

# 15 Easy Ways to Recognize, Reward Your Employees



## 15 Easy Ways to Recognize, Reward Your Employees

Now more than ever, employers are seeing how important it is to keep their staff happy and motivated at work. It just makes good business sense – satisfied, engaged employees work harder, produce better work and stick around longer.

Not to mention, in this tight labor market, companies are having to go the extra mile to hang on to their best employees. With unemployment at a near record low and more open positions than candidates to fill them, replacing departing employees can be an overwhelming challenge.

---

## Getting them to stay

Instead of taking their chances in the war for talent, many companies are opting to focus on ways to convince their best employees to stay put. And the keys to that endeavor? Rewards and recognition.

Now, we're not talking about the occasional "good job" or free donuts in the breakroom – workers today want much more than that. To really feel connected to their companies, employees need

## Recognition the right way

constant feedback and specific recognition for their hard work. They want enjoyable, well thought out rewards programs that show they're valued – anything less could push them right out the door.

Survey after survey has shown that, while raises and bonuses are good motivators, recognition and rewards are even more powerful. Money only goes so far if employees are miserable at work every day. It's a revamp of company culture that'll really make employees feel appreciated and get them to stay.

The great thing about recognition is it costs nothing and takes very little time to let employees know they're doing excellent work. When used appropriately, praise allows staff to know what exactly they're doing right – so they can keep doing it – and that management has noticed and appreciated all their effort.

But, believe it or not, there are some common mistakes that can make recognition ineffective. Praising employees too much or being nonspecific won't be helpful.



Here are some key strategies for managers who want to boost their recognition efforts:

1. ***Thank employees after completing a particularly difficult or tedious assignment.*** It may seem insignificant, but a “thank you” can really go a long way. Employees aren’t often thanked in the workplace, because the effort they put in can just seem like part of their job. Turn this around and show your appreciation when you notice someone working longer days to finish a tough project or going out of their way to help a team member.
2. ***Be specific in your praise.*** While the sentiment behind “good job” is nice, it won’t be that useful to your employees. It’s important to let them know specifically what they did that made you happy with their work, so they can do it again. For example, if they always turn in quality work on time, praise them for being reliable and always hitting deadlines.



3. **Recognize your people in the moment.** Praise loses some of its meaning if you wait a while to let an employee know they performed well. Immediate feedback is always the most effective. When you see workers going above and beyond, let them know right then and there you appreciate what they're doing. This way, they're more likely to remember exactly what they did and repeat the performance.
4. **Don't use praise too frequently.** The effect of recognition will wear off quickly if you start complimenting employees on everything they do. To avoid this, it's a good idea to save your praise for truly excellent work. This could also inspire good employees to become even better.
5. **Use trust to recognize employees.** Nothing tells employees you're pleased with their performance like trusting them with more responsibility. This is a very tangible way to show your employees they've done excellent work and they're valued members of the team.



6. **Encourage employees to recognize each other.** Praise from managers isn't the only thing employees crave. Compliments from co-workers can also go a long way. By encouraging your staff to recognize each other, comradery and trust will naturally start to form.

For example, Kaitlyn Uden, HR manager at Parkland College, started a “Kudos for Colleagues” program. Each month, she has employees fill out compliment cards about each other, calling attention to those who did a great job. She never sees fewer than 40 people participating each time.

7. **Host an awards ceremony.** Here's a more fun spin on employee recognition: make it into an event. Giving out personalized awards will highlight everyone's strengths and let employees know what their colleagues have accomplished.

Harris Grayman, senior VP of people and culture at UBM Technology, started The LOOT Awards (League of Overachieving Talent). This program allows anyone at the company to nominate an employee if they witness extraordinary performance or anything pro-culture. Then, winners are given Looties for the whole company to see.

8. ***Recognize accomplishments outside of work.*** A great touch to any recognition program is celebrating employees' achievements outside of the workplace. By congratulating your people on milestones like birthdays, getting married or having a baby, you'll create a caring and supportive work environment.

