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Volume 9, Issue 9: Employee Recognition

The Definition

Employee recognition is the acknowledgement of a job well done. It can be a spontaneous gesture of appreciation, made in an informal manner, or a formally structured programme to recognise those employees who have achieved a desired level of performance.

Employee recognition does not necessarily involve incentives or rewards; in fact, experts think recognition and rewards should not be lumped together in the same basket. Research has shown the importance of disassociating recognition from tangible rewards. The most important thing is to show genuine appreciation for the contribution an employee or team has made to the success of the organisation.

The Stage

Employee recognition can have a positive impact on everything from productivity and motivation, to engagement and retention. It is a crucial element, shared by many of the world's most successful organisational cultures. Recognition is not just something only executives should do; it should happen throughout the organisation. Research clearly shows that top-down recognition is *not* what makes companies thrive today – it is recognition by peers or, in other words, social recognition.

Employees respond to appreciation, expressed through recognition of their good work, because it confirms their work is valued. When employees and their work are valued, work satisfaction and productivity rise; this, in turn, motivates employees to maintain or improve their high standards. Despite the unquestioned benefits of employee recognition, organisations frequently execute their policies or programmes quite badly. In this light, many professional companies have now jumped on the bandwagon and offer employee recognition programmes and services.

Contents

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Editors: *Dr Robin Mann, Centre for Organisational Excellence Research*
       Michael Adams, Thingwall Communications (Canada).

1. What is "employee recognition"?

1.1 The Value of Employee Recognition
Source: Sodexo, United Kingdom (date of information: 2017)
Link (video): Employee Recognition: appreciating the remarkable

Application/Key learning points: Recognising people that have gone the extra mile helps a company succeed – indeed, 78 per cent of employees say recognition motivates them in their jobs. Learn about the importance of employee recognition and how it can help your employees and your organisation improve performance.

1.2 Why Is Acuity Insurance a Great Place to Work?
Source: Acuity Insurance, United States (date of information: 2016)
Link (video): Acuity Insurance - always a great place to work

Application/Key learning points: In just one minute, find out what employee recognition is all about. Acuity has put in place employee benefits and programmes that help keep its employee turnover rate at an incredible two per cent. Watch employees share short snippets on why they are so proud to work for Acuity.

1.3 Your Complete Guide to Employee Recognition
Source: Officevibe, Canada (date of information: 2017)
Link: Employee Recognition: The Complete Guide

Application/Key learning points: Do you know the difference between recognising an employee and rewarding an employee? This well-researched article answers this question, and many more, in a clear, easy-to-read way. This guide will show you how to create a culture of employee recognition, through which you can easily make your team and workplace happy.

1.4 Why Is Employee Recognition So Important?
Source: Cutting Edge PR, Australia (date of information: 2017)
Download (PDF): Why employee recognition is so important

Application/Key learning points: This article starts from the premise that everyone wants to be recognised – it is a fundamental need. There are two aspects to employee recognition. The first is to realise that there is an opportunity to recognise someone; the second is the act of acknowledging someone's good work. Additionally, the cost-benefit analysis (or payoff) for recognition will help you decide what to do in future.

1.5 Why It Is So Important to Recognise Employees – and How to Do It
Source: Chart Your Course International, United States (date of information: 2014)
Link: Employee recognition: why it's so important and how to do it

Application/Key learning points: US $46 billion! That's how much the employee recognition industry is worth annually. That is about two per cent of the total payroll for individual companies. Does recognition mean money? Read this short and practical article for insights.

"Recognition is the most inexpensive, easy-to-use motivational technique available to management."
—Jim Clemmer, Canadian columnist, speaker and author

2. Which organisations have been acknowledged for excellence in employee recognition?

2.1 Examples of Employee Recognition Awards
Sources & Links:

People Excellence Award, Singapore – a government-centred initiative to recognise people excellence programmes.

HRM Awards, Singapore – created by HRM Asia, these awards feature both public and private winners with top HR practices, including many international companies with a local presence.

