



# Building a Culture of Recognition

3 STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVELY RECOGNIZING  
AND REWARDING YOUR HUMANS

workhuman®

**"What we are seeing is a return to being human at work. The laggards in the future will be the companies that ignore the value of an interconnected approach to happiness and success, and the leaders will be the ones that value humans the most."**

**SHAWN ACHOR**

**Happiness researcher and New York Times bestselling author of "Big Potential"**

Navigating the COVID-19 pandemic has been challenging, but the lessons learned are invaluable in creating a more human workplace. One thing is for certain: Human connection is more important than ever, and employees want to be seen, appreciated, and valued.

This makes the newest Workhuman® survey results even more surprising. Out of more than 1,000 responses from U.S. workers, we found that nearly half (48%) had only sometimes, rarely, or never received a "thank you" from their employer and/or colleagues.

In challenging times, employees are asking, above all, for a simple "thank you." It's about creating a culture of appreciation and recognition. To help kick-start the journey to a more human workplace, here are three strategies to help you create a culture of recognition at your organization.

## STRATEGY 1: RECOGNIZE KEY MOMENTS

Working remotely has put a strain on us all. The lack of face-to-face connection can leave employees feeling unengaged and disconnected. That makes it even more important to take a step back and remember to say "thank you" for a job well done. Here are a few examples of moments to look for that are worthy of recognition:

### **Is it something you'd like to see them do more of?**

If you see something great that you want the employee to keep doing, then recognize it. Consistent acknowledgment is a great form of positive feedback and sets a tone for others.

### **Is it something you'd like to see others doing?**

When you see an employee doing something you want others to emulate, absolutely recognize it. This is a powerful way to send a message to other employees about what your organization values most.

### **Is it something that embodies company values?**

Recognize behavior that is a clear embodiment of your company values. This shows the employee, and the whole team, what it means to practice your company values.

**Results usually deserve praise and appreciation. It's rare when we can draw a direct line from employee actions to business results. When you can do that, be sure you include recognition in the mix.**



### **Is it something that has helped your organization achieve its mission and goals?**

Like values, a company's mission, vision, and goals can sometimes feel very disconnected from day-to-day work. When you see activity that moves the needle on your core principles, call it out. This is a fantastic way to make those aspirations tangible in their daily work.

**Example:** "By streamlining the approval process, you have been able to shorten the bidding – and delivery time – by 25%."

### **Is it something above and beyond the call of duty?**

One of the benefits of engagement is the application of discretionary effort. More simply put: "She did something she really didn't have to do." When employees do work that isn't assigned to them, or take on additional responsibility, they almost always deserve kudos for it.

**Example:** "Thank you for going above and beyond by offering to mentor new employees to ensure they feel connected in this hybrid work environment."

### **Is it something others are noticing and talking about?**

If you've got customers, vendors, senior leaders, or other employees buzzing in your ear about something great one of your team members is doing, chances are you have an opportunity for recognition.

**Example:** "The head of ABC company informed me that you went above and beyond over the weekend to help one of their staff."

### **Is it something that is otherwise thankless?**

Consider recognizing the effort and attitude that goes into completing thankless tasks – even if they are routine. Thankless tasks are some of the hardest to bring ourselves to complete day after day. It's fantastic when we realize someone is noticing and grateful for our daily grind.

**Example:** "I truly appreciate your willingness to volunteer to be the notetaker in our last team brainstorming session."

### **Did they do something that made your life much easier?**

Yeah, this is personal, but so is recognition! If an employee takes the time, attention, or energy to assist a colleague, that can have an enormous impact, even on just one person.

**Encourage and empower leaders to get to know their teammates so well that they understand the kind of recognition that will make each individual on their team feel most appreciated for their amazing work.**

## STRATEGY 2: CREATE A GREAT MOMENT OF RECOGNITION

Poorly delivered recognition can appear disingenuous and has the potential to backfire into bitterness and resentment. Appreciation that is authentic, fair, consistent, and personal has power to move your employees.

