



EMPLOYCO USA

The Power to Compete

HR TOOLKIT

Employee Recognition

Provided by: Employco USA, Inc.

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Introduction

Employees want not only good pay and benefits, but also opportunities to contribute to their employer, customers and other stakeholders through their work, and feel valued and appreciated for their efforts in the workplace. Unfortunately, 65% of employees reported that it had been over one year since they received any form of recognition for their work, according to a Gallup poll.

65%

of employees reported that it had been over one year since they received any form of recognition.



To help express appreciation, many employers implement ongoing employee recognition programs. A more promising statistic from the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) survey revealed that 80% of organizations have an employee recognition program in place. The goal of employee recognition is to reinforce certain behaviors, practices or activities that result in better performance and positive business results. It comes down to acknowledging and appreciating exemplary performance.

While most would relate rewards and recognition to monetary bonuses or award ceremonies, employee recognition or appreciation doesn't have to be that expensive or glamorous. Praise can be as simple as a pat on the back or a genuine compliment. Just as informal, a thank-you email or a friendly greeting in the workplace can go a long way with employees too.

If they haven't already, employers should consider implementing an employee recognition program to raise morale, recruit and retain top talent, boost engagement, increase productivity and reinforce behaviors that support the organization's business goals and bottom line.

This HR Toolkit will further explain the significance of employee recognition, provide an overview of different types of workplace recognition programs and suggest a step-by-step process to implement an employee recognition program.

Employee Recognition Overview

It's important to keep in mind that rewarding employees is not the same as recognizing employees. Although employee recognition programs are often combined with reward programs, they serve a different purpose. A recognition program is intended to provide psychological benefits for employees. Employees want to feel appreciated and valued for their work, and that comes from being acknowledged and praised by a colleague or superior. Employee recognition is a way to appreciate employees and reinforce an organization's goals and values.








Why Is It Important?

One of the biggest motivators for employees is to be valued by their colleagues—which comes from being acknowledged for being good at what they do. When people are recognized by their peers and superiors, it drives engagement and motivation. According to Gallup, 70% of employees in the United States are disengaged. Low workplace engagement can damage productivity and commitment to the organization and its goals. Engaged employees have passion, pride and energy for their work and are willing to go the extra mile on a regular basis.

What Are the Benefits?

An employee recognition program can help maintain or improve positive workplace relationships and teamwork, as well as encourage a compassionate, thoughtful culture.

According to an SHRM survey, 68% of HR professionals agreed that employee recognition has a positive impact on retention, and 56% said such programs also help with recruitment. Additionally, an employee recognition system can help an organization:

-  Align employees to company values.
-  Attract top talent.
-  Build a positive company culture.
-  Improve employee productivity.
-  Retain the best employees.
-  Strengthen the bottom line.
-  Unite a multigenerational or remote workforce.

In today's reality of increasing competition for top talent, a well-managed recognition program can help employers attract and retain the best employees and keep them engaged and productive.

Types of Employee Recognition Programs

Just as every workplace culture is different, recognition programs are different and should be tailored to fit the culture and workforce. Recognition will vary from organization to organization, so it's important to appreciate employees based on the company's needs and values.

It's important to point out that recognition can be done publicly or privately—and may or may not include a reward. Rewards may be monetary (e.g., cash bonuses, gift cards and company shares) or non-monetary (e.g., merchandise, an experiential trip or class, time off, personal development opportunities or words of appreciation). How recognition is earned may impact whether employees are given a monetary reward.

There are several types of recognition programs appropriate for the workplace. Here a few of the most popular programs to consider:

- **Peer-to-peer**, where any employee can nominate or praise a peer—rather than coming from only a manager or other superior
- **Value-based**, where employees are rewarded for behaviors tied to organizational values
- **Performance-based**, where employees are rewarded for behaviors tied to business objectives
- **Tenure-based**, where employees are rewarded based on years of service to the organization

Read on to dive deeper into the different types of recognition programs and how they can be incorporated to reward and motivate employees.

Peer-to-Peer

Generally, there are two different categories of employee recognition: top-down recognition and peer-to-peer recognition. Both are important and have their time and place. The more traditional form of recognition is the top-down kind, but there are benefits to opening up praise to everyone at the organization.