Best Work Places Awards, New Zealand – hosted by IBM to showcase top workplaces in New Zealand.

HR Awards, New Zealand – these awards recognise excellence and outstanding achievement within New Zealand's HR community.

Top Companies to Work for in the UAE, United Arab Emirates – an annual list of the best companies to work for in the UAE.

The Best Workplaces Awards, United Kingdom – a highly regarded award that showcases Britain's best places to work.

HR Excellence Awards, United Kingdom and an international category) – the most prestigious and the longest running awards in the field of HR, focusing on HR excellence in many categories.

The European Excellence Awards in Human Resources, Europe – a collection of Europe's best HR practitioners that are judged by a renowned panel.

World HRD Congress and Awards, India – one of India's longest standing HR awards, featuring top organisations, primarily from within India.

The Australian HR Awards, Australia – Australia's most prestigious HR award, given to the companies with the best HR practices in 19 categories.

The Canadian HR Awards, Canada – the 19 organisational and individual categories ensure national recognition of both large and small organisations on their individual merits.

Application/Key learning points: These are examples of employee recognition awards from around the globe. You will be able to catch a glimpse of the best organisations in this space, and read about what makes them exceptional. Award winners are usually excellent organisations to contact and from which to learn.

2.2 Great Employee Recognition Cultures
Source: O.C.Tanner, United States (date of information: various)
Links: Cultures of great work
How does a luxury hotel staff create memorable moments for guests from Vancouver to Quebec City?
What if your business model depended on continual innovation?
How do you consistently grow a culture of recognition across multiple locations?

Application/Key learning points: We have selected three of the many snippets from this world-class organisation's website, which show how companies, large and small, have won accolades for having created a strong culture of recognition. You can access many other excellent articles and papers from the first link.

> *"People may take a job for more money, but they often leave it for more recognition."*
> *—Bob Nelson, employee engagement, recognition and rewards expert*

2.3 Top 100 Companies to Work for in 2017
Source: Great Place To Work, United States (date of information: 2017)
Link: Fortune 100 Best Companies to Work for in 2017

Application/Key learning points: The Fortune 100 Best Companies to Work For list recognises the best companies at maximising the human potential of their organisations. Every year, an extensive employee survey identifies the 100 best companies to work for. The ranking in this list is based on feedback from more than 232,000 employees, selected from companies with more than 1,000 employees. The three major survey questions revolve around the honesty and quality of communication by managers; the degree of support for employees' personal and professional lives (employee recognition); and, the authenticity of relationships with colleagues (peer recognition included). The results are highly reliable so check out the reasons why these organisations are as amazing to work for as they claimed to be.

2.4 UK Top Employers 2017
Source: Top Employers Institute, United Kingdom (date of information: 2017)
Link: UK Top Employers 2017 revealed

Application/Key learning points: The Top Employers Institute certifies companies from around the world for their great employee conditions. This list of the top ten performers from the United Kingdom includes PepsiCo UK & Ireland, Roche Products, CHEP UK Ltd., and Tata Consultancy Services. This is a good opportunity to learn from from these successful companies.

2.5 Britain's Top Providers of Employee Benefits
Source: Passion To Engage, United Kingdom (date of information: 2014)
Link: Top 5 employee benefits providers in the UK

Application/Key learning points: This is a list of the best service providers in the United Kingdom that design employee benefits programmes linking directly to recognition. These providers serve the best companies with superb recognition and benefits systems. Check out their websites to find out what their top clients do, and benchmark against them.

2.6 Employee Recognition in Action
Source: Bonusly, United States (date of information: 2017)
Download (PDF): 17 unique examples of employee recognition in action

Application/Key learning points: It can sometimes be difficult to find meaningful ways to recognise employees and teammates for their hard work. This article presents 17 examples from companies, large and small, from across the globe – and shows how they are making a difference in the lives of their employees by recognising their efforts in a unique and meaningful way.

