



Reflektive's Guide to **Effective Employee Recognition Programs**

1 1:1S

2 GOALS

3 REVIEWS AND CHECK-INS

4 FEEDBACK

5 RECOGNITION

6 ENGAGEMENT SURVEYS

Table of Contents



1. Introduction / 03

2. Why Recognition Is Critical for Performance / 04

3. Designing Your Recognition Program / 05

3.1 Develop Success Criteria

3.2 Make Recognition Easy

3.3 Provide Guidance on When and How to Give Recognition

3.4 Partner with Key Stakeholders

3.5 Develop an Integrated Campaign Plan

4. Launching a Recognition Program / 09

5. Conclusion / 10

6. Appendix / 11

1. Introduction



In this guide, we'll cover best practices for launching and managing an employee recognition program, as well as tips for driving valuable recognition across your entire workforce.



Most employees, leaders, and HR teams know that employee recognition is a good thing, and it contributes to a healthy workplace culture. But how does recognition support business objectives? Is it really that important to drive a culture of recognition at companies? According to the data, the answer is a resounding, yes!

While there is a business case to be made for driving a culture of recognition, it's less clear how to do it -- and how to sustain the culture over time. In this guide, we'll cover best practices for launching and managing an employee recognition program, as well as tips for driving valuable recognition across your entire workforce.



2. Why Recognition Is Critical for Performance

Workers who receive meaningful recognition are more likely to work harder and recommend their company as a great place to work.

Recognition is too often forgotten as a key aspect of performance management. Yet the value of recognition can be tied to critical business metrics like productivity, engagement, and employee retention. Additionally, recognition complements other performance programs, and provides visibility into key employee accomplishments.

Gallup research¹ found that only one in three U.S. workers strongly agreed that they have been recognized or praised for their work in the past seven days. Yet, people who receive meaningful recognition when they perform well are **3.6X more likely to work harder** than they have at past companies² and **3X more likely to recommend their company** as a great place to work.¹

What's more, a recognition program also:

- Acts as a **foundation** to build a culture of feedback
- Provides a **record** of individual and team achievements
- Helps promote company **values**
- Counters **recency bias** during performance reviews

Given the value of recognition, we've included best practices to successfully build and launch a program that your employees will love.

IMGUR HEALTH CASE STUDY

The HR team at Imgur cited the power of recognition in enabling employees to capitalize on their strengths and increase their self-awareness.

[Read the full case study →](#)

1. Source: <https://www.gallup.com/workplace/236441/employee-recognition-low-cost-high-impact.aspx>

2. Based on a Reflektive survey of 1,000+ US workers



3. Designing Your Recognition Program

While no two recognition programs are the same, these steps have helped HR teams around the world plan for a successful launch -- and continue to drive strong adoption months later.

3.1 Develop Success Criteria

Prior to developing a recognition strategy, we recommend that HR teams ask themselves: "How do we define success for our recognition program?" While qualitative information can help, quantitative data helps HR teams understand how recognition is trending, and if they should take additional steps to boost their culture of feedback.

OMADA HEALTH CASE STUDY

One year after launching Reflektive's recognition technology, Omada Health's top quartile engagement scores increased across the board.

[Read the full case study →](#)

Here are four key recognition metrics that we recommend HR teams evaluate:

1. Total Number of Posts

Helps HR teams see changes in company-wide recognition. You can also slice this data by location, department, or other demographic to see areas of strength and opportunity at your organization.

2. Posts Per Employee

Keep track of the average number of recognition posts per employee, and how this changes over time. This metric can also be helpful for measuring employee adoption.

3. Hashtag Usage

Are employees using the corporate value hashtags? This helps HR teams assess the values that most strongly resonate with employees, and those that do not.

4. Correlations

Look for correlations between the number of recognition posts and changes in engagement scores. Increased recognition may have a positive impact on employee sentiment.



3.2 Make Recognition Easy

To drive a culture of recognition, giving praise should be easy. Employees should be able to give peer recognition without having to deviate from their daily workflows. We recommend recognition tools that seamlessly integrate into employees' favorite workplace apps, such as Gmail and Slack. With recognition built into their favorite tools, employees are more likely to celebrate wins and continue strong performance.

HOW REFLEKTIVE HELPS

Reflektive's integrations with Microsoft Teams, Microsoft Outlook, Gmail, and Slack empower employees to give praise right when it comes to mind. Jessica Adams, VP of People at Brad's Deals says, "With the Slack integration, everyone can see recognition and react to it. It's worth the 30 or 60 seconds it takes to drive a culture of appreciation here."

[Learn more about Reflektive Integrations](#) →

PRO TIP

If both recognition and employee engagement are low, you can create a company-wide recognition campaign that encourages employees to show more appreciation.

Reward employees that...

Receive the most recognition

This helps you identify and celebrate high achievers at your company

Provide the most recognition

Identify key influencers that contribute to your organization's culture of feedback!





3.3 Provide Guidance on When and How to Give Recognition

After determining the metrics you'll evaluate, it's time to prioritize the employee experience. Employees need clarity on when to give recognition, and the best ways to provide it.

The "When"

In general, praise shouldn't be tossed around lightly. To ensure that it's meaningful for employees, we recommend that recognition is given for major milestones. At Reflektive, employees receive recognition when...

