



25 Recognition Ideas That Work

People want to be acknowledged and feel appreciated ... it's one of the greatest human needs and it will re-engage your employees. Here are 25 ideas to do just that:

1. **Values Card.** Give employees a stack of 4x6 postcards that they can fill out and give to one another. Print your company Values on the cards, so the awarder can check off the Value that the employee's action supports. Also include a To line, From line, and two blank lines where a person can thank the recipient for their great work. Create an e-version, so employees can recognize employees in other locations.
2. **Wall of Fame or Wall of Heroes.** Denote one wall in each office location for recognition. Everyone can post copies of their Values cards on the wall, and signs thanking people for individual and team successes.
3. **Meeting Recognition.** Begin every Staff Meeting and/or Daily Huddle with recognition. Also, begin Town Hall Meetings and every large-group meeting with recognition.



4. **Clap Out.** When an individual joins your company, gather every person in your company near the employee's work area at the end of the day and give the person a standing ovation that lasts two minutes. Clap them out of the building! No words are spoken; this action speaks volumes. Groups can also give someone an ad-hoc standing ovation if they do something extraordinary.
5. **Project Completion Celebration.** Celebrate every major project completion with a team celebration. If the project did not produce the desired results, you still need to celebrate, reflect, discuss what could be improved next time, and thank employees for their dedication and contributions. Major projects take a lot out of employees, so you must acknowledge people after Go Live.
6. **Team Road Trip.** Managers should regularly take their team off-site or outside to work. Include fun activities to break up the work day and time to verbally thank the team for their efforts.
7. **Annual Employee Appreciation Day.** As a part of this celebration, employees will receive recognition throughout the day. For example, managers can leave a hand-written thank you note on every employee's chair, lunch can be free, thank you posters can be erected in break rooms and bathrooms, balloon bouquets can be at entrances, company-branded swag can be given to employees, etc. Be creative, but make sure employees are recognized in multiple ways!
8. **Monthly Department/Business Unit/Group Recognition Day.** Each month, choose one group to recognize for an entire day. For example, on that day, erect, 'Thank You, Marketing, For All You Do,' posters around your buildings, put a thank you banner on the company intranet, give Marketing employees free lunch, have the CEO and head of Marketing address Marketing employees live for 15 minutes to say thank you, and allow Marketing employees to end the workday at 3 p.m. (business



permitting). Be creative and make sure Marketing employees - for example - are recognized in multiple ways.

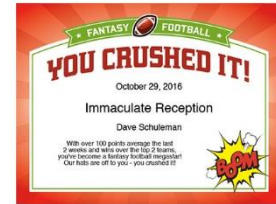
9. **Monetary Spot Bonuses for Major Accomplishments.** While we know that money does not increase employee engagement, Monetary Spot Bonuses or Gift Cards are appreciated, as long as there are other recognition tools in place where employees hear the words “thank you.” Money should not be your only recognition tool.
10. **Social Media Site Shout Out.** Leverage your Marketing Group to help recognize employees externally on your company Social Media sites. Your Marketing Group can create an infographic or banner that features the employee and thanks them for their efforts.



11. **Daily Recognition Reminder.** Recognizing people does not come naturally to most people. Therefore, you could give every employee three company-branded plastic bands to put on their right wrist. By the end of each day, the plastic bands must be on their left wrist, which means they recognized three people that day. Simple!
12. **Online Points-Based Recognition Program.** Think of this as a “rewards savings account,” allowing employees to accrue points toward tangible rewards for achievements or living the Values. Online points-based programs engage employees, as they receive the recognition of their choice for their contributions.
13. **Lunch Drawing.** Individual contributors enter their name into a fishbowl (physical or online) every time they recognize a peer. The more kudos they send, the higher chance their name will be chosen. At the end of the week, draw two names and let those employees enjoy a meal on the company.
14. **Rotating Trophy.** Find a fun trophy that you can pass around the office. Give it to an employee who has exemplified one of your Values and let them keep it on their desk for a week. The following week, let that employee hand it off to one of their peers who has exemplified a different Value.
15. **Spontaneous Treats.** People LOVE free food. Bring in donuts, cold drinks on a hot afternoon, ice cream, etc. Let your employees take a break to enjoy the treats and hear the words “thank you” before returning to work.
16. **Cheer Tee.** Has someone done a spectacular act or gone the extra mile at work? Have teammates sign a company tee with thank you messages.
17. **Hackathon.** Let employees take a whole day to work on a project of their choice either in groups or on their own. Unveil the ‘Top Five Best Ideas’ at an Employee Town Hall Meeting and implement them into everyday operations, thanking all employees for their efforts and creativity.
18. **Intranet Recognition Column.** Your company homepage is prime real-estate. Dedicate a portion of it to thank your hard-working employees. Enable employees to recognize one another, as peer-to-peer recognition is critical.



19. **Friday Crush-It Call.** Each Friday afternoon, each team (manager and direct reports) huddles together and everyone recognizes someone on the team who they are grateful for.



20. **Secret Admirer Card.** Who doesn't love receiving a surprise card? Put recognition in writing and leave the note on an employee's chair. Give employees award templates that they can print and customize to recognize one another.

21. **You Rock! Sticky Notes.** Give every employee a pack of company-branded sticky notes that they can put on people's computer, coffee mug, window, briefcase, etc.

22. **Random Acts of Fun.** Is there snow? Plan a snow-shoe hike with wine at the shelter bon fire. It's a nice summer evening? Sponsor a local walk and end in a park with ice cream. Do lots of employees have dogs? Gather in a dog park for a Play Date, and provide treats for your employees and their dogs. Be spontaneous!

23. **Annual Employee Wellness Day.** Employee wellness is a hot topic right now. A great way to address this and employee recognition at the same time is to bring self-care activities to the office, such as on-site massages, yoga classes, mindfulness sessions, a fitness walk, and healthy snacks.



24. **Birthday Bash.** Send a birthday email from the CEO or handwritten note, sing happy birthday, and serve dessert. If you have a large workforce, dedicate one day a month to celebrate all birthdays that month.

25. **Daily Door Greeting.** Identify one person each week who will stand at your main entrance and warmly welcome every employee who enters. The greeter can say things like, "Thank you for being here today," and "We couldn't do it without you," and "Know that you make a difference."