

25 Employee Reward Ideas to Increase Employee Engagement

How do you create and implement a total rewards strategy?

Best-in-class businesses follow a formal process to ensure they're building a rewards strategy that compliments their culture and really helps engage their employees through purposeful, meaningful rewards and recognition.

If you're ready to create and implement a total rewards strategy, consider these steps:

1 Evaluate your current rewards strategy.

Start with an assessment of what you have in place today. Are you rewarding employees in any way? Do you have a formal recognition program? Do you offer wellness initiatives? Do you track employee engagement or satisfaction? Once you have a clear idea of how you are compensating employees—in all ways (benefits, rewards, recognition, salary, etc)—you can build a plan that will include all of the key areas to make it successful.

2 Assess your company's needs.

A total rewards strategy won't work in the long run if it isn't aligned to the business's mission, vision, goals, and values. Without a deep understanding of who your business is, what it's working towards, and why you value employees in the first place, you can't build an employee rewards strategy that will last.

Identify the areas your organization needs some improvement in order to maximize engagement and get the most out of your total rewards and recognition initiative.

3 Ask for employee feedback.

Survey your employees to understand how they feel appreciated and what they view as recognition (and a reward) from the business. Consider offering a few suggestions that they can select from—tangible rewards, compensation, benefits, physical products, etc.

Plus, when you ask for employee feedback, you'll likely find out some areas for improvement that weren't on your radar and help your team members feel valued. If you want to increase tenure and keep your rockstar employees, start by listening to their needs and building their total rewards strategy around the things that are important to them.

4 Create your employee rewards strategy.

Armed with the areas you've identified for improvement, employee feedback, and information about what you're currently offering your workforce, you can design an effective rewards strategy for your business. This will likely look different for each company, but most will often include a mix of benefits, performance-based rewards, milestone gifts, a recognition program (best if it's aligned to company values), and rewards (e.g. physical gifts, travel and experiences, company swag, perks, and more).

Take Note:

While an employee rewards strategy is a great first start, offering meaningful rewards is even better. And for companies that want to reach a best-in-class status—and see the most impact from their total rewards strategy—your employee rewards strategy should include a more comprehensive approach to a culture focused on engagement where rewards and recognition serve a higher purpose.

Company swag, gift cards, and an extra day of PTO are nice, but they're not the reason employees stay longer. Rewards must be connected to employee needs, company values, and a culture of appreciation in order to make the most impact.

5 Launch your new total rewards strategy.

Communicate your new strategy in the way that works best for your employees. For some, this might mean hosting a launch party to celebrate your new benefits package. For others, it could look like a quick training lunch on the new peer-to-peer recognition program. Or, if you've got a distributed team, it might make the most sense to communicate and announce your new total rewards strategy through your company intranet or internal communication tools. Whatever it looks like for you, be sure to communicate (and communicate again) what your strategy is to your employees so they are aware of how you are compensating them (and showing them they are valued).

Pro tip: *One way to ensure employees are crystal clear on how much they're valued at the business is to break down exactly how they are recognized and compensated at work. This could be presented in a single doc that showcases, line-by-line, the monetary value of all the benefits, perks, and compensation they receive from the business (including potential rewards).*

6 Measure your success.

Review your program's success by implementing an annual review of the strategy. This could involve another survey to employees to collect feedback and asking managers to weigh in on engagement changes from their team. One of the best ways to measure the impact of your programs and initiatives is through employee satisfaction surveys and comparing eNPS over time. Collect your findings, look for areas of improvement, and make adjustments as needed to continually improve your total rewards strategy.

25 Employee Reward Ideas

Need a few recognition ideas to get started? Consider this list with reward ideas that connect to specific events:

P.S. You can do nearly all of these with Motivosity. Make your life easier and see how Motivosity's [employee recognition software](#) can help you level up your company culture.

Reward	Recognition Event	Description
1. Branded water bottle	Wellness initiative	Gift employees a branded water bottle to kickoff your new wellness initiative—encouraging employees to drink more water and stay hydrated.
2. Gift basket for date night	Employee wedding	Celebrate the big event in your employee's life by gifting them a date night basket that they can use with their new spouse.
3. Luxury trip	Top sales rep/ reaching quota	Motivate your sales team (or other teams with different goals) to meet their quota and qualify for a luxury trip paid for by the company.
4. Company swag	Onboarding a new hire	Welcome new employees to your business with company swag, helping them feel included and like they're already part of the team.
5. Favorite treats	Employee birthday	Gift employees their favorite treat on their birthday each year.
6. Home office enhancement	1-year anniversary of remote work	Offer employees a new home-office stipend after their one-year work anniversary.
7. Self care pamper day	After a busy quarter	Gift employees a special pamper day with a gift card (and time) to get a massage.

8. Personalized thank you notes	Excellent performance	Give employees a handwritten note from the CEO or their direct manager to highlight the company's recognition of excellent performance.
9. New parent care package	New baby	Deliver a welcome home baby gift package to new parents—include diapers, baby clothes, or even a gift card to let the employee pick out what they need.
10. Service day options	Quarterly event	Give employees the option to go do service without taking PTO from their saved days.
11. Nike or other shoe company gift card	Wellness initiative	Offer the first 50 people who finish the wellness walking challenge a \$100 gift card to get a new pair of sneakers.
12. Books or a gift card to purchase a book	Company book club	Gift employees that participate in the company book club for a full year a gift card to purchase their own books (or deliver copies of the book for book club to all those that participate).
13. Wellness kit (yoga mat, stress balls, etc.)	Mental health awareness	Offer employees a wellness kit, packed with items that align to a specific wellness initiative, like mental health.
14. Spotify or Apple Music subscription	Return-to-office initiative	Gift employees who are returning to the office something for their commute—a music subscription service.
15. Charitable donations	Milestones	Donate money in your employee's name once they reach a specific milestone at the business—years served, promotion earned, etc.
16. Restaurant gift cards	Meeting a deadline/ finishing a project	Surprise employees that have been working extra hours or overtime to meet a deadline or finish a project to show them how much you appreciate their efforts with a gift card to their favorite restaurant.

17. Headphones, speakers, power banks	Innovative ideas	Give employees a tech product to celebrate innovative ideas or outstanding work.
18. Spa gift certificate	Work anniversary	Offer your employees a way to relax as a celebration of their years of service with a spa gift certificate.
19. Paid Time Off	Exceptional performance	Boost your employee's PTO bank with extra days to reward them for exceptional performance on a project, working with a new team, etc.
20. DoorDash gift card	Long work days	Reward employees with a paid lunch on a long work day when they're putting in extra hours.
21. 3-day weekend	Summer holiday	Implement half-day Fridays in the Rotate a special 3-day weekend reward and gift it to employees that finish projects on time.
22. Tickets to a concert, play, or activity	Exceptional work	Highlight hard work by gifting employees tickets to a local event.
23. Lunch with the CEO	New hires or a quarterly rotating roster	Sponsor a lunch event with new hires to get to know the CEO or consider a rotating quarterly event with a different guest list each time.
24. Front-row parking spot	Employee of the Month	Give your Employee of the Month primary parking privileges for a month with a designated space at the front of the building.
25. Gift cards—Walmart, Target, Amazon, Visa, etc.	Short-term goal achievements	Hand out gift cards to employees who reach short-term goals.

