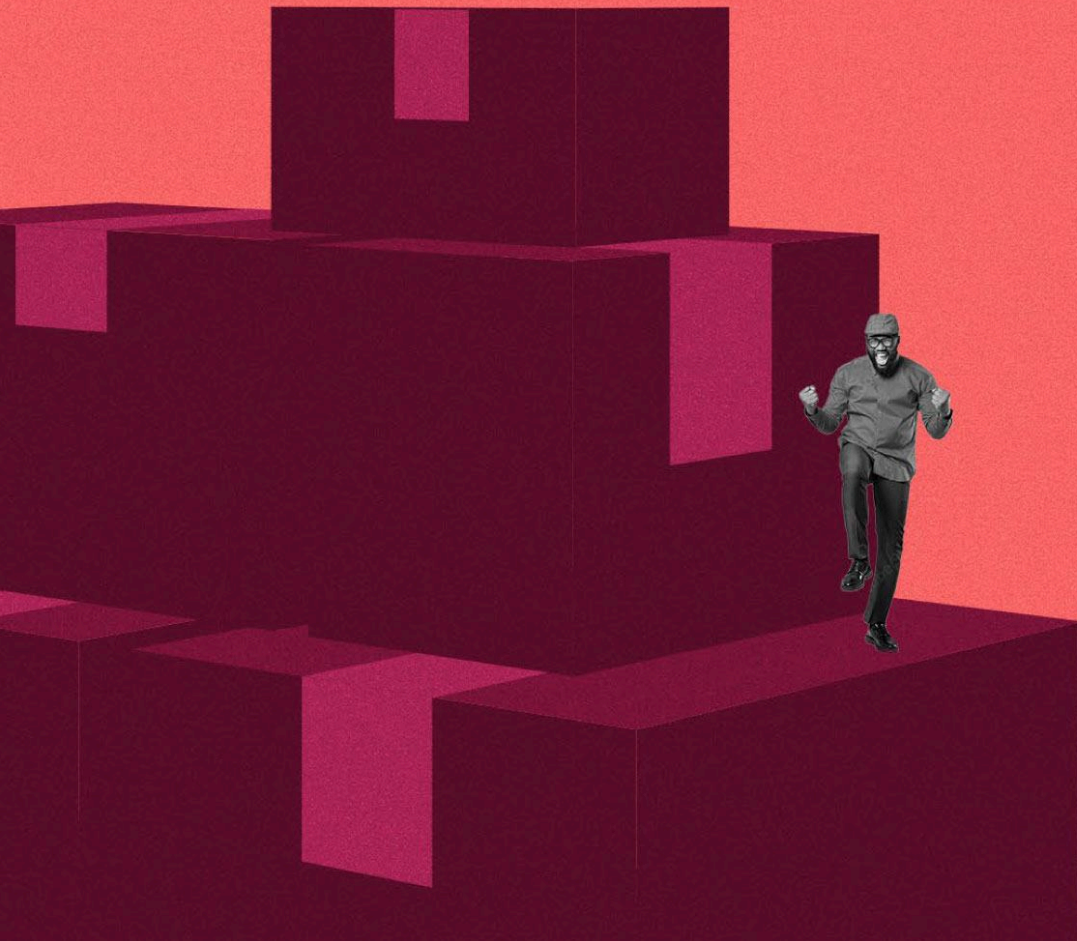


EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Tangible Value of Appreciation

Recognition shapes behavior and culture; and rewards make that appreciation visible, memorable, and measurable. In this multi-country study, Workhuman examined the “how” of rewards, and found that value, choice, ease, and frequency of redemptions have clear links to increased belonging, motivation, advocacy, and program ROI.



The business impact of recognition and rewards satisfaction:

Employees who love their recognition program report higher scores across every metric vs. those who say it's "okay":

Belonging is **93% vs. 58%**

Engagement is **94% vs. 71%**

Alignment with strategic initiatives is **91% vs. 65%**

Understanding company values is **95% vs. 83%**

What creates a beloved recognition program?

Tangible monetary value drives about **3x** higher love for a program, and memorable redemptions drive **5x** love for a recognition program.

Frequent redemption matters — as we saw love for a program double with one redemption and rise nearly **7x** with **11+** reward redemptions.

The quality of a reward experience maps to key outcomes:

Similar to love for a recognition program, a reward experience itself corresponds to key metrics.

Among those with a positive reward experience, belonging is **77% vs 48%** for those with a negative experience.

Engagement (motivation) is **81%** among those with a positive reward experience vs. **52%** for those with a negative experience.

Other key findings:

A great rewards experience is a force multiplier:

When people have a positive reward experience, they are more than **2x** more likely to feel motivated and **19x** more likely to recommend their company as a great place to work.

Tangible value moves the needle.

When rewards carry real monetary value, feelings of belonging rise by **28%**, and engagement (motivation) rises by **21%**.

Belonging rises with reward redemption frequency.

Employees who redeem for more than 2 rewards per year are **34%** more likely to feel they belong.

Rewards connect people.

70% of employees have redeemed their rewards as a gift for others and **56%** redeem for family and friends' wellbeing. Employees with a very positive reward experience are almost **2x** as likely to say they feel connected to colleagues at work.

Memorable rewards have impact.

Employees who redeem to create memories with loved ones are **5x** more likely to love their recognition program.

Personalization, ease and access matter.

Employees who say their reward options reflect their culture, values, and interests are **3x** more likely to love their recognition program vs. those who dislike or hate it. **44%** cite a simple, mobile-friendly process as the most enjoyable part of redemption, **40%** say it is clear guidance on what points can buy, and **31%** value a shopping experience similar to the best online stores.

The five dimensions of meaningful rewards:

1 Tangible
When rewards carry real monetary value, rates of **belonging rise 28%** and **engagement rises 21%**. **95% of employees** who used rewards for “splurge” items they wouldn’t buy otherwise say they’re engaged, compared to 76% of those who never do.

2 Connected
7 in 10 workers have redeemed their rewards as a gift for others; and when rewards are redeemed to boost wellbeing for loved ones, it equates to a **19% higher motivation** rate and **16% rise in connection** to colleagues.

3 Memorable
“Storyworthy” redemptions (like travel experiences or family moments) are associated with **35%** higher alignment to their organization's values, and **25% higher connection** to colleagues.

4 Universal
Employees who have access to rewards **2+** times per year are **34% more likely to feel they belong** in their organization.

5 Personalized
Employees who say their reward options reflect their culture, values, and interests are **3x more likely to love their recognition program**.

Overall, this year's survey found that while recognition shapes behavior and sentiment; **well designed, memorable, tangible rewards have the power to turn that recognition into lasting stories, high belonging, strong engagement, and a recognition program people love.**

[Read the full report, now. →](#)

About the research

More than 2,500 full-time employed workers across the US, UK, Ireland, Canada, and Australia were surveyed in September 2025 as part of this research, sourced by our independent research firm partner.