According to SHRM, a peer-to-peer recognition model is nearly 36% more likely to have a positive impact on an organization's bottom line than manager-only recognition. Along with financial benefits, peer-to-peer recognition has additional workplace benefits like collaboration and improved employee relationships. When an employee is recognized for a job well done, that employee is more likely to go and recognize someone else, keeping the cycle of recognition-giving going. Teamwork and peer support can thrive in a positive workplace environment.

Value-based

Value-based recognition programs reward employees for behaviors that exemplify an organization's core mission, vision, values and goals. This type is very targeted and scalable to reinforce behaviors based on the overall organization, department or role.

According to the SHRM survey mentioned earlier, value-based recognition programs are more effective and empowering for employees. Employers can implement this type of recognition program to reinforce the brand and business goals—like accountability, leadership, teamwork, honesty and integrity.

Performance-based

Performance-based employee recognition programs reward employees for behaviors tied to measurable and trackable business objectives such as:

- Demonstrating exemplary performance
- Driving innovation
- Enhancing workplace safety
- Improving customer care
- Increasing workgroup efficiency

The type of objective can vary depending on the employee's role or department, but it should be clear and trackable. While career planning, managers and direct reports should collaborate on identifying SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and timed) goals.

A twist on a performance-based program could be to infuse some friendly competition. If the overall workforce has a fun, competitive spirit, going the competition route may work best to motivate. Depending on the size of an organization and range of employee roles, incentive- or points-based programs are typically best when implemented within a specific department or function, like sales or safety. On the other hand, attendance is a straightforward category that could be easily tracked and measured among all employees.

By leveraging analytics and performance, employers can easily measure, manage and improve performance, and demonstrate return on investment.

Tenure-based

According to Bersin by Deloitte, 87% of current employee recognition programs focus on tenure. Tenure-based employee recognition programs reward employees based on years of service to the organization.

The modern workforce may be shifting from awarding tenure to awarding behavior, but there are still ways to recognize employees who want to feel like they are building a successful career within a company. Service awards don't need to be traditional milestone recognitions. Ultimately, there are two main goals in rewarding someone for their tenure: to thank them for their service and dedication, and to motivate other employees to achieve the same milestone.

According to the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average tenure for working adults in 2018 was 4.2 years (4.3 years for men and 4 years for women). That statistic may suggest that it's time to rethink the milestone recognition for 5, 10, 15 and 20+ years of service. Employers can increase employee retention by recognizing employees early on in their careers for reaching one- or two-year milestones. Significant achievements should be recognized and rewarded, no matter how long that specific employee has been working for the organization. Although the initial goal may be to celebrate tenure, be sure to make it about celebrating careers.

A cookie-cutter approach will come up short in creating a meaningful and successful employee recognition program. Employers should be thoughtful and tailor the program to fit the company culture and the needs and values of the workforce. Recognition may look differently depending on the organization's industry or employees' roles.



Employee Recognition Program Guidelines

With a solid understanding of what employee recognition is, why it's important and how it could look, let's explore how to build a successful employee recognition program.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach for employee recognition programs, but there may be a secret to making it successful. Create and adjust it with your employees' wants and needs in mind so they feel a sense of belonging in the workplace and feel appreciated for their hard work.

An effective employee recognition program is well-funded, aligned with organizational goals, appropriate for employees' achievements and timely. The recognition process should be straightforward, and the program should be reviewed regularly. Read on to explore general guidelines for selecting, developing, implementing and evaluating an employee recognition program.

Selecting a Program

To begin, define the business need for an employee recognition program. Why is it important to recognize and celebrate employees? What will happen if praise isn't given to employees? Identify your organization's unique reason to engage and motivate employees.

Employee recognition programs are most successful when they are aligned with the organization's mission, vision, values and goals. A recognition program should reinforce and reward positive behaviors that support what matters most to the organization. For example, if a company's core value is providing exceptional customer service, its employee recognition program might offer rewards and praise for going above and beyond when serving customers. For the program to be effective, employees should know and understand what the company stands for, making it clear on what those acceptable behaviors and habits look and sound like.

Developing a Program

Once the business need for the program has been identified, ensure all aspects of the program reinforce that ultimate business goal. Successful programs are tied to employee retention and recruitment efforts.

