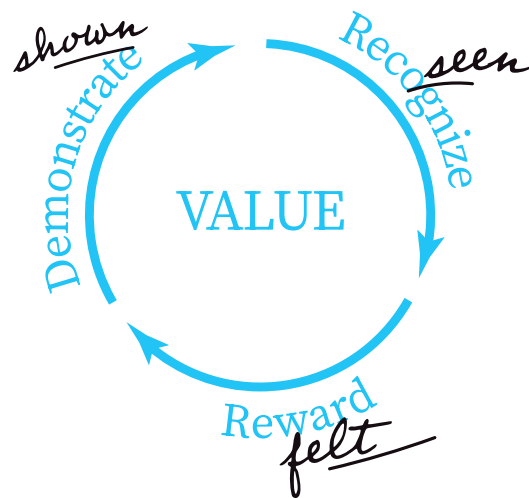# Value-Driven Recognition:

The Engine That Powers Positive Culture

Employee recognition has been a thing for a while now. You may have heard things like "Employee recognition improves engagement by 2X[1]" or "Engaged employees are 17% more productive,[2]" or any number of statistics that show how recognition is vital to your organization's success.

We're not here to debate the efficacy of recognition—we'll leave that for another time. But how will you unite your company values with your recognition programs, and help propel your organization forward in the direction you want to go? What is the benefit of value-driven recognition, and how does it work? Let's dive into the value-driven recognition cycle, and how it's the self-sustaining engine that powers a positive culture in your company.

shown Demonstrate · Recognize *seen*

VALUE

Reward *felt*

1. Employee Recognition: Low Cost, High Impact, Gallup
2. Why is Employee Engagement Important? 14 Benefits Backed By Research, Quantum Workplace

Demonstrate

Start Your Engines!

The starting line of every effective value-driven recognition program is simple, and may seem trite at first. In order for your employees to demonstrate values through their work, they need to know those values. It should go without saying that in order for employees to know what the values are, organizations should have values that are purposeful, thoughtful, and then communicate those values as often as possible.

- **Define:** Be aspirational, realistic, and specific. Too many organizations have values like "Good Judgement" but never define what that actually means in context of the company. Be sure your values help your organization reach for higher things, are realistic in their expectations, and specific enough that employees know what you're saying.

Only then can they begin to embody your values in their work.

- **Communicate:** If they're just words on a wall, your values won't get you very far. You need to communicate them in as many ways as you can, including through your behaviors, so they are top-of-mind for your employees.

- **Exemplify:** There is perhaps no more potent learning experience than seeing leaders exemplify your values on a regular basis. If one of your values is "A Healthy Work-Life Balance" but your leaders never take time off, you might be sending a completely different message than you intend. Make sure your leaders embody your values so your employees see those values in action.

Pedal to the Metal

Once you have your values nailed down, communicated, and—let's be honest— probably on a wall somewhere, it's time to drive those values home with specific recognition programs that can help your employees demonstrate those values and show their stuff. Why are specific programs needed? Well, think of it this way: if an Olympic athlete knew the benchmark they had to hit to get the gold, but didn't have an event to compete in, that would be a bummer, right? Right. ==Having more than one catch-all recognition program is crucial to encouraging your values with your employees.==

If you're at a loss for recognition programs, you're not alone. Most companies on average only have one to three programs.[3] While some recognition is certainly better than no recognition, here are a few examples of programs you can use in your organization:

- **Spot recognition:** When an employee demonstrates company values in their daily work, they deserve a timely, appropriate pat on the back. This is the foundation for driving all desired behavior in an organization.

- **Manager spotlight:** As you strive to tie recognition in with company values, it's critical to provide managers an opportunity to lead by example, and be recognized for it.

- **Milestone recognition:** Onboarding programs, work anniversary programs, and retirement celebrations show team members their dedication is valued, and are a great opportunity to highlight company values exemplified long-term.

- **Life events:** ==Celebrating events outside of work is an important way to encourage work/life balance.== Bring the work family into the celebrations that matter most in life such as birthdays, new babies, or any other even.

- **Remote work:** Boost remote work productivity by spotlighting values in your remote workforce, and build a cohesive culture at the same time. Remote employees will feel part of a greater whole.
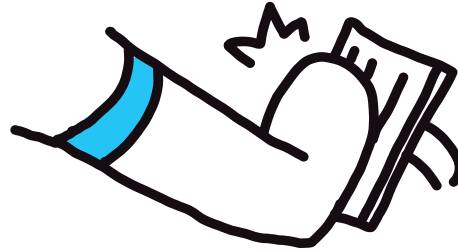
3. Managing Employee Recognition Programs, SHRM

Recognize

Highway to Success

Now that you've defined your values and your organization has begun to demonstrate them in their daily work, it's time to take the next step in your journey with the value-driven recognition cycle: recognizing individuals.

The 7Ps to Reach Your People

Public: Praise from a leader in a group setting.

Private: A personal note from a manager.

Personal: Recognition with a personal touch—like a signed card from teammates.

Physical: Physical rewards like plaques, certificates, or a prize.

Peer: Comments, reactions, small notes, and celebrations with peers, often on a virtual platform.

Performance: Evaluations, reviews, and celebrations of success over time.

Pay: Promotions, raises, bonuses, these have an important place in recognition.

