

workhuman®

How to Champion a Culture of Workplace Safety

USE RECOGNITION TO ENHANCE WELLBEING AND PERFORMANCE IN MANUFACTURING





Imagine this: Workers in a bustling manufacturing or food production hub are humming along, in the groove of their day-to-day, when out of nowhere, a machine hiccups, flinging a part dangerously close to an unaware colleague. Everyone knows the drill: Halt the line. But they freeze. The specter of downtime costs looms, and no one wants to hit that red button. This pause could lead to serious injuries or worse.

Let's flip the script. Imagine instead a company where health and safety aren't just buzzwords, but are embedded in culture as a lived ethos.

When that machine misfires, the team doesn't hesitate. They halt the line. Prevent injury. And address the issue head-on.

Yes, there might be downtime, but the payoff is a safer workplace, happier employees, and improved business performance.

We're not just spinning tales here. These close calls are an all-too-real part of life in many manufacturing settings. That's why it's mission-critical to build a culture of safety, where every team member feels supported and empowered to prioritize wellbeing.

In this paper, we'll look at:

- The magic that happens when workplace safety meets business goals
- How a strong culture can be your best ally in boosting workplace safety
- Actions you can start taking today to grow your safety culture

By knowing how to create a safer workspace, you can avoid workplace accidents, crank up productivity, and build a team that's truly engaged.

Recognition affirms the importance of quality. It says excellence is better than cutting corners, a job well done is better than hiding mistakes. Recognition likely increases conscientiousness on a work site.

Source: "[From Praise to Profits: The Business Case for Recognition at Work](#)," Gallup and Workhuman, 2023

The role of safety recognition programs in promoting safe behavior

Recognition program awards are more than just fancy certificates – they're the secret sauce to a safer workplace. Crafted to celebrate safety, they inspire employees to make better choices on the job. They vary in format – think peer-to-peer kudos for safe actions or a team shout-out for reaching safety milestones.

Research shows that a whopping 75% of employees feel their employers' safety efforts are lagging. Safety recognition programs, however, can change this narrative by building a culture where safety isn't just expected – **it's celebrated**.

Consider high-risk industries like construction, transportation, and warehousing. Here, safety recognition programs aren't just nice-to-haves – they can literally save lives. Rewarding safe behaviors changes the game in reducing work-related fatalities. When employees receive awards related to safety, the actions that led to that safety moment are reinforced and the visibility of the recognition moment demonstrates what good safety behaviors look like.

But the perks don't stop there. These programs can boost team spirit, ramp up productivity, and even beef up your bottom line.

Remember, a safe workplace is a successful workplace.

The link between safety and financial savings

A commitment to safety recognition isn't just a matter of health – it's a key financial strategy.

When Workhuman data analysts examined five plants at a global manufacturing customer with the strongest safety recognition cultures (as measured by the proportion of employees who received a safety award), we found the plants with the highest usage of the safety award saw a total recordable injury rate (TRIR) 82% lower than the plants with the lowest safety award usage.

Beyond saving lives, a lower TRIR can also save an organization millions of dollars. According to the National Safety Council, work injuries cost a total of \$171 billion. When safety incidents occur:

- Costs can escalate quickly, encompassing compensation claims, medical expenses, legal fees, and downtime.
- There are often costs for equipment repair or replacement.
- Your reputation and employer brand decrease, making it difficult to attract and retain the best talent.

A strategic and robust safety recognition program can help minimize these accidents, leading to considerable cost savings. Recognizing safe behaviors also has a direct impact on revenue:

- A workplace that prioritizes safety is more attractive to potential employees, reducing recruitment and training costs.
- When employees feel valued and safe, their morale, productivity, and loyalty increase, resulting in reduced turnover and improved performance.

In essence, an investment in safety recognition is an investment in a more financially resilient future. As safety improves, so does your bottom line.

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You can see what behaviors are happening in your facilities almost in real time. That type of behavioral intelligence and insight is why we decided to go with Workhuman.

BRADY BAGWAN
VP, HR
Morgan Truck Body

Source: “[Engaging and Retaining Offline Workers With Recognition](#),” Morgan Truck Body, LLC and Workhuman, 2023

Best practices for implementing safety recognition programs

These four essential steps will help you build a program that's not just effective, but truly shines.

- 1. Set the course and bring everyone on board.** Start with clear goals and expectations. Make your team part of the process – invite their ideas and suggestions. It's all about fostering a sense of ownership and making sure everyone is committed to creating a positive workplace culture.
- 2. Celebrate all things safety.** Big or small, every safety behavior counts. From celebrating accident-free milestones to appreciating everyday safety actions, timely and specific recognition underscores the importance of a safe work environment every single day.
- 3. Mix it up with recognition.** Who doesn't love variety? Use different types of recognition, like a mix of peer-to-peer and structured/manager-led recognition, to keep things interesting and engaging for all employees.

4. Keep track, keep learning. Regularly measure your program's success using key performance indicators. Also, promote continuous safety training. It's about refining your program and showcasing your dedication to your team's wellbeing. (That's why having a platform with built-in metrics and performance tracking can be such a performance booster.)

While it may not be rocket science, it does take thought and care.

Ready to build a culture of safety that pays dividends in employee happiness and your bottom line? If you want to positively impact safety and culture goals, let's talk.

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