To maximize its impact, an effective moment of recognition should be:

### **Timely:**

Occur as close as possible to the event.

### **Specific:**

Celebrates effort, contribution, and achievement.

### **Meaningful:**

Is authentic in a way that resonates with the accomplishment.

### **Appropriate:**

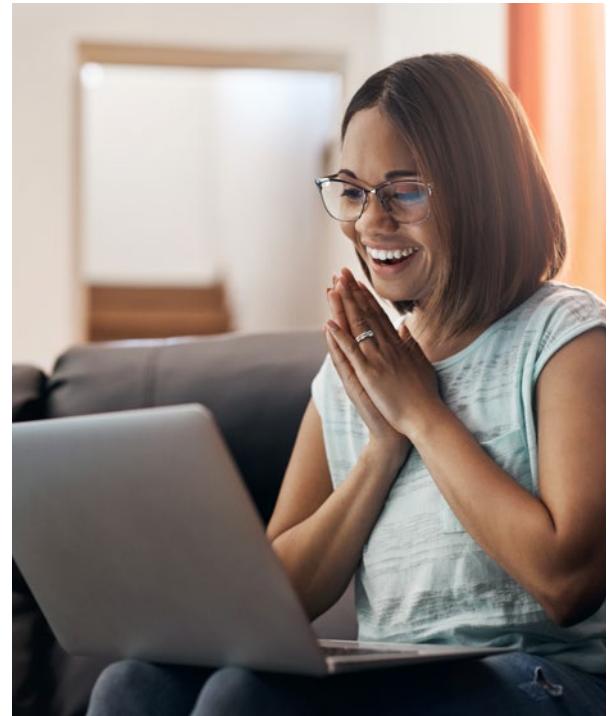
The accolade should match the effort.

### **Consistent:**

Keeping a steady tempo transforms work environments and maintains focus on goals.

### **Unexpected:**

Comes from anywhere: a manager, subordinate, or colleague.





## STRATEGY 3: MAKE RECOGNITION SUSTAINABLE

Once you've integrated recognition into your organization's culture, the next step is to ensure it continues and flourishes. To support that, remember these three key aspects:

### 1. Acknowledgment

Public recognition can feel uncomfortable for some people – particularly if the award is made social on an internal news feed. Yet it's important to socialize the achievement of the recipient. A social recognition platform can tailor how an award is socialized. For each recipient, it's important to take an extra moment to acknowledge the employee's achievement. It is entirely appropriate to say, "Did you see that award, Nina? It was so well deserved. Thanks again." Likewise, it's always a good idea to write a note thanking a nominator when you've received a recognition yourself – or to drop by in person to say "thanks."

### 2. Congratulations

Encourage people throughout the organization to congratulate the award recipient – even if they weren't the award giver. Set an example by adding congratulations to awards that others give. It can strengthen and extend the recognition moment and is a fantastic way to increase the impact that recognition makes on your culture.

### 3. Consistency

You sent an award, but don't stop there. Make it an ongoing part of your routine to notice, be inspired by, recognize, and congratulate good work. Even 30 minutes a week engaged in this sort of activity will yield significant results from your team.

## **Creating an impactful recognition program is easier than you think.**

Simply ensure it's meaningful, accessible, and at the fingertips of people throughout your organization. Giving and receiving recognition lifts spirits. When you recognize someone, you are acknowledging their existence and their human contribution. When you receive recognition, you become energized, empowered, and inspired. The power of recognition lifts both the giver and receiver, transforms your workplace culture, and drives the success of your organization.

Working remotely has changed our day-to-day work lives, but one thing that hasn't changed is the desire to be recognized and appreciated. To ensure your team is engaged, productive, and working to its fullest potential, create a culture of recognition at your organization.

## **Forward-thinking people leaders know:**

The COVID-19 pandemic has placed an unprecedented level of stress on workers in every industry. Now is the time to infuse recognition into the culture of your organization. Ensure your employees feel appreciated, empowered, and connected – despite the challenges.

**We can help every step of the way.**

**Reach out today to request a demo or get started with the Workhuman Cloud®.**

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