- A new program or product is launched
- A new partnership is live
- Internal technology or processes have been significantly improved
- A deal is closed
- A customer renews or expands
- A new market is entered
- A peer has developed a valuable skill
- A peer has gone above and beyond
- A peer has embodied one of the organization's core values
- An employee celebrates a workiversary

The "How"

In our experience working with hundreds of organizations, recognition adoption is highest when organizations use the following best practices for giving praise:

Keep it specific: By informing colleagues of specific actions that positively contributed to a project, they'll know which behaviors to continue.

Tie it to your values: Seeing company values in employee kudos helps bring the values to life, and helps instill your company culture.

Make it visible: Encourage employees to share recognition publicly -- this encourages peers to provide praise too.

Incorporate it into performance reviews: Knowing that praise from colleagues will be included in review cycles is added motivation to give kudos. Additionally, it saves time for managers and reduces recency bias during reviews!

BEST PRACTICE

Reflektive recommends choosing 3-5 hashtags that represent your company values. Employees can use these hashtags to celebrate achievements.

#customercommitment

#endlesscuriosity

#webeforeme



3.4 Partner with Key Stakeholders

After you develop your success criteria and recognition best practices, start building relationships to drive a successful launch of your recognition program. We recommend partnering with the following people:

Leadership

Department heads are your best allies in encouraging new employee behaviors. Tell leaders what you're looking to accomplish with your new kudos program, and why recognition is important in driving engagement and retention. Encourage leaders to provide recognition right after launch to set the tone for the rest of your workforce.

Managers

In addition to collaborating with department heads, managers will play a huge role in driving recognition across your company. Get input from managers on ways to boost praise at your organization, and the types of recognition their employees prefer.

Influencers

After you launch your program, identify employees who give recognition often. Ask these individuals what motivates them to give praise, and see if these practices can be replicated across your organization.

3.5 Develop an Integrated Campaign Plan

Now that you have key partners to launch your recognition program, it's time for the fun part -- building an internal campaign to drive excitement. We recommend a multi-pronged approach to make your recognition best practices stickier and more memorable.

Ideal places for recognition-related content are:

- Company-wide trainings
- New hire trainings
- All-hands meetings
- Your company's intranet
- Weekly recognition recap email
- Quarterly email to all employees celebrating a major accomplishment
- Posters around the office
- TV screens around the office
- Contest to incentivize employee kudos



4. Launching a Recognition Program

A culture of recognition requires encouragement of new employee behaviors and an organized gameplan to get there. The following launch plan has practical recommendations to help your organization get started and achieve long-term success.

Step 1

Pick a launch day

Best practice is to pick your launch date and work backwards to set key project milestones.

Step 2

Schedule your training sessions

Schedule manager and department head training sessions, as well as a company-wide session. Prior to the company-wide training, ensure leaders are fully enabled and know the best practices for providing meaningful recognition.

Step 3

Develop your email communications

Email #1: Introduce your recognition program. What are you launching? Why? When? (More tips in the appendix!)

Email #2: Announce a recognition challenge to boost adoption. Employees are more likely to participate in your program if there's a prize involved. (See appendix for challenge ideas!)

Step 4

Track Progress

Keep track of your recognition KPIs by leveraging a people analytics platform. Reflektive's People Intelligence solution can help.

[See People Intelligence](#) →

Step 5

Iterate, Iterate, Iterate

Pay attention to what's working and what isn't. Iterate on your program design to ensure you're driving a culture of recognition across your workforce.

PRO TIP

Pay attention to individuals who never or infrequently provide recognition. If there is low recognition on specific teams, engage with managers to determine additional ways to boost kudos. Additionally, encourage leaders to provide more kudos -- this will instill recognition as a company norm.

5. Conclusion



Recognition is a vital component of performance management. When employees feel appreciated, they're more likely to be happy and productive in their roles.

While most praise is delivered infrequently, there are many reasons why continuous recognition from team members, cross-functional colleagues, and leadership is extremely beneficial. With the right tools and programs, all organizations can foster a culture of feedback -- and see meaningful improvements to employee engagement and retention too.

Additional Resources

HR ADMINS

The ROI of Recognition in the Workplace

[Read the Blog Post](#) →

3 Tips for Creating a Culture of Recognition

[Read the Blog Post](#) →

Why Employee Recognition Needs to Go Beyond the 1:1

[Read the Blog Post](#) →

EMPLOYEES AND MANAGERS

Giving and Viewing Recognition

[Read the Guide](#) →

Tips for Giving Thanks to your Employees

[Read the Blog Post](#) →

6. Appendix



Recommended Content for Recognition Launch Email

We encourage HR teams to include the following content in their first company-wide recognition email:

- What is employee recognition?
- Why is recognition important, and how will it help employees?
- Best practices for giving and sharing recognition
- External resources that employees can reference in case they have more questions

Reflektive customers can access **free trainings** for managers and individual contributors!

[Learn more about our free trainings →](#)

Recognition Challenge Ideas

Challenge A: Employees who provide 5 pieces of recognition in the first week will be eligible for a raffle

Challenge B: An amazing piece of recognition will be highlighted in the All-Hands meeting and the winner will receive an extra vacation day

Challenge C: Whoever receives the most recognition in a week will get a pizza party for themselves and their team