No matter what the award is for, it's crucial to have clear requirements to earn recognition. For example, an award like Employee of the Month is not specific and may unintentionally have employees suspecting favoritism, which would hurt company morale. Instead, structure your recognition programs around measurable behaviors or qualifications. Sometimes business values or desired qualities aren't that concrete—such as teamwork or customer service. Consider developing departmental goals or opening up the program so all employees are involved in the nomination process. The best programs recognize

contributors throughout the organization and motivate the entire workplace with the possibility of recognition.



Funding

Employee recognition programs are scalable and can be adjusted along the way—including the level of investment. According to the same SHRM survey mentioned earlier, the sweet spot for investing in recognition is 1% of payroll.

HR professionals are more likely to rate their employee recognition program as excellent when organizations invest at least 1% of payroll into the program. Investment should cover ongoing program management, implementation and rewards. However, the impact of investment is greater when recognition is core to the organization's talent strategy. For example, if a recognition program has goals such as reducing employee attrition and increasing employee retention, the accomplishments should help offset costs.



Selecting Incentives

You'll also need to decide what employees will receive when they are recognized. Some employees may not be as motivated as others, or value intangible and tangible rewards differently. Therefore, organizations should offer a variety of incentives and recognition opportunities to meet various employee needs. For example, some workers may be motivated more by time off than by a gift card. Others may be more driven to earn a bonus incentive. One is not better than the other. Remember that appreciation can come in all forms, and both have a place in keeping employees motivated and appreciated.



Using Technology

As everything should align with company culture, so should the technology used to make an employee recognition program. For example, if you have a very segmented workforce spread across the United States or beyond, and one of your company values is enabling teamwork, you may be investing more in software to help keep everyone connected and recognized. Employers can deploy employee recognition software platforms to help operationalize actions needed to motivate employees. Peer-to-peer recognition driven by technology causes employees to look for ways to help each other, motivate each other and recognize each other. If you are a smaller organization with a localized workforce, it may make sense to build recognition into existing platforms like an intranet or in-office signage.



Including Remote Employees

Employee recognition should apply to all employees at an organization—and it shouldn't matter whether they work on-site or remotely. Whether remote employees make up the majority of your workforce or represent a smaller group, it's important to develop a program with their needs in mind as well. With distance, employees receive little to no feedback when compared with employees in the workplace, making them feel undervalued. Remote employees often feel isolated and out of touch with things that

matter to the organization, so it is important to avoid implementing a recognition program that further isolates remote workers.

No matter where employees are located, an employee recognition program can help make everyone feel connected and valued for their work. Peer-to-peer recognition may be helpful in this instance to make all employees feel involved. Remote employees may work with a handful of others in their department or team, so this would give those employees an opportunity to acknowledge and praise teammates who they may not see every day. When developing a recognition program, it'd be a good idea to invite remote employees to participate and share their needs and ideas.



Establishing Consistency

However or wherever you decide to house or manage your recognition program, it's important to be consistent. Some ideas to keep a recognition program accessible for all is to keep it on a virtual platform, such as a cloud-based platform, or implement a software-based recognition program, as mentioned earlier. Leadership may choose to regularly share recognition via Skype, Microsoft Teams, social media channels or real-time instant messaging. Consistency will keep employees engaged and motivated once they know what to expect and when.

A nice touch might be to keep up with handwritten notes for a job well done or birthday. Handwritten thank-you notes feel more personal than an email, and are tangible reminders of appreciation they can keep on their desk or wall.

Implementing a Program

When you're ready to roll out the program to the workforce, there are some important steps to take to ensure the employee recognition program is clearly understood and easy to participate in.



Training

Even if managers aren't initiating or nominating employees for recognition, it's crucial to have managers on board and trained on the recognition program. If employees are unclear about the goals or eligibility requirements, they should talk to their manager.

Most managers need to acquire skills related to recognizing employees' contributions and offering effective feedback and praise. Training should begin with senior management to encourage participation from the top-down. Managers should understand and be trained on how to:

- Help employees understand the impact their performance has on the organization's goals and how they drive the business to succeed.
- Discuss the approach for managing and rewarding individual and team performance.
- Explain how the program works and how employees can achieve recognition.

- Learn ways to motivate and inspire others.
- Learn how to communicate needs, expectations and goals clearly.
- Deliver praise in a sincere and timely manner.



