



Making Appreciation Last

12 Real-World Stories of Powerful Recognition,
Meaningful Rewards, and Genuine Belonging

workhuman*

Behind every great workplace is something surprisingly simple and deeply human – **appreciation.**

We remember appreciation because it activates the very parts of the brain that drive motivation and memory. Workhuman's recent research confirms this; employees who have positive reward experiences are almost twice as likely to say they belong and more than three times as likely to speak proudly about where they work.

That's not magic. That's psychology doing its job. We've also learned that the impact of a recognition moment can be amplified by an engaging reward story. Maybe it becomes a weekend escape. Maybe it turns into a special night out. Maybe it's the perfect birthday gift for your toddler – even if they refuse to share it.

Enjoy some of our favorite real-life Reward Stories that speak volumes about the links between appreciation, gratitude, and belonging.

Darcy Jacobsen's Reward Story: **Thank You for Enabling My Competitive Picnicking!**



I was SO excited to use my points for some **spiffy camp chairs to complete our Tanglewood picnic set-up**, so Nell and I could take my best friend and her wife with us to see John Williams Film Night and sit in the lap of luxury.

We had a blast (and a long convo about how great recognition is.) Thank you so much!



📈 Employees who use rewards for special experiences are **19% more likely to feel motivated at work.**



I used redeemed my points for a
4th of July staycation in Plymouth/Boston
(via a Hotels.com gift card).

My husband and I stayed in downtown Plymouth for a few days. We had a great beach day, got to try some great new restaurants and visited a few breweries and a winery we love. We ended the trip in Boston seeing the Savannah Bananas play the Firefighters at Fenway! It was our first time seeing them and they put on a great show.

Brittany Anderson's Reward Story: **4th of July fun!**



↗ When people have a very positive rewards experience, they're **2x more likely to feel motivated and 19x more likely to recommend their organization** as a great place to work.



Matt Keohan's Reward Story:
The teepee, not the kid

In my relentless quest to win my son's affection, **I purchased this highly reviewed teepee** that was brought to my attention by the almighty algorithm gods.

It's been three weeks and he still hasn't allowed me in, but I feel like I'm wearing him down. He will eventually run out of provisions in these harsh winter months and he will crack. I'm grateful to my phenomenal team for enabling me to assume the title of Dad of the Year – even if my son doesn't know it yet.



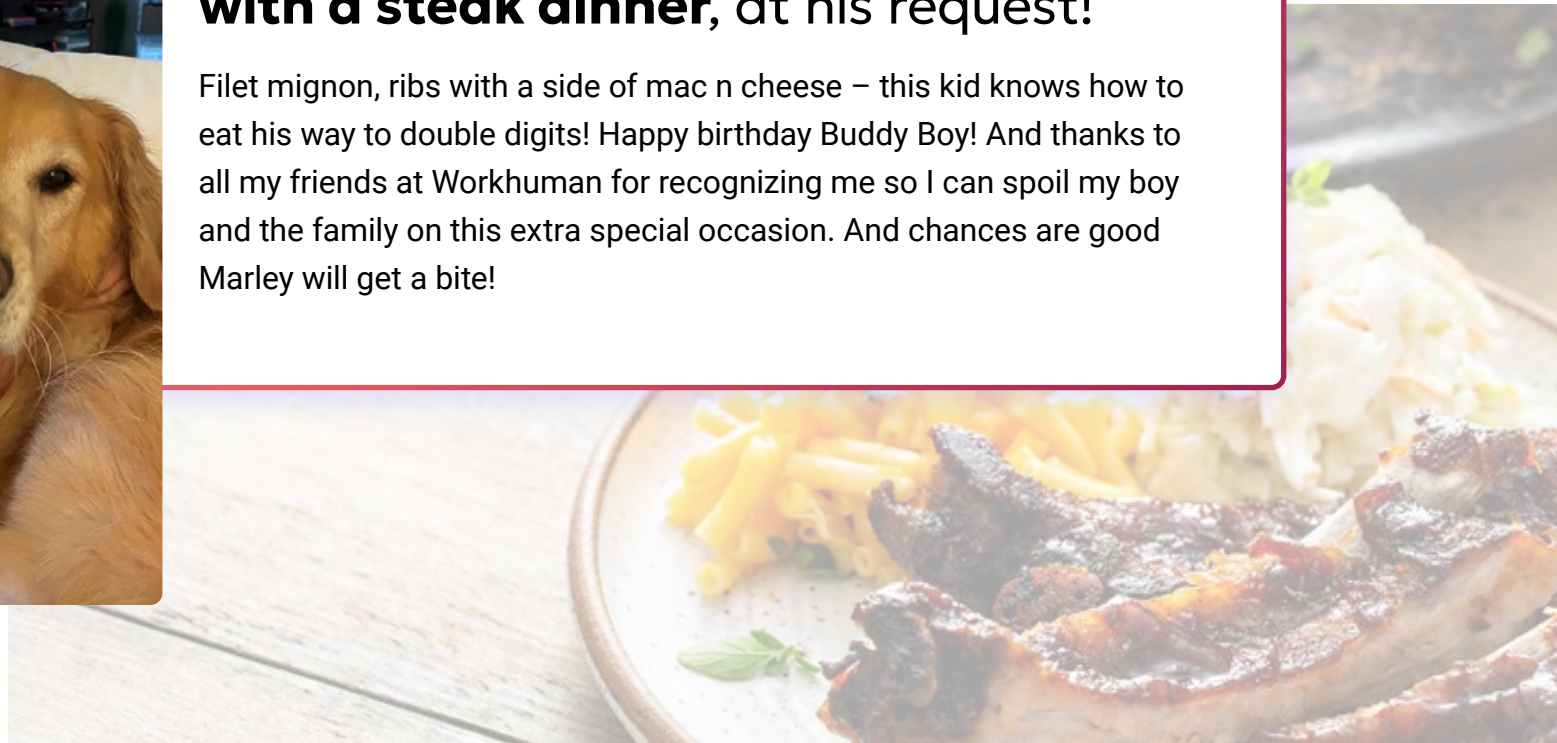
📈 Employees who've redeemed rewards in the last few months give their programs **13% higher satisfaction scores.**