"Employees who report receiving recognition and praise within the last seven days show increased productivity, get higher scores from customers, and have better safety records. They're just more engaged at work."
—Tom Rath, American well-being consultant and author

3. How have organisations achieved high levels of success in employee recognition?

3.1 Singapore Business Excellence Award: The IRAS Story
Source: Inland Revenue of Singapore, Singapore (date of information: 2011)
Link (PDF): IRAS Summary Report on People

Application/Key learning points: To engage employees, the Inland Revenue Authority of Singapore (IRAS), winner of the 2011 Singapore Business Excellence Award, implemented its Employee Engagement Framework. Engagement was driven by four mechanisms: a) job fit career advancement; b) positive work environment; c) empowerment and involvement; and, d) rewards and recognition. IRAS instituted a wide range of employee engagement strategies and programmes. These included a work-life strategy based around three key dimensions (family/friends, work, and health); strategies to provide challenging and meaningful jobs; opportunities for learning and development; and initiatives to promote employee well-being and satisfaction.

3.2 DHL UAE Tops Aon Hewitt Best Employee List
Source: Aon Best Employers, Middle East (date of information: 2013)
Download (PDF): DHL UAE tops Aon Hewitt's Middle East's best employer list

Application/Key learning points: Find out how DHL Express UAE was named the region's best employer for two years in a row in this short article. The country manager for DHL Express UAE said the company firmly believes its people are what makes the company a success – and this is why employee motivation and engagement is at the heart of everything done at DHL.

3.3 Malcolm Baldrige Award Winner 2016: Momentum Group
Source: National Institute of Standards and Technology, United States (date of information: 2016)
Download (PDF): Momentum Group

Application/Key learning points: Momentum Group, a fabrics manufacturer from the United States, was the recipient of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award 2016 Award for Small Businesses. The last page of this short article highlights Momentum's employee loyalty programme (average tenure of more than ten years), achieved through integrated learning and development, annual profit-sharing and an open and transparent culture. Succession planning and job rotations have led to 73 per cent of current managers being promoted from within.

3.4 Singapore Quality Award with Special Commendation Winner 2015: Singapore Civil Defence Force
Source: SPRING Singapore, Singapore (date of information: 2015)
Download (PDF): Singapore Quality Award with Special Commendation 2015

Application/Key learning points: The Singapore Civil Defence Force (SCDF) deploys a robust health and well-being framework implemented by its HR department in conjunction with individual departments. When employee achievements are formally recognised and rewarded, they are motivated to repeat their accomplishments. The last two pages of this PDF focus on SCDF's recognition programmes and how they improve performance.

3.5 Malcolm Baldrige Award Winner 2016: Kindred Nursing and Rehabilitation Centre

Source: National Institute of Standards and Technology, United States (date of information: 2016)
Download (PDF): Kindred Nursing and Rehabilitation Centre

Application/Key learning points: Kindred Nursing and Rehabilitation Centre, Mountain Valley, has a unique senior leadership stance. Leaders are required to walk around the Centre's various departments and engage with staff. When they observe good performance, it is flagged and the staff member is recognised and rewarded. Page 5 of this document details a "meetings and communication forums" table, showing how their recognition programmes are tracked and maintained. This is an interesting read on how leaders play a significant role in motivating and rewarding staff performance.

3.6 Google: One of the Best Employee Recognition Systems in the World

Sources: Quora, SABA, SlideShare, United States (date of information: 2015 & 2016)
Links: What sort of rewards and recognitions does Google offer to their employees?
Link: What can we learn about employee recognition from Google?
SlideShare: Google's reward programme

Application/Key learning points: Google has consistently been the top performer when it comes to its recognition and engagement programmes. Fortune.com ranked it the best company to work for six consecutive years. Find out why Google is so exceptional from three different perspectives, and discover, and how the company has created a culture that highly values every single employee.

