



motivosity

Turn The Great Resignation Into The Great Recognition:

The Future of Employee Engagement



If you've spent any time in the workplace over the last 30 years, you've probably heard the phrase "Employee Engagement." Maybe you've been sent a few questions asking if you have a best friend at work or there's a dusty suggestion box sitting in the corner of the breakroom.

But guess what? Employee engagement is SO much more than an annual survey, an Employee of the Month parking space, or that coveted President's Club vacation. Unfortunately, most people still aren't sure what successful employee engagement programs look like—until now. We've unlocked the secret to creating and implementing programs that your employees will actually want...and use!

So, let's dive in. We'll explore the history of employee engagement programs, why they haven't worked—and frankly, won't ever work. Then we'll let you in on the secret of the future of employee engagement and our secret sauce to the program of your DREAMS. (...and your employees' dreams, too!)

Employee Engagement... What Is It?

It's December 1990. The Hubble Telescope launched a few months ago, you've got Billy Joel playing on your Discman, and you're feeling good.

At the same time, some guy named William Kahn proposed the idea that when people feel safe at work and find meaning in what they do, they are more likely to personally engage themselves. At the core, he defined exactly what employee engagement is.

Today, Gallup defines employee engagement as "people who are involved in, enthusiastic about, and committed to their work and workplace." So, that dude was really onto something. In fact, we even consider him the father of modern employee engagement theory.

Since Kahn's brilliant discovery, companies have tried and tried and tried to find that perfect formula to not only boost employee engagement, but to maintain positive engagement long-term. While some efforts have been successful to intrigue employees initially (we're talking about you, ping pong tables and free soda...), they don't actually do anything to retain and engage employees on a long term basis.

You might be asking, "well, where do we go from here?" Lucky for you, Motivosity has dedicated itself to helping people be happy at work. And we don't just mean for a few months—we mean they are actually happy. They love what they do and who they work with. That's why we've put together this guide to the history—and future of—employee engagement.



**Companies that
focus on employee
engagement are
23% more
profitable
than those that don't.**

Epic Fails: Employee Engagement Edition

For the last 30 years, no matter what's been tried, employee engagement levels hover around 30%. There are probably a lot of reasons why the employee engagement programs we know (but we don't really love...) haven't been working. Here are a few of the most common employee engagement programs. (Don't worry, we've all done 'em!) Let us tell you why they don't work.

But don't sweat! We'll tell you how to fix it, too.

Fail #1: Rewards Only

You know what we're talking about. The dusty plaque in your desk drawer, the sub-par pen with your name on it; rewards are great in theory, but without anything meaningful attached to them, they're just a really expensive paper weight.

Why It Doesn't Work: Rewards without meaningful recognition mean... well, they mean nothing. Your employees aren't interested in crystal trophies for a great quarter. They care about being thoughtfully recognized for the hard work they're doing.

The Solution: Use your words! When you come from a place of authenticity and genuinely acknowledge and appreciate your employees, they may not remember exactly what you said, but they'll remember how you made them feel. And THAT, ladies and gentlemen, is something they'll take home with them.

Fail #2: Employee of the Month

It might just be us, but getting a generic picture plastered up on the wall for a calendar year or a parking spot next to the front door for a month doesn't exactly scream "motivation."

Why It Doesn't Work: No matter how you celebrate an employee of the month, if you

don't specify what went right or acknowledge successful behaviors, other employees won't care and the employee you're awarding might not even know what it's for. And, what about all of the other great things your employees are doing? Don't let the others go feeling unrecognized.

The Solution: Be specific. It's totally fine to give awards (we actually encourage it!), but be intentional about acknowledging and publicizing the good things your employees do to earn that award. It will encourage similar behavior from peers and mean SO much more to the person you're celebrating.

Fail #3: Keeping It Private

It's probably happened to you before: you're in your monthly 1-on-1 with your boss and they tell you what a great job you did on your presentation last week. That feels good, doesn't it?! But you know what feels better? Recognition that isn't behind closed doors.