Communicating

Once the program is designed, the organization should communicate transparently to help all employees understand how to judge the desired outcomes. It will also ensure timely recognition, which is necessary for the program to be effective. Employers should provide a clear, written policy and guidelines describing the recognition program and its criteria, including:

- Employee eligibility requirements
- Approval process
- Types of awards or recognition given
- Frequency of awards or recognition
- Measurement of performance goals
- Examples of ideal behaviors or achievement
- Threshold for awards or recognition

Communication shouldn't end after rolling out the recognition program to employees. Consistent and transparent ongoing communication will continue to help employees feel heard, valued and recognized.



Maintaining

Just as important as an employee recognition program kickoff is a plan for ongoing program maintenance. The goal is to manage the entire recognition process with minimum administrative effort. A system that requires excessive management control, complex calculations or exceptional employee efforts to be understood will not likely achieve its desired results. A simple program is a great program.

Evaluating and Improving a Program

First and foremost, you want to understand whether the program has met the initial goals. Sticking with the simple route, here is a four-step framework with potential questions and thought starters. Check out a full employee survey in the Appendix that can be deployed to the workforce.

- 1 Reaction**—Consider asking employees for program feedback either casually in-person or more formally via an email or an anonymous survey. Consider the following questions:
 - Are you excited about the recognition program?
 - Are the program guidelines clear and communicated well?
 - Is the nomination and award process simple to use?
 - Are you receiving recognition fairly?
 - How is it better than the previous program or activity?
 - What is your favorite part of the program?
 - What should be done differently?
- 2 Learning**—Measure whether certain skills or awareness levels have changed since the rollout of the recognition program. Employees can be asked how important it is to recognize employees, how often they should do so, in what types of situations and in what ways. Take this step to determine whether employees understand how to use the program and why they should recognize others.
- 3 Behavior**—Evaluation of behavior will be easier if the measurement method is established as part of the recognition program (e.g., via tracking reports or spreadsheets). While expecting employees to alter their behavior to achieve standards or goals set by the organization, keep in mind that the measurement method may differ by department or office location. As previously mentioned, software can help automate this aspect of the program.
- 4 Results**—To get the full picture, keep in mind both direct and indirect measures of impact from the program. Even if the goal of the program is to simply increase morale, you can build metrics to examine the program’s effectiveness. For example, annual employee surveys or exit interviews can include questions to evaluate recognition in the workplace. Here are some criteria to have employees rank:
 - My manager recognizes me when I do good work.
 - My manager makes time for me when I need to talk.
 - I feel appreciated for the work I do.
 - I feel I am a valued member of the team, department or organization.

It's important not to stop at just finding out employees' attitudes and metrics results. Use those findings to improve the program. It's OK to change or alter the program, but be transparent and honest to employees. If you are asking for their feedback, use it to make the workplace better. Demonstrate that you are listening to employees, and explain why changes are being made. Keep the lines of communication open.

If you aren't sure about your employee recognition program, consider taking a step back. Deconstruct the program and evaluate what you're really doing when you recognize employees. Here are some additional general questions to ask yourself:

- Are the program's rewards adequate, fair, competitive and appropriate?
- Are the program's objectives being met?
- Does the program help improve organizational processes?
- Does the program support performance initiatives?
- Are there appropriate levels of communication?
- Are there celebrations?
- Do employees find the program meaningful?
- What should be done differently?

People want to be acknowledged for who they are and what they do. Engage them by being engaged yourself. The most effective program is honest, authentic and individualized to how employees want to be recognized.

Creating a Culture of Recognition

Even the best employees cannot perform well when they are not motivated enough. This is why employee recognition in the workplace has to be an innate part of any company's culture. A human workplace is one that fosters a culture of recognition while empowering employees, strengthening working relationships and providing a clear purpose aligned with business goals.

So, how do you create a culture of recognition? For starters, it's important to lead from the top. When managers either give recognition or amplify recognition from a peer, it reinforces the importance of that employee behavior. When employees see their managers acknowledging their peers or direct reports, they are more likely to recognize their teammates too.

Recognize the Everyday

It's easier to send recognition when an employee stays late to finish a project or works over the weekend on a critical issue. Don't forget about the employees who are performing well on a day-to-day basis, however. That work may also be critical to long-term business performance and success. Recognizing vital everyday actions reinforces them, motivates employees and boosts overall performance.

