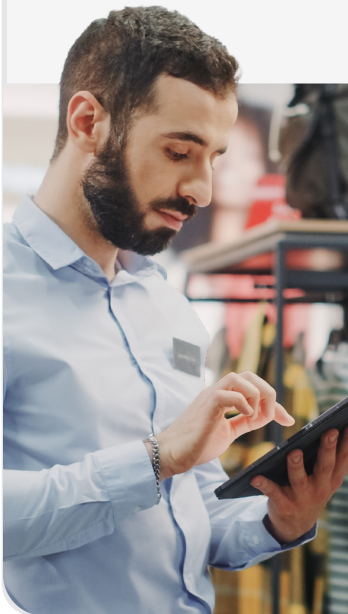
Craft a persona for an employee segment that includes specifics about their work experience (e.g., function, location, motivations and pain points). Outline how these attributes should guide why, when and how similar employees should earn recognition and rewards.

DESKLESS RETAIL ASSOCIATE

Salary:
\$14–19/hour

Work location:
Retail store

*Sample employee
persona*



MOTIVATIONS

- > Public recognition in front of peers, such as on radio headsets
- > Individual rewards for going above and beyond
- > Helping peers
- > Being knowledgeable for customers

COMMON QUESTIONS

- > Can I send recognition outside of my break time?
- > Can a customer recognize me?
- > What do I need to do to earn associate of the month/quarter?
- > What do I get from being recognized?
- > How do I really impact the store goals, and do I receive a reward if we achieve them?

PAIN POINTS

- > Lacks access to technology to send/receive recognition
- > Works a shift-based schedule, which limits team connection
- > Doesn't understand store goals/metrics and how they relate to them

PROGRAM FEATURES

Formal

- > Platform with e-cards that can be sent from a kiosk in a shared breakroom
- > Associate of the month/quarter nomination-based recognition

Informal

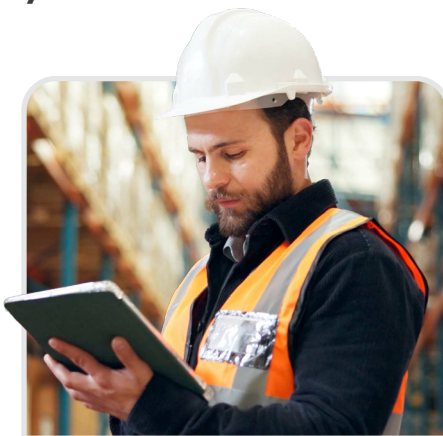
- > Peer and manager shout-outs on radio headsets
- > Food-based rewards and swag in breakroom

Effective recognition journeys ensure appreciation feels genuine, recognition feels relevant and trust is reinforced through clarity and follow-through. But personalization doesn't have to mean endless customization. Personas spot shared needs, motivators and barriers, so brands can create more relevant recognition experiences.

Use segmentation to improve relevance and impact

Group personas into segments according to similarities in how, when and why they should be recognized. For example, while the job functions of various types of deskless workers differ, their work environment and motivations are aligned. Many organizations need more than just segmented tactics. They need a consistent framework that ensures appreciation, recognition and trust shows up across every segment, role and experience.

Segmenting helps streamline the number of personalized recognition experiences you offer.



SEGMENT 1 DESKLESS INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTORS

Role types

- > Retail associates
- > Warehouse workers
- > Production staff

Personalized strategies

- > Spot recognition
- > Print communications and environmental branding
- > Team-based awards
- > On-site swag



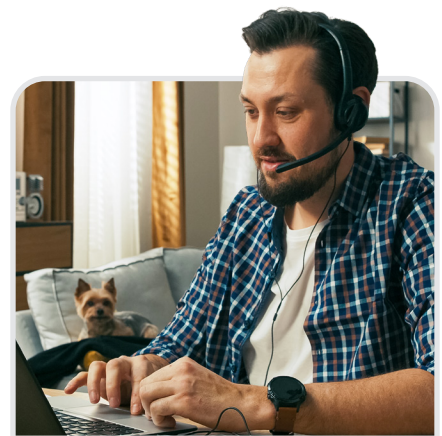
SEGMENT 2 ON-SITE DESK-BASED WORKERS

Role types

- > HQ-based individual contributors
- > People managers (HQ + retail + warehouse)

Personalized strategies

- > Recognition and rewards platform
- > Environmental branding
- > Combination of discretionary and performance-based recognition criteria



SEGMENT 3 REMOTE DESK-BASED WORKERS

Role types

- > Corporate
- > Field sales

Personalized strategies

- > Recognition and rewards platform
- > Home-based mailings with program communications and swag
- > Video-based promotional messaging

Create your own employee segments

Although your goal is to consolidate personas into common segments for program development, hold on to the full range of personas. Share these details with managers as a tool to help build empathy. Encourage leaders to explore how they can best support the various worker types and empower them to acknowledge individual contributions in personally relevant ways. Sustained recognition success comes from reinforcing the same core behaviors over time, equipping leaders to consistently show appreciation, recognize contributions and build trust as programs scale and evolve.

Personalize recognition experiences

DATA AVAILABILITY

Do you have the basic quantitative information available to facilitate segmentation based on job function, work location, program eligibility, etc.?

UNDERSTANDING OF ROOT CAUSES

Have you conducted qualitative research to “read between the lines” of survey data? What can you discover about underlying causes of friction and personalization expectations?

CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT

Is your journey map for implementation clear? Which segment(s) will you launch first, and how will you expand the program over time?



CLIENT SUCCESS STORY

Modernizing service awards through personalization

Challenge

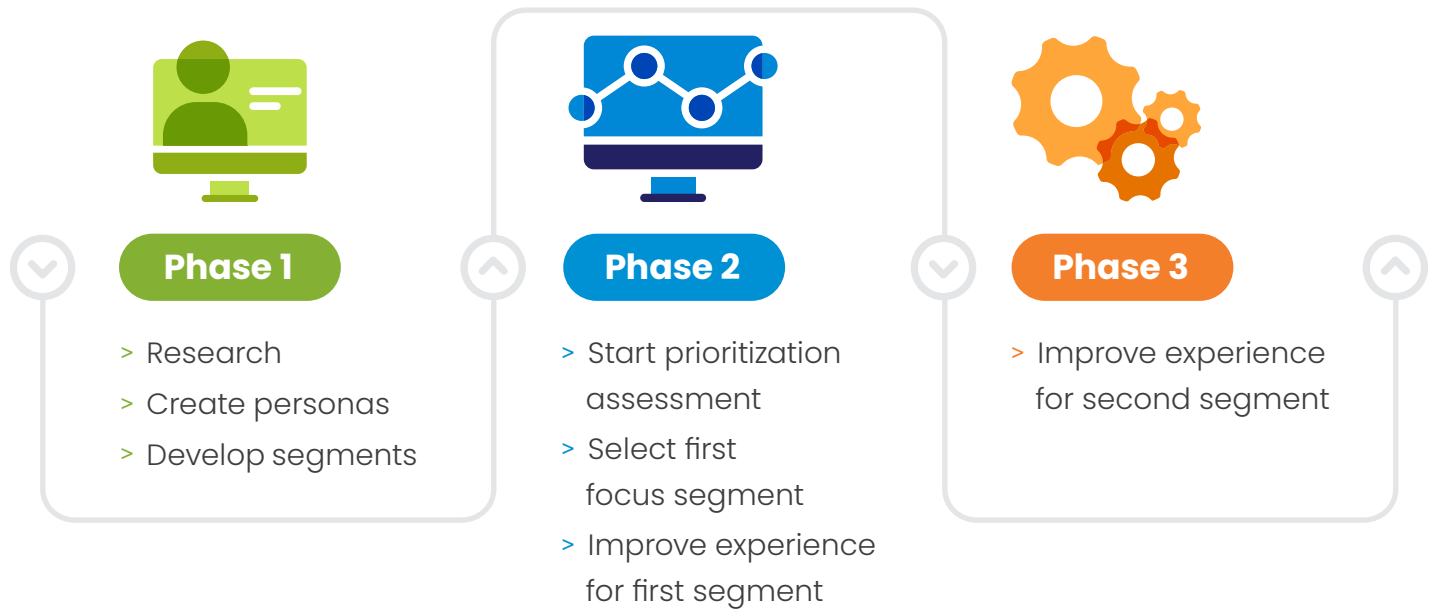
Tenure-based recognition is common within nearly all organizations. But research showed us that a traditional program recognizing tenure with commemorative pins was misaligned with the motivations of an employee segment comprised of customer-oriented achievers. For these deskless workers, what mattered was knowing that they were doing a good job because they'd see the same customers continue to return to their shop, and even ask for them by name.

Solution

We created a more relevant program tied to workers' ability to retain customers. We traded that five-year pin for the opportunity to earn higher-end tools of their trade, a status symbol that could also improve service. It was a swap that showed real results in satisfaction all around.

Sustain momentum with a phased launch

Your research, persona creation and segmentation exercises will help you identify which areas of your workforce are most in need of a revamped recognition strategy. As you see success with your initial implementation, shift toward improving the recognition experience for your next priority segment. Don't forget to regroup with each segment after your changes are in place. This process should be iterative and evolve as you collect feedback.



Modernize your recognition program

In matters of recognition, perception is reality. Great leaders must remain open to hearing when their employees are unsatisfied by current offerings or believe they've been overlooked by a biased process. Failure to seek and act on feedback puts you at risk of losing high performers.

When recognition systems are designed to intentionally reinforce appreciation, recognition and trust, organizations move from one-off initiatives to a sustainable culture. Refreshing or revamping recognition programs opens an opportunity to engage workers across roles, geographies and levels. Segmenting helps ensure the solutions you design are a hit with each of them, no matter where they work or what job they do.

Prove the business impact of your recognition investment

1

LISTEN

Ask your people what's working and what's not. Employee willingness to share signals openness to co-create a more fulfilling experience. The feedback will kick-start your discovery process and should be embedded into the program to ensure the strategies you implement continue to meet their needs.

2

ACTIVATE

Prioritize and act on what you hear to experiment with new and different ways of recognizing and rewarding various workforce segments. This should involve adjusting reasons for recognition, how you increase awareness and excitement for various recognition experiences, and the opportunities themselves.

3

OPTIMIZE

Continue to source data to strengthen employee recognition experiences. Look for opportunities to proactively engage leadership to recognize people on a personal level. Measure the organizational impact of the changes you're making by tracking trends in retention, eNPS, profitability and customer experience outcomes to validate investments in targeted segments.