Why It Doesn't Work: Sure, any kind of recognition feels great. But it's not enough to encourage your employees to be actively engaged and involved in their work and the people they work with. Sweeping recognition under the rug tells an employee "Hey, you did a great job. But not good enough to be an example to your peers."

The Solution: Don't be afraid to shout praises from the rooftops—and do it often! Making recognition public adds a little "oomph" to your culture that can't be replicated. When you give your employees the opportunity to celebrate everyone's wins together, you'll break down silos, create new relationships, and encourage positive engagement from others.

Maybe you've got an introvert on your team and they prefer quiet recognition. That's okay, too! Just make sure you understand how your employees like to be recognized and what speaks to them the most.

Fail #4: Achievements Only

Another quarter passed and your team did some GREAT work. They worked together better than ever before, developed amazing working relationships, and supported each other through thick and thin. Buuuuuut, you didn't meet your goals. So all that great work doesn't really mean anything, right...?

WRONG.

Why It Doesn't Work: When you only focus on achievement-based recognition, you miss out on incredible opportunities to recognize your employees, encourage awesome behavior, and increase positive engagement. Don't let yourself get into the habit of only recognizing numbers.

The Solution: It's totally okay to celebrate the big achievements, but don't forget to recognize positive behaviors, too. One way we do this? Introduce value-based recognition and rewards. When you see an employee living one of your company values, make it a point to publicly recognize them for the good things they're doing.

Fail #5: Annual Recognition

All we can say is: if you wait until annual performance reviews to recognize your employees...we need to have a serious conversation.

Why It Doesn't Work: Employees don't feel motivated to be engaged in their work year-round by a few compliments you give them in a performance review you have once a year. If you're not recognizing and celebrating the tiny and not-so-tiny wins on a regular basis, do you even like your employees?!

That seems harsh. We're sorry. But seriously...it's so important. Soooo, maybe we're not that sorry after all.

The Solution: Frequent recognition. And we don't mean once a quarter. We mean every single day.

But, don't worry! That pressure doesn't have to be all on the managers. When you introduce a peer-to-peer recognition program that encourages daily recognition, you'll start to see all the little things your people are doing to help the company be successful. And, on top of it all, it feels really good to say 'thanks!'

Well, What Do They Really Want Then?

It might seem daunting to find a new way to engage your employees after all these years of the same things, or at least modified versions of the same things. But don't worry! The key to understanding what your employees really want lie in three key drivers to employee engagement. (They're actually what we use to guide everything we do here at Motivosity!)

Your employees want...

To Be Recognized and Appreciated for What They Do

It's no surprise to us that one of the top three things your employees need to feel engaged is recognition and appreciation. In fact, when asked, 58% of employees said they were working harder than ever before...but if they don't feel more recognized, they're going to cut back. And we KNOW you don't want that to happen.

So, recognize and appreciate your employees. Tell them (and show them) how much you appreciate them and all of the good things they do! And pretty soon after, you'll start to see an engaged workforce that maybe even whistle while they work.

A Positive Relationship With Their Manager

We KNOW you know what we're talking about. There are few things better in the workplace than having a manager that just...gets it. What is 'it'? 'It' is a lot of things. 'It' is strong communication. 'It's' understanding the importance of mentorship...and just about any other characteristic that makes a manager into a leader.

Managers account for 70% of an employee's experience at work, so when there is a positive relationship between manager and direct report, you can be almost certain that your employees will be happier at work and more engaged in their environment.

To Have a Strong Sense of Belonging at Work

Do YOU have a best friend at work? When you log on for the day or step into the office, do you feel like you play a part in the success of your company? Do you feel seen and heard by your peers and manager? If you answered 'Yes' to any of these questions...you probably feel pretty good about what you do and who you work with. That's exactly what your employees want to feel, too!