David Stott's Reward Story: **This Birthday Boy Wants Steak!**

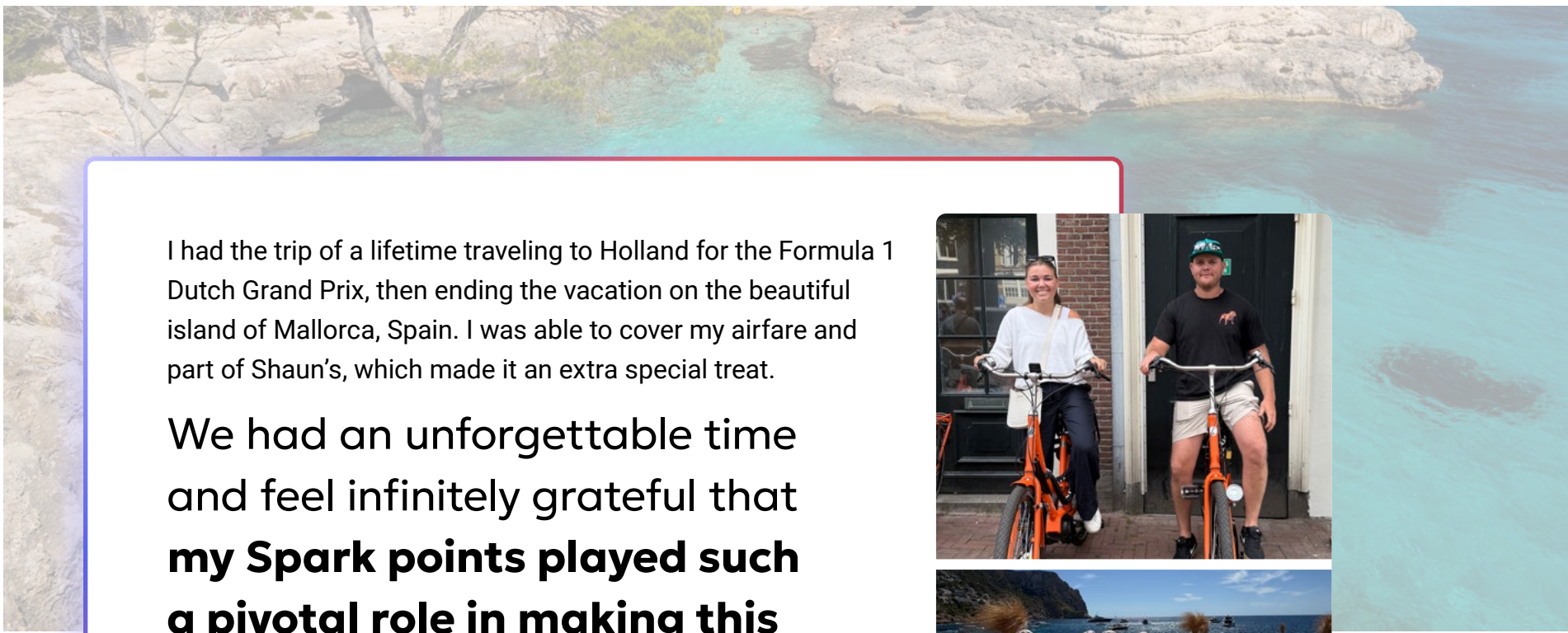


Celebrating Ryan's 10th birthday with a steak dinner, at his request!

