



40 WAYS
TO SHOW
love TO YOUR
EMPLOYEES

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ENGAGE EMPLOYEES WITH RECOGNITION

Recognition is one of three top factors having **the most influence on employee engagement**. Yet, less than one percent of organizations perform best in that area.

That's a problem.

When employees feel valued, their engagement and productivity rises, and they are motivated to do their jobs better.

This ebook will give you 40 proven, fun, sentimental, and fresh ideas so you can give your employees the recognition – the love – they want and deserve.



#1

Happy Anniversary!

Nothing says, “You’re appreciated!” like celebrating the day each employee joined your workforce. Big company? Modify your celebrations.

- Throw monthly parties to celebrate numerous work anniversaries at once (think grade school summer birthdays).
- Delegate party planning to team leaders and let each department honor employees with their own celebrations.
- Set aside one day each year to celebrate. (Save the Date: National Employee Appreciation Day is in March!)



#2

Say Thank You

“Two of the most underused words in corporate America with the most potential to impact ROI and ROT.”

(Michael Guld, president of the Guld Resource Group)

This simple expression of gratitude sends a powerful message. These two little words give employees the priceless recognition they deserve, acknowledge that you depend on your employees for help, and express that you value employee contribution.



#3

What's Next, Boss?

The survey item,

"I know how I fit into the organization's future plans,"

ranked third amongst the most uncertain survey items. In other words, employees don't know what the future holds for them at their organization, and it's negatively impacting their engagement. Sit down with your employees to discuss their career goals and your vision for their growth.



#4

Say Please

Stick to the rules of conversational etiquette. Simple, isn't it?





#5

What's Going On?


Your employees are more than just a payroll number. Express interest in their personal lives (as well as professional) to show you care. Don't know what to talk about? Here are a few topics to get you started:

- Family and pets
- Weekend plans
- Local events
- Vacation plans
- Favorite restaurants
- New movies
- Popular TV shows
- After work activities
- The news



#6

Say My Name, Say My Name



Destiny's Child said it best. Get on a first-name basis with all of your employees, regardless of tenure, rank, or department. A warm smile and friendly greeting can go a long way when you're trying to make employees feel valued.



#7

Flexible Schedules

Allowing employees flexible schedules is a huge benefit. It gives them freedom to get work done on their terms, letting it blend with their personal schedules in a way that makes them happy.



8

Toast Success!

Happy hours are a great way to celebrate team or organizational success. You can host happy hours in a variety of ways:

- **Keep it simple:** Bring in some wine and beer for an in-office party.
- **Mix up something non-alcoholic:** Alcohol-free punches are a fun option, especially in alcohol-free work environments or those with employees who are minors.
- **Special delivery:** Take orders for Sonic drinks and hand-deliver them to your employees.
- **Pick a theme:** Margarita machines are always a hit!
- **Create a specialty cocktail:** Serve up a special menu of cocktails with creative names to highlight outstanding employees or project successes.
- **Go out:** Hit up the local happy hour and pick up the bill for employees.



#9

Make an Announcement

No, not over an old-school PA like Principal McGee in Grease . Instead keep it casual and take a few minutes at the beginning of a company meeting to share the good news.



#10

Donut Stop

Recognize an employee or a team by putting donuts (or any snack) at the employee's cube or team area. Announce it via email, so everyone can stop by to grab a treat and give thanks for all the hard work.



#11

A+ for Effort

Too often, the only end result that gets recognized is a job well-done. What about employees who invest time and effort into a project that falls just short of the end goal? Recognize hard work to keep employees motivated and help them regain confidence by turning the failure into a learning experience.





#12


You've Got Mail!

Get the word out ASAP and send a quick email blast. It doesn't have to be fancy, just enough to let everyone know of an awesome employee's awesome accomplishment.



