



# Launching Recognition at Lightspeed

A CASE STUDY

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## Customer spotlight

As one of the world's premier biopharmaceutical companies, Pfizer has been working relentlessly to develop medical treatments that change patients' lives since 1849. Pfizer's 80,000 colleagues span the globe, supplying medicines and vaccines to 165 countries. The organisation's purpose has remained steadfast since its inception: breakthroughs that change patients' lives.

To do that, Pfizer's culture is built around four core values: courage, excellence, equity and joy. And, whether it's developing a vaccine or producing life-saving medicines, Pfizer's culture is all about unleashing the power of their people to make breakthroughs happen.

This case study explores how leaders at Pfizer partnered with Workhuman® to implement a global employee rewards and recognition programme to ensure their colleagues can – and want to – keep doing their best work.



A photograph of two scientists in a laboratory. A man in the foreground, wearing a white lab coat, a surgical mask, and blue gloves, is looking through a microscope. A woman in the background, also in a lab coat and mask, is holding a pipette. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a clean, professional environment.

# The challenge

Pfizer's colleagues worked tirelessly to develop a COVID-19 vaccine during the pandemic. How was this possible? They felt valued, energised and wanted to play a part in shaping history.

The company's leaders knew that if they wanted colleagues to continue innovating like they did to develop the vaccine, they had to tap into that same power. To do it, they needed a recognition and rewards programme that delivered gratitude and joy back to the colleagues who impacted the world's response to the pandemic. The programme needed to be scalable and agile, global, peer-to-peer, equitable and most importantly, impactful.



**If we wanted our colleagues to continue to innovate the way they had been, being able to reward them from an impressive standpoint was important.**



**JANICE BEAUCHAMP**  
SVP, People Experience, Wellness  
and Workplace Engagement  
Pfizer

While they had a homegrown recognition programme in place, leaders like Janice Beauchamp, SVP of people experience, wellness and workplace engagement, knew it wasn't enough. "Pfizer had recognition programmes, but one size *does not* fit all, so we did a lot of workarounds," says Janice. One of those workarounds had to do with the company's global population, as well as manufacturing colleagues, who are mostly offline.

In the past, when Pfizer would roll out a companywide initiative, they had to work in phases. Often this would lead to colleagues in other departments or countries feeling left out or less supported than their other colleagues.

Janice explains: "When we approached our executive leadership team, they supported a recognition programme 100%." And everyone agreed on the importance of creating a unified and equally accessible programme that would launch for all colleagues at the same time; and with nearly 80,000 colleagues, that's no small task.



## The solution

Pfizer chose to partner with Workhuman to revamp their employee rewards and recognition programme and selected the name Bravo. And, because the leaders knew how vital this was for their colleagues, they deployed the programme using the same concept as they did the vaccine – what they call “lightspeed.” Lightspeed is a mindset that encourages colleagues to cut the red tape, crush bureaucracy and trust one another to make room for meaningful work.

“We were put to the test by an executive leader,” Janice recalls. “They asked, ‘If you could deploy this in six to nine months, could you get it done in four?’ So that business factor really drove speeding up the process. We are committed as an organisation to use the same process for our colleagues that we used for the vaccine.”

When deciding whom to partner with, Pfizer had lightspeed on its mind. Along with the need for a speedy implementation, the team was also looking for a platform that was easy to use, global and able to provide an equitable experience to every colleague regardless of function or geographic location.

**“We talked to other organisations, and we could not have found a better match than with Workhuman,” says Janice.**



## The results

With the help of Workhuman and a Pfizer team fully empowered to work at lightspeed, Bravo launched in four months, during a time when it was most needed. “Coming out of COVID, who doesn’t need a little joy? We are resetting the landscape for our culture to say, ‘Everyone matters.’ And a thank you is very powerful,” Janice says.



**77%**

**of colleagues were  
recognised in the  
first six months.**

And that effort seems to be paying off. “We have around 80,000 employees and, since we launched in April 2022, over 62,000 colleagues have received at least one Bravo award.” That’s 77% of Pfizer’s employee base. The awards, which can be point-based or not, are given in true peer-to-peer fashion, in which anyone from around the company can send a moment of appreciation up or down the organisation.

**“From the day we launched, we knew it was working,” Janice reflects. “We were hearing from colleagues around the world; there was excitement that has continued since then.”**

The ease of use has also contributed to the success of the programme, as having one place to track, recognise, reward and reinforce the company's recognition culture allows leaders to see their colleagues' recognition activity in real time.

Pfizer is in a new phase of its recognition journey and, as time goes on, the platform will continue to develop and act as a culture driver, bringing colleagues from around the globe together under one common goal: breakthroughs that change patients' lives.



**We have built an inclusive, engaging work environment that recognises and rewards colleagues for demonstrating Pfizer's values and empowers them to bring their best selves to work for the benefit of patients.**



**PAYAL SAHNI**  
Chief People Experience Officer,  
Executive Vice President, Pfizer



**To learn how recognition can drive  
retention and engagement at your  
company, get in touch.**

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