Filet mignon, ribs with a side of mac n cheese – this kid knows how to eat his way to double digits! Happy birthday Buddy Boy! And thanks to all my friends at Workhuman for recognizing me so I can spoil my boy and the family on this extra special occasion. And chances are good Marley will get a bite!



 Employees who receive rewards with real monetary value are almost **twice as likely to feel connected to their team.**




I had the trip of a lifetime traveling to Holland for the Formula 1 Dutch Grand Prix, then ending the vacation on the beautiful island of Mallorca, Spain. I was able to cover my airfare and part of Shaun's, which made it an extra special treat.

We had an unforgettable time and feel infinitely grateful that **my Spark points played such a pivotal role in making this trip possible.**



Sarah Vandevaart's Reward Story: **Boston to Holland to Mallorca!**

 It only takes 1 reward to double someone's love for their recognition program. But after 11, that **love grows by almost 7x.**



Tom O'Reilly's Reward Story: **Disney week!**

Here we come Disney World!

Just got enough money on
**Disney gift cards to get
admission for the family!**

Appreciate the moments of recognition you all
provided! And appreciate y'all being my teammates!
Thank you!!



📈 People with a very positive reward
experience report **35% higher alignment
to their company's core values.**



Lee Brophy's Reward Story: **From recognition to “She said yes!”**

Over the past few months, I've been lucky enough to receive some amazing recognition from my colleagues.

I recently decided to put those awards to a very special use and redeemed them for **a stay in a beautiful beachfront hotel on the Greek island of Crete.**

It was my very first redemption, so I wanted it to be something memorable and it definitely was! During the trip, I proposed to my girlfriend, and she said yes! So thank you to everyone who has recognised me since joining. Your appreciation helped make this unforgettable moment possible for us. I'd say that's a pretty great first reward story!



 People who use rewards to make memories with loved ones are **7x more likely to love their recognition program.**

Lisa Doughty's Reward Story:
90th Birthday Surprise



Thanks to my amazing coworkers, I was able to surprise my grandma and **fly to Oklahoma for her 90th birthday.**

It meant so much to be able to celebrate with her and our extended family, the first time we've all been together in over 5 years!! Hobbling through the airport with a broken foot was worth it for the look on her face when I walked through the front door. Thank you!



↗ Recognition is an opportunity to say, "I care," and **70% of people use rewards for someone else.**



Sameer Hadid's Reward Story: **Celebrating 25 Years in Hawaii**



Thank you so much for the previous recognition you provided me. I wanted to let you know it helped create a very memorable and meaningful experience while Dawn and I were celebrating our 25th anniversary and vow renewal in Hawaii together with our daughters.

On our last night on the island, we elected to have **a wonderful dinner at Ruth's Chris Steakhouse**, which we made happen by by redeeming for gift cards.

It was the perfect way for us to wrap up a tremendous trip!

 94% of employees with a positive reward experience say they **feel motivated to do their best work.**



Kevin Fischer's Reward Story: **Flicking good time**

Thanks for the awards, Alana and Sara!

I have been eyeing getting a Biñho board since Brian introduced the office to the game. My girls are already enjoying it and have tried to get their Barbies on the pitch (had to halt those invaders real quick).

Thanks for bringing the beautiful game in miniature form to our house!



 Employees who redeem rewards for loved ones are **31% more likely to feel they belong.**




Eliza Goehry's Reward Story: **'Cuse girls storm Brooklyn**

My friend Jen and I recently traveled to NYC to spend the Halloween weekend with our college roommate Sara, who was also turning 40. She lives in Brooklyn, and Jen and I were incredibly excited to visit her.

What was even better is that I was able to **book a really chic hotel with my points for our stay!**

As we're all approaching our 40s and live busy lives, it's rare that we get these moments – but when we do, we TEAR IT UP. It was a memorable weekend, full of laughs, love, and a little mischief!



 The Workhuman Store empowers recipients to choose exactly what speaks to them, with **1 in 6 appreciating rewards that align with personal values.**

When recognition is paired with a meaningful reward, appreciation is amplified, fostering a strong sense of belonging and connection. At Workhuman, this turns a moment of thanks into a tangible reminder of why employees love where they work.

What we see in the numbers is clear – workers who feel appreciated go on to recognize their fellow colleagues and promote their companies.

The Workhuman Store brings that vision to life. With more than a million reward options across 150+ countries, a mobile-first experience, and personalized catalogs that reflect lifestyle and culture, it's easy for anyone to turn their awards into a gift they'll enjoy and share.

Reward Stories take engagement to the next level, inspiring teams through viral company or social media posts. When word travels, gratitude speaks for itself.

Got a great Workhuman Reward Story?
Share it on LinkedIn and tag us! #FollowTheSpark

Download [2025 Workhuman Global Research Study: The Tangible Value of Appreciation](#) to **learn more about the impact of rewards and Reward Stories on employee motivation and connection.**

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