



Creating a Culture of Connection With Recognition

A CASE STUDY

As one of the nation's oldest and largest financial institutions, Citizens Financial Group is headquartered in Providence, R.I., and employs more than 18,000 people across 43 states. The company's mission is to help customers, colleagues, and communities reach their potential. Bringing that vision to life are Citizens' guiding principles and internal values of: exceeding customer expectations, doing the right thing, thinking long term, and working together.

This case study explores how Citizens partnered with Workhuman® to implement a modern recognition and reward solution, driving employee engagement and retention across its business.



The challenge

Prior to partnering with Workhuman, Citizens had launched a homegrown recognition program in 2015. The program “was very manual,” says Derek DeSousa, Director of Communication Programs and Events at Citizens. “We were shipping gift cards out to winners. By the time someone received recognition – which could take up to four weeks – they often forgot what they did to earn it.”

The team knew prioritizing employee recognition was key to achieving Citizens’ goals around becoming a customer-centric organization.

“If colleagues are your differentiator, why not invest in them? Why not help equip them to feel motivated and engaged to continue to do better?” says Michelle Hecht, Head of Communications, Executive Vice President at Citizens.

In looking to up-level the existing program, Citizens had three guiding principles: to modernize the experience, to make the rewards more appealing, and to make recognition easier.

The solution

In partnership with Workhuman, Citizens modernized its approach to employee recognition and launched Credo Awards in 2019. The new program is peer-to-peer and tied to core values, as well as:

- **Real time** – to reinforce the right values and behaviors
- **Social** – to amplify each recognition moment
- **Mobile-enabled** – to expand reach to branch (remote) employees
- **Data-driven** – to enable better tracking and insights from recognition data

The mobile app in particular is one of the most important features for Citizens. “It was the biggest win to be able to spread our recognition across the entire network,” says Derek. “You think about having a front-line sales team, and a regional manager is now able to visit a location and recognize those colleagues by the time they get to their car. That was important to us, to be able to digitize our approach.”



Showing appreciation along the way is going to boost morale and it's going to boost engagement, and that's what we're seeing with these numbers.

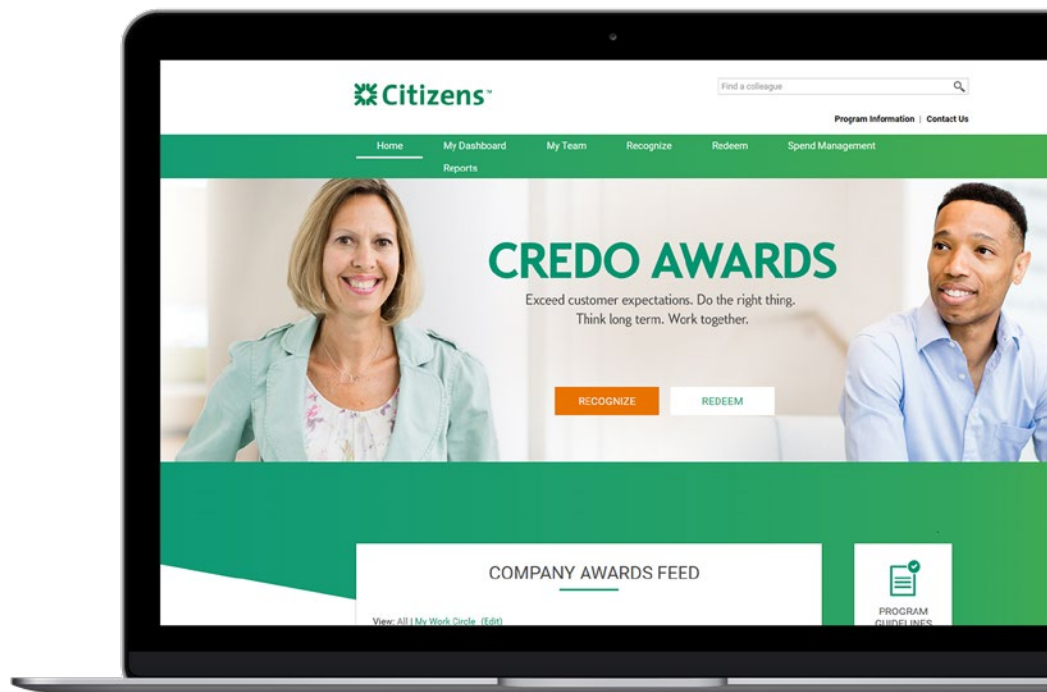
DEREK DESOUSA
Director of Employee Engagement,
Senior Vice President at Citizens

Another key improvement area in launching Credo Awards was access to data.

“As a manager and leader, I really appreciate all the data and analytics that are there to help see how your team is participating and how others are recognizing them,” says Michelle.

“What may have been an underfunded investment in some business units before, we’re seeing them realize the impact, and starting to increase their investment and the time they’re allocating to recognition,” adds Derek.

What’s more, Citizens was able to streamline and create efficiencies across all of its employee rewards programs, such as Credo Champions and Credo Community of Champions, with its new Credo Awards platform.



The result

Since the launch of Credo Awards, Citizens has generated more than 168,000 recognition moments across 96% of its employee base. This type of engagement is imperative to Citizens' organizational health.

This connection and engagement is also driving tangible ROI in the form of employee retention. Data from the Workhuman research team shows turnover is cut in half for employees receiving 10-12 recognition moments annually compared to those who haven't received any recognition.

And as Citizens continues generate more recognition moments, the team is able to better understand the social networking across the organization.

168k+

168,000+ recognition moments since Credo Awards launched

10-12

Significantly lower turnover for employees receiving 10-12 recognition moments annually

96%

96% recipient reach since launch



It shows us that work isn't done in silos. It's great to see where people are collaborating or where there are opportunities to recognize more. The more connected employees are, the lower the risk of turnover.

DEREK DESOUSA
Director of Employee Engagement,
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Citizens's decision to implement a formal recognition program came at just the right time. "COVID-19 has made us think about everything differently. We're reminding leaders to take a moment to pause and show gratitude and appreciation for what everyone's doing," says Derek. As the business world continues to reshape itself post-pandemic, Citizens is highly aware of the benefits of recognition and will only continue leaning into them.

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

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