#13

Celebrate Personal Milestones



Part of showing employees you care is expressing interest in their personal lives and events that are meaningful to them. Birthdays, weddings, new babies, new homes, work anniversaries, graduations, etc. — celebrate these meaningful moments. You can keep it simple or go all out. Here are a few ideas:

- Announce these important occasions via email or Intranet
- Birthday month cakes with everyone's name
- Ice cream social to celebrate new MBAs
- A personal or group card
- A balloon bouquet
- Singing telegram
- A gift for special work anniversaries



#14

Team Retreat

Reward employees with a little getaway. This can be as little as or big as you want. It can be a getaway for one employee, an employee and guest, or a whole team. Here are a few ideas:

- Afternoon at the movies
- Day trip to a local winery
- Local museum visit
- Two-night bed and breakfast getaway
- Destination, one-week, team retreat



#15

What Do You Think?

Employees feel valued when you appreciate both their contribution and their opinion. Ask a peer for some advice the next time you're stumped.





#16

Coffee Break

Give your employee, team, or office a little caffeine pick-me-up. At a small scale, this could simply be a manager bringing in an employee's favorite coffee drink. But, why not go company-wide and hire a barista to come in and make fancy drinks on a special day. Or if you really want to get fancy, make it a permanent fixture with an on-site coffee shop.



#17

Annual Awards Ceremony

Recognize employees with some fun and serious workplace awards. Tie these to your company values. You could announce the winners in a variety of ways from a casual town hall meeting to fancy ceremony. Here are some award ideas:

- Team Player of the Year
- Best Barista
- Most Energetic on Mondays
- The Growth Award
- Best Customer Service
- The Innovator Award
- Funniest Team Member
- The Above and Beyond Award
- The Joy Maker
- The Integrity Award



#18

Vacation Time

Celebrate an employee's phenomenal work by awarding an extra day paid vacation.





#19

Let Them Learn!

Engaged employees rank access to new learning or training opportunities as one of the most important forms of recognition, preceded only by a pay increase. Give your employees the opportunity to learn something new. Send them to a conference; sign them up for an online course; help out with tuition reimbursement; or find opportunities for them to cross-train with other coworkers to develop a new skill. The best thing about this one is that it's a gift that keeps giving. Your employees benefit; your organization benefits; it's a win-win.

For more research on employees' preferences for professional development, check out our ebook: **Employee Development Planning: How to Keep Them Happy and Engaged With Programs They'll Love.**





#20

Front Row Parking

Reward hard work with front row parking. Give up that reserved parking spot you've been using and turn it into a weekly traveling reward. Employees will appreciate the gesture, and the convenience.





#21

Standing O

When a hardcore rock band puts on a stellar performance, the crowd goes wild. Why not recognize employees in the same flattering fashion? Get all your employees together in one room, really pack them in. Invite your employee of honor, and give him or her a standing ovation.



#22

Not Enough Hours in the Day

Who couldn't use a little more time in their personal lives? Award employees with time — extra time for lunch, for errands, or other personal reasons. Make this process as formal or as informal as you'd like. For example, you could give managers a certain number of one-hour tokens that they could distribute over the course of a quarter, or it could be as simple as a manager telling an employee to take an extra hour break sometime this week.



#23



Org Bucks

Create your own custom phony money (for example: QW Bucks) or just use monopoly money to award employees over time. Let employees cash in their fake money for rewards. Think arcade tickets for adults. Prizes could come from your company store (branded items), or you could set up a treasure trove of items, including gift cards, treats, desk items, etc.



#24

Brag Boards

Make employee recognition visible to the entire organization. Create a brag board where leaders and employees can post their recognition of direct reports, team members, and peers. The shared responsibility will help ensure that no workplace accomplishment goes unnoticed.

Do corkboards and thumbtacks cramp your style? GoalPost allows you to publicly recognize peers for their outstanding work and excellence. [Schedule a demo](#) to learn how your organization can use GoalPost's interactive recognition platform to make sure employees feel valued.

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PERFORMANCE DRIVEN



#25

Write it Down

Make your recognition personal, and send a hand-written note of appreciation. Your employees will appreciate the gesture.





#26


Recognition Circle

Get each employee to write down something positive about the employee you're recognizing. Read the comments aloud in a group meeting. (Bonus points if the employee blushes!)