---

## Rewards people want

While employee recognition is a big part of boosting engagement and motivation, rewards are just as important. Encouraging and organizing fun activities for your employees can drastically reduce burnout and boredom at work.

Better yet, rewards programs don't have to be expensive or flashy to be effective. Little perks or quick activities can be enough to give employees some much needed time to relax and recharge.



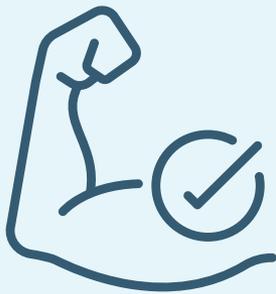
Here are some simple, effective rewards any employer can implement:

9. ***Flex time.*** This is one of the hottest perks right now and can cost employers little to no money to implement. If your employees' jobs can be done remotely, letting them work from home occasionally will be much appreciated. If workers have to be in the office to do their jobs, consider allowing flexible hours. Letting people have control over their work schedules will make things like personal appointments and childcare a lot easier.
10. ***Added vacation time.*** Another much appreciated reward is more PTO. If a flex time benefit isn't an option, giving employees an extra vacation day or two can help when they need to take time off for errands and appointments, allowing more time for an actual vacation. It's important that with added PTO comes encouragement from management to use it, as many employees are reluctant to actually take time off.



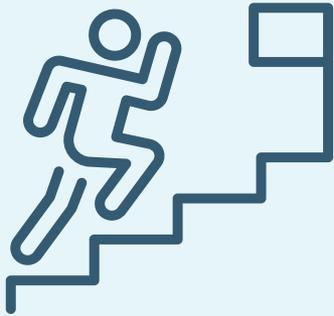
Some companies get creative with vacation time, too. Jade Palmieri, HR generalist at Millington Bank, started a program which gives employees extra PTO specifically to use for volunteering. This allows employees to be excused from work in order to help a cause they feel passionate about.

11. **Organized social events.** What employee wouldn't love to take a break for an hour or so and chit chat with co-workers? Putting together a party, lunch or happy hour is a great, simple way to get people out of the office and socializing with each other. Events like these will give employees some time to recharge and strengthen relationships between team members.
12. **On-site relaxation.** Getting employees out of the office for a break isn't something you can do every day, so it's a good idea to have a designated space for unwinding. It can be as simple as a room with some couches and snacks, as long as it's a place employees can go when they need to get away from their desks for a few minutes.



Employers willing to spend more might consider bringing yoga instructors or masseuses into the office to really help employees relax. Lisette Malarchik, HR manager at Graphik Dimensions, implemented Meditation Mondays and Massage Fridays to help her employees unwind during particularly stressful times.

13. ***Bring your dog to work day.*** Another popular, low-cost perk right now is pet-friendly workplaces. Allowing employees to bring their furry friends into the office can help everyone de-stress. This can also be helpful to workers who can't find a pet sitter.
14. ***Wellness activities.*** Physically active, healthy employees are usually happier ones. While there are a lot of fancy, costly wellness programs out there, it doesn't take much to get people moving. Doing quick exercises every day or encouraging walks around the building can be enough to get your employees feeling better, both mentally and physically.



Elizabeth Brady, wellness coordinator for Easy Media, started leading employees in daily exercises right before lunch. Activities ranged from stretching to plank challenges to yoga, and soon everyone was looking forward to each day's exercise.

15. ***Fun and games.*** Another go-to stress reliever is in-office games. It can be something simple like busting out Monopoly or Trivial Pursuit on a Friday afternoon, or something more complex, like a company field day.

Jessica Garcia, HR business partner for Rackspace, organized a family-inclusive field day for her company. Events included arts and crafts, tug of war and soccer games. Employees all brought food for a fun potluck lunch.

Access our helpful tools, articles  
and other HR essentials at  
[www.HRMorning.com](http://www.HRMorning.com)

© 2020 HRMorning  
All rights reserved.  
370 Technology Drive  
Malvern, PA 19355  
800-220-5000