With work conditions changing and a remote workforce becoming the norm, 53% of employees report not feeling as connected to their company as they did before. So, what do you do? Focus on ways to connect your employees with one another and with the goals of the company. Help them understand the part they play and how important they are to the success and the culture of the company. We're sure you'll see employees who are more engaged in what they do every day.

"The fundamental contract between corporations and their employees is dead. It's no longer enough to provide a paycheck, a few perks, an ergonomic chair, and a parking space. Employees are demanding (and will get) a new social contract—one based on genuine gratitude, transparency, and a full acknowledgement of each workers' basic humanity. Only companies willing to tackle these demands with humble authenticity will earn the trust of the modern worker. And that is the 'future' of Employee Engagement."

- Jesse Dowdle
Motivosity

"I have a friend who will be traveling for work during the holidays this year. He's a salaried employee for a well known and reputable company, and they need him on the clock because they're struggling with hiring and retention. Unfortunately the existing employees are expected to carry the load and they aren't alone... companies in all industries and of all sizes are looking for ways to keep talent. There's never been a better time to understand the benefits of employee recognition than in an environment where talent management is filled with so many unknowns."

Employee recognition is one of the best benefits a company can offer."

- Logan Mallory
Motivosity

The Future of Employee Engagement: It's Not Flying Cars & Holograms

Now you know what your employees want...it's time to talk about what to do about it!

We've tried and tried and tried to get this whole "Employee Engagement" thing down for the last 30 years doing the same things to no avail. So it's time we try something new! Motivosity has been researching and testing how to improve employee recognition and engagement; we found a way to increase peer-to-peer appreciation by 500%. The secret? Giving your employees the freedom to choose how and when they are rewarded with that recognition.

Motivosity is a modern employee engagement software designed and developed to help people be happier at work—by Connecting, Recognizing, Leading, and Listening to your employees and peers. But, even when we knew we had created the special sauce to help engage your teams and create happier employees, we knew we could do more.

We've paved the way for the future of employee engagement and recognition.

And it starts with the ThanksMatters Card.

We're changing the way you recognize and reward your employees: starting with letting them be rewarded on their own terms and in their own time.

Since Motivosity users have had the ThanksMatters Card, we've seen 500% more peer-to-peer appreciation and a 300% increase in rewards redemptions. You know what that means—no more dusty gift cards or branded t-shirts that never get worn.

Redeemable anywhere, the ThanksMatters VISA Card is accepted around the world with funds available on the spot. Through appreciations, spot bonuses, milestones, and more, employees can watch their spending balance grow and decide how and when they want to redeem their rewards.

It's the benefit of all benefits...the reward of all rewards...the ULTIMATE employee recognition program.



ThanksMatters Card users experience:

500% increase
in peer-to-peer appreciations

300% increase
in rewards redemptions *

*This sounds like more money...right? Cool news, it's not! The ThanksMatters Card is included in the purchase of Recognize licenses—no extra fees, upcharges, or surprises.

All in All?

We know you value your employees and genuinely care about them. But...we also know it can be hard to show it! Our answer (and a bunch of other smart people that do a bunch of research for fun)?

Say thank you and put your money where your mouth is.

Say 'thanks' often, be specific, be genuine—and let every single employee get in on the appreciation action with a peer recognition program.

Oh, and another thing: when you do say 'thanks' and want to reward your employees, give them the freedom to choose how and when they want to be rewarded. It's time we grow beyond ping pong tables, free soda, and empty promises because your company is not one-size-fits-all.

Help your employees be happier at work by giving them what they need: better relationships with their managers, a strong sense of community, and the feeling of being recognized often. Want to help them be the happiest at work? Give them the freedom to choose to be rewarded on their own terms. Whether you choose to grow with Motivosity and the ThanksMatters Card or on your own, we know you're qualified and equipped to take the next step towards the future of employee engagement and recognition.



Resources

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