#27

Spirit Week



Remember Spirit Week from high school? Who didn't love that? Build spirit in your organization by doing something similar, for one day or all week long. Tie it into your organization's favorite charity by asking people to donate a certain amount to participate, and if possible have the company match their donations. Here are a few spirit day ideas:

- Casual Friday
- Ugly Sweater Day
- Bring Your Pet to Work Day
- Sports Day
- Crazy Hair Day
- Dress Like a Book Character Day
- Moustache Day
- Twin Tuesday
- Favorite Decade Day



#28


Traveling Award

Create an award for high-performers, and rotate it regularly around the office each week, month, quarter, or year. The award should be something visible and can match your culture. It could be a small traditional trophy or something quirky like a super hero figurine. As a bonus, you could offer the winner something to go along with the award, like a gift card or the opportunity to have dinner with the leadership team.



#29

Summer Hours or Early Dismissal



A lot of organizations have started giving employees summer hours where they can leave a little early on Fridays during the summer. Why not extend this idea? When there's reason to celebrate, close the office early for the day.

#30

Front Page News

Do you have a company newsletter where you notify employees of company updates, upcoming events, or community news? Dedicate a spread to recognize employees. Get creative with the page name, like "Appreciation Announcements" or "Success Showcase."

An employee newsletter is also a great medium to help you keep engagement a top priority throughout the entire organization. For ideas on what to include in your company newsletter, check out our ebook: *Creative Ways to Incorporate Employee Engagement Into Internal Communications*.





#31

Alert the Authorities!

When an employee does something outstanding, send a note to the leadership team. Tell them about the employee's accomplishments, and request that they take a minute to recognize or thank the employee via email, a note, or in-person.



#32

Bring in Lunch

Surprise an employee or your team with lunch. Even if you already have an on-site cafeteria or stocked kitchen, a catered lunch is a nice way to break things up with something different.





#33

The Classic Gift Card

Not sure what kind of gift to give your employees? The classic gift card is always a safe bet. Here are a few ideas:

- Provide a week's worth of morning coffee with a gift card to a nearby coffee shop.
- Pay for a fancy night out with a gift card to a five-star restaurant.
- Give employees the gift of giving with a corporate charity gift card.
- Supply a day of fun with two tickets to an amusement park, museum, zoo, or movie matinée.

Our friends at Network for Good offer corporate charity gift cards called Good Cards. With more than one million charities to choose from, a Good Card can give your employees the power to spread help and hope wherever they choose.





#34

Wax On, Wax Off

Step outside the recognition norms and give employees a professional car cleaning while they're at work. Save some money and do the detailing yourself.





#35


Cash Bonus

Nothing says I appreciate your contribution like cold, hard cash. In fact, a cash bonus ranked among the top six preferred forms of recognition across all engagement profiles. If your budget allows, pass out yearly, quarterly, or spontaneous cash bonuses to keep productivity high and employees engaged.



#36

Subscribe!



Subscribe to a variety of magazines, from business to fun, and leave them in the common areas of your office. Why not take a quick poll before you make your order and get some employee feedback on what magazines they want — Men's Health, Self, Cosmo, Vogue, Martha Stewart, Inc. Magazine, The Economist, Time, or National Geographic ?



#37



Members Only

No, we're not recommending you hand out 80s jackets, though that might be nice. Instead, why not give employees memberships to various organizations, such as:

- A professional organization
- A gym membership
- A family zoo pass
- Season tickets to the theater
- A museum membership
- Season sports tickets
- Wine-of-the-month club



#38


Give Them a Challenge

Give employees a new opportunity to head a project or take on new responsibilities. It gives them the opportunity to learn and grow, and it also lets them know you trust them to rise up to the challenge.



#39

Post It Online



When employees do awesome work, why not share it with the entire world (literally). Publish employee contributions, accomplishments, promotions, etc., on your corporate website for customers, prospects, competitors, and future talent to see. Better yet, dedicate an entire section to your employee recognition.



#40

Team Lunch

Did your sales team just have an outstanding month of sales? Did your product team successfully launch a brand new product? Take your high-performing team out for a long lunch to celebrate, and have your organization pick up the bill.