Recognize Employees in Meetings

Employee recognition should be given frequently and in the moment. Consider putting shoutouts on the agenda for standing employee team meetings. It doesn't matter if it's a simple "Thank you" or "Great job" on a project. What does matter is that employees are being recognized in front of their peers. If employees feel awkward speaking up, consider giving praise to those people first. The goal is to make recognition giving casual and timely. When employees know that shoutouts are built into every team meeting, they'll likely come prepared to the meeting with acknowledgment for their peers.

Why It Matters

If managers and employees send recognition one to three times each week, employee recognition becomes a natural part of company culture. It means employees are more likely to accept and respond to the recognition that they get. To be impactful and authentic, employee recognition should be given frequently and in the moment.



Employee Retention

Across many industries, employee retention continues to be at the top of the list of workforce management challenges. Building a culture of recognition can help build loyalty in the modern job-hopping workforce.

Most HR professionals have reported that their company's recognition practices had a positive effect not only on retention but also on engagement, culture and employee happiness. Additionally, when recognition programs are linked to organizational values, the programs are more likely to lead to a higher perceived return on investment among employees. Rewarding employees for exemplifying organizational values demonstrates the organization's commitment to those values.



Employer Brand

Many employers strive to boost their brand through employee recognition programs, which in turn helps with recruitment efforts. Consider a shareable recognition program to help strengthen the employer brand. A shareable recognition program provides rewards and motivates employees to share their experiences with others via word-of-mouth or on their personal social media channels. For example, an employee might not share that they received a bonus with their friends and family on Facebook, but they might share photos from an experiential reward like a trip or cooking class. Think of experiences that you'd personally be excited to share publicly and lead with those. Shareable recognition programs can help build organic buzz, encourage employee ambassadors and differentiate your company from the competition.

Well-aligned employee recognition efforts are associated with employee retention and recruitment, reinforcement of organizational guiding beliefs and maintenance of a strong employer brand. Other common workplace programs that may help with culture management include health and wellness, learning and development, and celebrating employees' life events.



Summary

There is no single easy way to engage and motivate employees in the workplace. However, in an era of increasing competitiveness for top talent, a well-managed recognition program can help employers attract and retain the best employees.

Although National Employee Appreciation Day falls annually on March 4, employee recognition should be a year-round celebration. Carefully consider how you plan to acknowledge and appreciate employees' workplace contributions and accomplishments. As important as planning and building an employee recognition program is, it's equally important to ask for feedback and measure whether the program is supporting and driving operational goals and missions. Once you know what drives and motivates the overall organization for success, you can apply those same principles to individually motivate the entire workforce.

For additional employee recognition resources, or information about employee engagement and retention, contact Employco USA, Inc. today.

Appendix

This appendix features valuable information, including infographics, an employee recognition checklist and an employee recognition survey. Please review these resources when designing your own employee recognition strategy. The information included in this section may require some customization, and it should only be used as a framework.

Please consult with Employco USA, Inc. if you have any questions about these materials or any other content in this toolkit.

Printing Help

There are many printable resources in this Appendix. Please follow the instructions below if you need help printing individual pages.

1. Choose the “Print” option from the “File” menu.
2. Under the “Settings” option, click on the arrow next to “Print All Pages” to access the drop-down menu. Select “Custom Print” and enter the page number range you would like to print, or enter the page number range you would like to print in the “Pages” box.
3. Click “Print.” For more information, please visit the Microsoft Word [printing support page](#).

THE IMPORTANCE OF EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION

An employee recognition program can help your organization:



Align employees to company values.



Attract top talent.



Build a positive company culture.



Improve employee productivity.



Retain the best employees.



Strengthen the bottom line.

The following statistics illustrate the importance of an employee recognition program:



65% of employees reported not receiving any form of recognition for their work in the last year.

(Source: Gallup)



70% of employees in the United States are not engaged.

(Source: Gallup)

68% of HR professionals agreed that employee recognition has a positive impact on retention, and **56%** said such programs also help with recruitment. *(Source: SHRM)*



A peer-to-peer recognition model is nearly **36%** more likely to have a positive impact on an organization's bottom line than manager-only recognition.

(Source: SHRM)



For a greater impact, organizations should invest **1%** of payroll in recognition and integrate it into their talent strategy.

(Source: SHRM)

CHECKLIST | EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION PROGRAM

Presented by Employco USA, Inc.

