

workhuman\*

# 5 Ways Leaders Can Amplify Employee Wellbeing With Recognition

FINDINGS FROM A GALLUP-WORKHUMAN STUDY





Regardless of where employees work – in the office, from home, on the manufacturing line or anywhere else – today’s employers have an imperative to take care of their people. It’s better for the people who work there, and it’s better for business.

Which is why employee wellbeing comes hand in hand with psychological safety.

**“[Psychological safety is] a shared belief that I can bring my full self to work, that I will not be humiliated or made to feel less good about myself if I speak up with ideas, with questions, with concerns, and yes, even with mistakes.”**

AMY EDMONDSON  
Harvard Professor

It’s no surprise, then, that when employees feel like they can show up to work as they are without worry of judgment, they are better able to do their best work, lightening the emotional stress of employees and the financial stress of employee turnover and disengagement for organisations.

The latest Workhuman® and Gallup research report, “Amplifying Wellbeing at Work and Beyond Through the Power of Recognition,” highlights the power wellbeing can have on the emotional and professional success of employees.

The report found that employees who lack meaningful connections at work are **up to 9x more likely to be disengaged and as much as 3x as likely to be looking for a new job.**

Employee wellbeing is a valuable tool for establishing meaningful connections at work, as well as for improving business metrics including retention, engagement and productivity. The research also shows it is underutilised.

For organisations to thrive in today’s fast-paced business landscape, their employees need to thrive too. And an effective way to help them thrive is with employee recognition. When employees feel appreciated, they are much more likely to thrive. Here we will share five ways leaders can promote and amplify employee wellbeing in the workplace with recognition, plus tips and tricks to make sure they stick.



ONE

## Make smarter investments in wellbeing.

The past few years have put pressure on employers to provide more benefits to keep their employees physically and mentally well. And many organisations likely provided some resources to those asking for them.

Leaders should ask themselves: How are those resources and initiatives performing now? Are they still effective? Were they ever? If they aren't sure, it's time to reassess.

Leaders should start by examining how they allocate resources to these initiatives, and if they aren't paying off, sunset the programme and direct those funds elsewhere. One area to consider investing further in is recognition. Investing in recognition will likely make organisational returns go farther than the one-off projects they were funding before – and it comes with a compelling ROI for wellbeing and more.

The costs of neglecting wellbeing at work are significant for employees and employers alike, so **making smarter investments in wellbeing is more important than ever.**

**\$20M**

of **opportunity loss** for every 10,000 workers due to low wellbeing and its drain on performance

**\$322B**

cost globally in **employee turnover and lost productivity** when low wellbeing shows up as employee burnout



TWO

## Be strategic about recognition.

When approaching employee wellbeing, business leaders should be strategic about the tools they use.

Peer-to-peer recognition has the power to amplify wellbeing at work because it gives everyone the ability to give and receive appreciation. Using recognition has the power to reduce employee turnover, improve employee morale and increase productivity. But those gains happen only when it is implemented and used correctly. And doing recognition correctly means it has to be more than a yearly pizza party or an engraved pen.

According to a previous Workhuman-Gallup report, “Unleashing the Human Element at Work: Transforming Workplaces Through Recognition,” organisations get the most out of their recognition investment when they follow the five pillars of recognition.

## Five pillars of recognition

**Fulfilling:** The moments of appreciation should be genuine and create a consistent, reliable experience for both the giver and receiver.

**Authentic:** Recognition moments should mean something to both the giver and receiver.

**Equitable:** Every award message should be unique to the people giving and receiving, but the rate at which they receive and the amount in which they receive should be equitable.

**Personalised:** Recognition givers should consider how the person they are recognising prefers to be recognised for their work, whether that be publicly, privately or a bit of both.

**Embedded in organisational culture:** Appreciation should be woven into employees' everyday work lives to build a genuine culture of recognition.



## THREE

# Integrate recognition and wellbeing practices.

Thriving employees are crucial to the success of businesses. The better they feel, the more engaged and productive they will be – not to mention they will be producing higher quality work.

The Gallup wellbeing report found employees who strongly agree that recognition is an important part of their culture are up to 91% more likely to be thriving in their lives. They are also up to 84% more likely to be thriving when they agree they get the right amount of recognition for the work they do.

Additionally, employees who report receiving recognition from managers and leaders at least a few times a month are up to 2x as likely to be thriving as their counterparts.

Knowing this, leaders should intentionally and explicitly design initiatives to bring recognition and wellbeing together.

## **How to bring recognition and wellbeing together**

- Integrate wellbeing into the company's core values.
- Create an award for employees who promote wellbeing.
- Acknowledge employees' wellbeing-related achievements such as marathons or yoga certifications.
- Use companywide recognition events as an excuse to boost social wellbeing by being together.



## FOUR

# Upskill managers.

A manager can make or break an employee's success at a company. To ensure employees are getting the coaching, support and value they need to grow, employers should be actively engaging managers in learning and development courses. And wellbeing is no exception.

Organisations should train managers on the importance of wellbeing in the workplace, as well as the impact employee recognition has on sustaining that wellbeing. Only when employees at all levels of the company realise the impact being valued has on wellbeing will they be able to integrate it into their work routines.

Through their words and actions, managers and leaders shape the work culture environment. That environment impacts employees' overall lives and wellbeing every day. With so much influence on the employee experience, it becomes even more important to provide managers with specific actions, goals and tools to bring recognition to life for those they lead.





## FIVE

# Lead by example.

Organisations need to be committed to building employee recognition into their culture to sustain wellbeing, and that starts at the top. Leaders should set the tone for how the entirety of the organisation should be spreading appreciation and encouraging others to do the same.

If organisations are arranging volunteer activities for employees, leaders should be participating as well. They should encourage employees to make use of mental health resources offered by the company and set up time to discuss and improve those offerings based on employee feedback.

**4x**

Employees who receive recognition at least a few times a month from managers, leaders and/or peers are up to 4x as likely **to strongly agree that they belong at their organisation.**

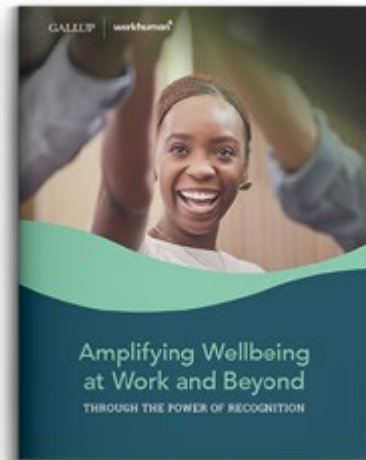
**3x**

Employees who receive mostly public recognition are as much as 3x as likely **to be confident that they belong** at their organisation.

Leaders should also give shoutouts for shared milestones, attend team award programmes and informal celebrations, post to recognition platforms and reply to email chains. Every action counts. In time, a culture of recognition will take hold.

Employee wellbeing is no longer optional. Organisations wishing to attract and retain top talent must be actively working toward building a workplace that supports the wellbeing of their people. And with the help of employee recognition, bringing a culture of wellbeing to the workplace is possible – and it's worth it.

Read the full [Workhuman-Gallup report](#) to gain more insight into the power of wellbeing at work.



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