4. What research has been undertaken into employee recognition?

4.1 Employee Recognition Programmes

Source: Morgan, Brown & Joy, LLP, United States (date of information: 2015)
Link (PDF): Employee recognition programmes

Application/Key learning points: This all-encompassing 17-page paper gives you all the reasons you need to put in place some form of a deliberate recognition programme. In addition to giving you evidence and showing how you can start a programme, the paper lists international examples and resources you can access for further information. There are also examples of recognition activities and programmes to consider for your own organisation. This paper is a must-read for practitioners and researchers alike.

4.2 Trends in Employee Recognition

Source: WorldatWork, United States (date of information: 2015)
Link (PDF): Trends in employee recognition

Application/Key learning points: This 2013 survey of nearly 500 members, underwritten by the ITA Group, gathered information about trends in recognition programmes. Among other things, the survey measured the prevalence of recognition programmes; the top-ranked programmes; the length of time in use; the formality and strategy; the goal and award types; budget amounts; buy-in; effects on engagement; and, retention.

4.3 2015 Employee Recognition Report

Source: Globoforce, Ireland (date of information: 2015)
Link (PDF): Findings from the 2015 Employee Recognition Survey

Application/Key learning points: According to this comprehensive report and survey from the Society for Human Resource Management and Globoforce, values-based employee recognition significantly contributes to bottom-line organisational metrics, and helps create a stronger culture and more human workplace. The 823 HR professionals who took part in the survey had the following to say about their employee recognition programme:
- 90 per cent said it had a positive impact on engagement
- 86 per cent said it increased employee happiness
- 84 per cent said it improved employee relationships
- 68 per cent said it had a positive impact on retention.

4.4 Key Principles for Effective Employee Recognition Activities

Source: Cutting Edge PR, Australia (date of information: 2013)
Link: Key organisational principles for effective employee recognition

Application/Key learning points: This interesting article points out the danger of leaving employee recognition solely to the HR department. Employee recognition is an important communication tool, which should be used by everyone to create a happy and productive workplace. In addition, the article points out the ten factors that contribute to successful recognition programmes. This website offers free access to many employee recognition articles.

4.5 The 12 Employee Recognition Statistics to Know

Source: TINYpulse, United States (date of information: 2016)
Link: 12 mind-blowing stats on employee recognition you need to know

Application/Key learning points: Here you will find 12 facts about employee recognition that might surprise you. These are compilations of excerpts from top research companies, including Bersin & Associates, Globoforce, and HRM Report. Fill in these gaps and you are likely to see some amazing results in your organisation.

4.6 The Secret of Employee Recognition

Source: Forbes (date of information: 2012)
Link: New research unlocks the secret of employee recognition

Application/Key learning points: Did you know that 87 per cent of tenure-based rewards programmes have little or no impact on organisational performance? The research in this fascinating article also shows that organisations with great recognition systems have about 31 per cent lower turnover. Find out the five best practices Forbes uncovered in this brilliant article.

4.7 The Importance of Recognition: Rewards and Recognition Providers

Source: Workforce, United States (date of information: 2013)
Link: Companies recognising importance of recognition: rewards and recognition providers

Application/Key learning points: The use of recognition and rewards programmes to drive performance appears to be the focus of modern organisations. Read this short, insightful article about the importance of designing a good programme to make employees feel good – and to propel worker productivity.

4.8 Recognising across Cultures: China
Source: [Globoforce](), Ireland (date of information: 2014)
Link: [Recognising across cultures: China]()

Application/Key learning points: Do you know what "guanxi" means? If you don't, this is a great article for you. The Chinese account for some 20 per cent of the world's population, and the country's business ethics are felt far and wide. China has a unique employee recognition culture, and the Chinese spend a considerable amount of time establishing relationships and building a climate of trust, understanding, and cooperation. Time is incredibly flexible when it comes to spending time on relationships.

5. What tools and methods are used to achieve high levels of success in employee recognition?

5.1 Innovative Employee Reward and Recognition Tools
Source: [Reward Gateway](), United Kingdom (date of information: 2017)
Link: [Demo Recognition]()

Application/Key learning points: Reward Gateway provides you with a really useful template to map out your organisation's employee recognition programme. There are great examples and suggested plans to consider adopting or modifying to your needs.