An employee recognition program can help maintain or improve positive workplace relationships and teamwork, as well as encourage a compassionate, thoughtful culture. Employee recognition can also have a positive impact on employee retention, and often even help with efforts such as recruitment. There is no one-size-fits-all approach for developing and implementing employee recognition programs, but there may be some best practices to making it successful. As your organization considers how to launch an employee recognition program, create and adjust it with your employees' wants and needs in mind so they feel a sense of belonging in the workplace and feel appreciated for their hard work.

Use this checklist as a general guide when developing and implementing a recognition program.

Selecting a Program	
Define the business need for an employee recognition program while answering the questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Why is it important to recognize and celebrate employees?• What will happen if praise isn't given to employees?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tie employee recognition to the organization's core values.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tie employee recognition to talent strategies.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reinforce and reward positive behaviors.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Developing a Program	
Ensure the program reinforces the overall business goal.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enable peer-to-peer employee recognition.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Identify clear recognition criteria and requirements.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Establish a budget for recognition efforts (for example, consider investing 1% of payroll).	<input type="checkbox"/>
Select incentives (intangible or tangible).	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use a platform to help operationalize actions.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use a platform for public employee recognition.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Invite remote employees to participate and share their needs and ideas.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Share recognition on a regular basis through expected channels.	<input type="checkbox"/>

This checklist is merely a guideline. It is neither meant to be exhaustive nor meant to be construed as legal advice. It does not address all potential compliance issues with federal, state or local standards. Consult your licensed representative at Employco USA, Inc. or legal counsel to address possible compliance requirements. © 2020 Zywave, Inc. All rights reserved.

Implementing a Program	
Lead from the top.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Train managers to do the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help employees understand the impact their performance has on the organization's goals and how they drive the business to succeed. • Discuss the approach for managing and rewarding individual and team performance. • Explain how the program works and how employees can achieve recognition. • Learn ways to motivate and inspire others. • Learn how to communicate needs, expectations and goals clearly. • Deliver praise in a sincere and timely manner. 	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provide a clear, written policy and guidelines about the program and its criteria.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Make employee recognition specific by providing details of the action or behavior being recognized.	<input type="checkbox"/>
State the impact by explaining why certain employee actions matter and ultimately move the organization forward.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Make employee recognition authentic.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Make employee recognition timely.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Make employee recognition frequent.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recognize the everyday actions and behaviors.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maintain the recognition process and overall program.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Evaluating and Improving a Program	
Ask employees for program feedback.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Measure whether certain skills or awareness levels have changed.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evaluate whether behaviors have changed.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consider both direct and indirect measures of impact from the program.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adjust the program if it is not meeting program goals or employees' needs.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Keep the lines of communication open.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Use this checklist as a guide when planning, developing and implementing an employee recognition program at your organization. For more information, contact Employco USA, Inc..

How to Write an Appreciation Letter

If managers and employees deliver recognition one to three times each week, employee recognition becomes a natural part of company culture. It also means employees are more likely to accept and respond to the recognition that they get. It's important to recognize the everyday actions and behaviors, and give that feedback in the moment.

Authentic employee recognition is:



Casual



Timely



Frequent



Specific

Writing a letter of appreciation is a courteous gesture—and helps keep a cycle of appreciation and recognition going among employees. To ensure recognition is authentic, managers should not use a templated letter or email to praise employees. However, there are certain elements that create a genuine thank-you note.

The next time you are going to write some kind words to show appreciation to co-workers, consider incorporating the following elements:

- Address the person directly (e.g., “Dear _____”).
- Be specific about what they did and why you are grateful.
- Explain why that was important or impactful to the organization.
- Thank them again before your closing signoff.

Don't worry about the length, or perfect grammar and spelling. A letter of appreciation can be as simple as a short thank-you email. But, with overflowing inboxes, it might be more meaningful to mail a handwritten letter or drop it off at their desk if you're in the same location.

Employee Recognition Survey

Here is a sample survey that you employers can send to employees. Consider how you're asking for feedback and what channel works best (e.g., one-on-one meetings, department meetings, or an anonymous survey sent via email or posted on organization intranet).

- Are you excited about the recognition program?
- Are the program guidelines clear and communicated well?
- Is the nomination and award process simple to use?
- Are employees receiving recognition fairly?
- How is it better than the previous program or activity?
- What is your favorite part of the program?
- What should be done differently?

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
My manager recognizes me when I do good work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My manager makes time for me when I need to talk.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel appreciated for the work I do.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel I am a valued member of the department.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel I am a valued member of the organization.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>