Now that we've sparked a few ideas of how to recognize your employees, let's talk about how it's important that the "how" you recognize matches the "who" you recognize. Just like a car clipping down the highway requires a symphony of parts working together to serve the whole, it's important that you consider both "how" and "who" in your recognition efforts.

No two people are the same (that's why we call them individuals) and likewise there's no right way to recognize. Reaching out and recognizing your people using one of the seven methods above will be useful for different people and in different situations. A public recognition in front of others might be just the ticket for one, while another might be intimidated by such a prospect. When recognizing your employees you'll need to know them well enough to know how they like to be recognized.

RECOGNITION PERSONAS

MATERIAL MIKE

Likes: *rewards for driving value*
Dislikes: *cheap talk & mementos*
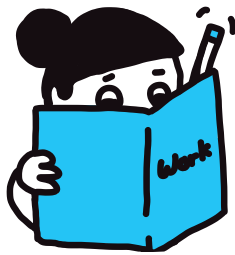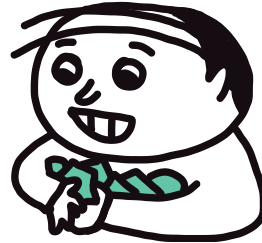
SHY SHARON

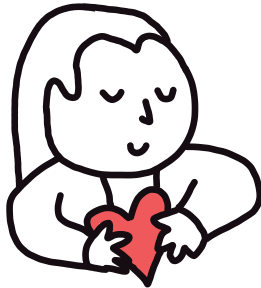**Likes:** *private notes & encouragement*
Dislikes: *public hoopla and attention*

GREGARIOUS GREG

Likes: *public awards & attention*
Dislikes: *private recognition*

HEARTFELT HANNAH

Likes: *authentic peer recognition*
Dislikes: *competition & external incentives*

DIGITAL DAN

Likes: *virtual recognition without the hassle*
Dislikes: *ceremony & pomp*

Reward

Work in the Fast Lane

So you've defined your values, communicated them effectively, set up programs to recognize those values as they're demonstrated, and have done your homework to know the best ways to recognize your employees. Now what?

An employee that demonstrates values in their work should be appropriately recognized and rewarded. In fact, 40% of Americans would put more effort into their work if they felt adequately recognized.[4] In light of that, can you afford NOT to recognize your employees? However, and whenever, you recognize—it's important to remember that feeling valued comes from receiving actual value. Think of it this way: does the communicated value you give either through recognition and/or rewards match the value the employee gave?

"I FELT APPRECIATED."

"THE ORGANIZATION STEPPED UP BIG TIME."

"JUST WHAT I NEEDED TO HEAR AFTER A DIFFICULT PROJECT."

"I FEEL LIKE I MATTER, LIKE I'M NOTICED FOR THE WORK I DO."

"MY TIME AND EFFORT WAS REWARDED!"

When values are demonstrated, communicated value should be felt in return. And there's no better way for an employee to feel valued than through recognition that rewards them.

When we talk about recognition and rewards, that encompasses a lot of things. However, the importance of recognition itself cannot be overstated. In fact, recognition bridges the gap between perceived value and actual value. It's quite literally the engine of engagement in your organization—and the great equalizer between an employee's perceived value and their actual value.

For example, let's say you have an employee named Riley. Riley's perceived value is low, meaning she doesn't think she's contributing to the organization in important ways, and it turns out she's right! Riley's actual business value is on the low side. Riley is what we like to call a "Sleepwalker" in your organization. She contributes, she comes to work, she's present, but she's not engaged.

Because recognition is the great equalizer, a little can go a long way. It can wake Riley

4. 6 Statistics That Confirm Employee Recognition and Retention Are Related, HR Technologist

up and help her become an engaged MVP for your company—and a powerful driver of success. Conversely, zero recognition can drive Riley to perform even more poorly and ultimately seek employment elsewhere, leaving you with task of finding, hiring, and training her replacement. (Regular, appropriate recognition actually reduces turnover by 31%, in case you were wondering).[5]

We could go on and on about how recognition elevates everyone, but we think you get it. Recognition can turn low-value employees into high-value employees and high-performers into rockstars. Again we ask: knowing all this, can you afford NOT to recognize your employees? We didn't think so.

When you include rewards with recognitions (and not all recognitions need to have rewards—see "The Seven P's" above), consider the following to make rewards the most potently powerful they can be:

- **Offer Choice:** Give employees the power to choose their own reward.

- **Avoid Markups:** Ensure employees receive dollar-for-dollar value for their recognition.

- **Be Inclusive:** Include options for each employee to be rewarded and feel valued.

- **Be Quick & Convenient:** Get rewards out to employees fast, and at no cost to them.

Too many rewards platforms have extreme markups, limited catalogs of items, restrict-ed options for rewards experiences, and high shipping costs. In fact, we'll let you in on a little secret: they all do except one. And that's Awardco—the only recognition, rewards, and engagement platform to offer millions of items, thousands of experiences, zero markups, and free shipping options. We think that statement speaks for itself.

The Engine of Engagement

Value-driven recognition is the engine of engagement for your organization. As you define your values, communicate them to your workforce, give opportunities for those values to be demonstrated by employees, recognize your employees for embodying those values, and then reward your workforce in the right ways, you'll see values become behavior—and behavior become the culture of your company.

Let your values become behavior, and behavior become your culture.

SCHEDULE A DEMO

Learn more at www.award.co or schedule a demo at **www.award.co/start**.

5. Becoming irresistible: A new model for employee engagement, Deloitte