5.2 What you need for successful employee recognition
Source: [Officevibe](), Canada (date of information: 2015)
Link (PDF): [The 12 things you need for successful employee recognition]()

Application/Key learning points: In a study of 834 organisations, Bersin & Associates found that companies scoring in the top 20 per cent for building a "recognition-rich culture" also had 31 per cent lower voluntary turnover rates. If you are looking to build a rich culture in your organisation, this article would be a great place to start.

5.3 Linking Your Organisation's Objectives with Rewards and Recognition
Source: [Peoplecart](), India (date of information: 2015)
Link (video): [Link the objective of the organisation with rewards and recognition]()

Application/Key learning points: In a little under three minutes, Vamsi Ram Maddimsetty, the managing director of Peoplecart, talks about the current trends of peer-to-peer recognition and being able to choose the kind of recognition you might want. He explains how technology can be deployed organisation-wide to facilitate a powerful rewards and recognition programme.

5.4 Five Tips for Effective Employee Recognition
Source: [the balance](), United States (date of information: 2017)
Link: [5 tips for effective employee recognition]()

Application/Key learning points: Here are five useful tips to communicate your appreciation to your employees. In this short article, employee recognition is portrayed as a communication tool to reinforce and reward key outcomes in your business.

5.5 The Ultimate Guide to Peer Employee Recognition
Source: 6Q, Australia (date of information: 2015)
Link: The ultimate guide to peer employee recognition

Application/Key learning points: Peer-to-peer employee recognition is a great way to increase the involvement of employees in the business of engagement and appreciation. This guide defines peer employee recognition, provides statistics, shows the benefits, and guides you to choose employee recognition software. There is also a short guide to developing your own peer employee recognition programme.

6. How can the success in employee recognition be measured?

6.1 Showing the Value of Employee Recognition Programmes
Source: Sodexo, United Kingdom (date of information: 2014)
Link: Demonstrating value in employee recognition programmes: Why VOI is the new ROI

Application/Key learning points: So you have a great employee recognition programme plan – but how do you go about measuring its impact? Most organisations go about it by calculating the return on investment of the programme, but soon realise the returns cannot be attributed to the single source of the recognition programmes. This article/guide will help you to demonstrate to senior management the value on the investment (or VOI) of these programmes.

6.2 Employee Recognition: Understanding the Construct, its Measurement and its Relationship to Employee Outcomes
Source: Saint Mary's University, Canada (date of information: 2015)
Download (PDF): Employee Recognition by Michael Cannon

Application/Key learning points: If you are looking for an academic understanding of the correlation between employee recognition and work outcomes, this 133-page document is for you. Turn to page 49 to see the strong correlation with some key outcomes, including emotional well-being; turnover intention; perceived organisational support; trust in the leader; and, perceived leader justice. The model will help you predict outcomes related to organisational citizenship behaviours as mentioned above.

6.3 Recognition via Employee Suggestion Scheme: Self-Assessment
Source: BPIR.com (date of information: 2015)
Download (PDF): Employee Suggestion Scheme Self-Assessment

Application/Key learning points: Staff suggestion schemes are very popular amongst organisations seeking ideas for improvement. Your ability to harness innovation and breakthrough ideas through your employees really depends on how well you recognise them for their efforts, and how much attribution you give to them for both big and small ideas. Find out where you are with this three page survey.

"The power of recognition is one of the strongest forces for stimulating human and social action. Yes, recognition is a powerful motivator to those who receive it as well as those who observe it."
—Lowell Milken, American businessman and philanthropist

6.4 The Problem with Measuring the ROI of Employee Recognition Programmes

Source: WorkStride, United States (date of information: 2016)
Link: The problem with measuring the ROI of employee recognition programmes

Application/Key learning points: Launching an employee recognition programme may not always work; you need to measure it, and measure it correctly. The return on investment for a recognition programme, as it relates to its effect on a business, really depends on business priorities; it is, therefore, different for every organisation. Notwithstanding, there are some factors (listed here) that can realistically be used to measure most programmes.

6.5 The Value and ROI in Employee Recognition

Source: Human Capital Institute, United States (date of information: 2009)
Download (PDF): Value and ROI in employee recognition

Application/Key learning points: Though this study is slightly dated, the findings remain relevant in today's context. It shows the strong correlation between recognition and how well your employees are engaged with organisational goals. It also advises organisations to have multiple streams of award and appreciation as every employee view recognition differently. Check out the three case studies of Scotiabank, Delta Airlines, and MGM Grand, illustrating how some organisations are restructuring their recognition programmes to better align them with employee engagement and business strategy.

6.6 Employee Assessment of Your Management and Leadership Skills

Source: BPIR.com (date of information: 2015)
Download (PDF): Self-Assessment: Do you lead and recognise your employees?

Application/Key learning points: Employees primarily want to know if you value them and their work. This is an excellent self-assessment tool, which be completed by people who report to you in order to give you feedback on your management and leadership skills. From their feedback you will have a greater understanding of your capabilities in motivation; job definition; positive reinforcement; coaching; time management; corrective action; interviewing and hiring; and, leadership.

7. What do business leaders say about employee recognition?

"People may take a job for more money, but they often leave it for more recognition."
—*Bob Nelson, employee engagement, recognition and rewards expert, United States*

"By common consent of all the nations and all the ages the most valuable thing in this world is the homage of men, whether deserved or undeserved."
—*Mark Twain, American writer, humourist, entrepreneur, publisher, and lecturer*

"The power of recognition is one of the strongest forces for stimulating human and social action. Yes, recognition is a powerful motivator to those who receive it as well as those who observe it."
—*Lowell Milken, American businessman and philanthropist*

"Don't worry when you are not recognised, but strive to be worthy of recognition."
—*Abraham Lincoln, former American President*

"Recognition is not a scare resource. You can't use it up or run out of it."
—*Susan M. Heathfield, human resources expert, United States*

"A pat on the back is only a few vertebrae removed from a kick in the pants, but is miles ahead in results."
—*Ella Wheeler Wilcox, American author and poet*

"A boss wants to pay for results, an employee wants recognition for effort. If a boss recognises effort, they will get even better results."
—*Simon Sinek, British/American author and motivational speaker*

"There's nothing greater in the world than when somebody on the team does something good, and everybody gathers around to pat him on the back."
—*Billy Martin, American Major League Baseball manager*

"It is important that you recognised your progress and take pride in your accomplishments. Share your achievements with others. Brag a little. The recognition and support of those around you is nurturing."
—*Rosemarie Rossetti, inspirational/motivational speaker, United States*

"No matter how busy you are, you must take time to make the other person feel important."
—*Mary Kay Ash, American businesswoman*

"Recognition is the most inexpensive, easy-to-use motivational technique available to management."
—*Jim Clemmer, Canadian columnist, speaker and author*

"Employees who report receiving recognition and praise within the last seven days show increased productivity, get higher scores from customers, and have better safety records. They're just more engaged at work."
—*Tom Rath, American well-being consultant and author*

"There is more hunger for love and appreciation in this world than for bread."
—*Mother Teresa, Nobel Peace Prize winner, Macedonia*

Conclusion

This report outlines the best practices research undertaken by BPIR.com in Employee Recognition. The best practices have been compiled under seven main headings. This new layout is designed to enable you to scan subjects that are of interest to you and your organisation, quickly assess their importance, and download relevant information for further study or to share with your colleagues.

Disclaimer: *Recent information has been included in this report to ensure our readers are kept up to date with the latest research; where possible, permanent links have been provided. At the time of publishing, all links are live. We apologise in advance for any broken links that might occur after publication due to matters beyond our control.*

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