![bonusly]

The Complete Manager's Guide to Employee Recognition

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Introduction

Why should I care about employee recognition as a manager?

According to our [recent poll](#) of over 2,000 workers in the United States:

- **63%** reported that they feel **unappreciated** at work on a **daily basis**.
- **46%** have **left a job** because they felt unappreciated.
- **65%** admitted that they would **work harder** if they felt like their contributions would be **noticed by management**.
- **65%** said they would **stay at a job** with an unappreciative manager **if their coworkers and peers recognized their work**.

In addition to making your team feel appreciated, *effective* employee recognition boosts [employee engagement, motivation](#), [productivity](#), [retention](#), job satisfaction, and more. It has also been shown to [reduce rates of employee burnout](#). With resignation rates at an all time high, managers are on the front lines when it comes to [influencing retention](#) and creating a positive work environment for their employees. Effecitvely recognizing your team can make the difference between a burned out, unmotivated team with low morale and high turnover and a highly engaged, high performing, happy one.

Employee recognition, if done correctly, is the easiest, highest-impact thing you can implement as a manager to improve your team. We've got all of the resources you'll need and more in this guide.

What can I expect from this guide?

The Manager's Guide to Employee Recognition covers the knowledge you'll need to successfully understand, cultivate, and support a culture of recognition—ultimately helping you build a better team.

We'll start by laying a solid foundation for you to build on. Then we'll walk through the basic steps required to successfully prioritize recognition on your team, build a case for a dedicated employee recognition program, and maintain an atmosphere of appreciation and recognition on any team at any organization.

How should I use this guide?

You can start with any chapter you find interesting or useful, but we recommend beginning with the fundamentals and building up from there.

If you're already familiar with the fundamentals, this is a great opportunity to brush up on current best practices and gain new insight.

Let's get started!

1. What Is Employee Recognition?

What does recognition look like?

At its core, employee recognition is the open acknowledgment and expressed appreciation for employees' contributions. 🎉

It could be a high-five for a job well done, a special shout-out during an all-hands meeting, or even a bonus for meeting a monthly goal.

Recognition can take many forms, but whatever your approach, it's one of the most valuable areas a team can focus on. Implementing the right kind of recognition program is a critical factor in giving your team the motivation to reach and surpass its goals. Effective employee recognition gives many successful businesses the competitive edge. According to Gallup, **"When recognition hits the mark, employees are five times as likely to be connected to company culture and four times as likely to be engaged."** Additionally, companies with highly engaged employees are, on average, 23% more profitable, nearly 20% more productive, and have customers that are 10% more loyal.

With that in mind, teams and organizations across the globe are increasingly adopting and rethinking recognition programs.

Who gives recognition?

Ideally, everyone in an organization should be able to give one another recognition. That said, the most effective source of a particular example of recognition is based on the situation and circumstance.

Top-down recognition

Recognition is traditionally given in a top-down system, where an employee's supervisor, manager, or leadership team witnesses and appreciates their contributions.

This is a great model for many reasons: since these leaders are typically in decision-making roles, their recognition often has monetary results, like a raise or promotion. These people are also in the best position to assist employees with their chosen career path or growth plans.

However, giving frequent, real-time, and specific recognition isn't always a simple undertaking for management. It requires managers to witness, catalog, recognize, and reward countless contributions.

In most cases, there are too many valuable contributions made on a daily basis for a recognition approach that is solely top-down to be effective. Most leaders just don't have the bandwidth to keep track of and acknowledge everyone's hard work. That's why the most common form of top-down recognition is an employee's annual review.

Unfortunately, [annual reviews](#) can be a significant source of stress and typically only highlight an employee's largest, most visible contributions. Annual reviews also include suggested areas of improvement for employees which can dilute acknowledgements and recognition.

That's not to say that managers shouldn't give recognition at all. On the contrary, they absolutely should! When it comes to completing big-picture objectives, recognition from higher-ranking leaders can emphasize the magnitude of an employee's accomplishment. However, for the day-to-day, it's a good idea to share the responsibility with the rest of the team.

Peer recognition

In a [peer recognition system](#), managers as well as other co-workers are all empowered to recognize and reward the contributions of everyone else. It's easy for managers to congratulate an employee on their general job performance, but their peers are working right beside them, day after day. They're in a much better position to recognize an employee's specific contributions and understand the immediate impact those contributions have.

It's simple. One teammate sees another teammate do something valuable, then praises them for it.

We also can't ignore the benefits of bottom-up recognition. Managers need appreciation, too! Recognition is motivating and insightful for everyone, even those in senior positions. With 360-degree style recognition, everyone in the company has a voice in expressing their positive feedback and gratitude. When employees recognize direct supervisors and other leaders for their work, it can reinforce positive leadership qualities and increase visibility into work that may have otherwise gone unnoticed.

Will recognition work for my team?

Yes! 😁

Every team can benefit from better, more frequent employee recognition. Having a dedicated employee recognition program can help ensure that recognition is truly effective on your team.

When you implement a recognition program, you give your employees a way to celebrate one another's achievements. These interactions build stronger team connections, boost company culture, and [motivate employees](#) to do their best work. When executed successfully, recognition provides positive peer influence and communicates the notion that good work is valued by everyone in the company.

Looking at the bottom line, companies that score highest for building a "recognition-rich culture" have

[31% lower turnover rates](#) than
their peers. What's more,
employees who don't feel recognized are [twice as likely to quit](#) within a year.

After all, being appreciated just feels good. Why? It strengthens team connections by [releasing the flow of oxytocin](#), the chemical our bodies create when we bond with others. In fact, in 2021, an average of 84% of Bonusly users gave and or received recognition every single month and [92% was peer-to-peer recognition](#) whereas 28% was managers recognizing their direct reports. In addition, in [our recent survey](#) of over 2,000 workers, we found that 65% of participants said they would stay at a job with an unappreciative manager if their colleagues and peers still recognized their work.

A recognition-rich culture is a worthy and achievable goal for any organization, in any industry. It benefits the whole team, from the newest hire to the CEO.

The key to success is understanding how employee appreciation works and how to implement an effective program on your team.

What will it cost?

Most organizations without a formal recognition program are already spending money on recognition. From organizing celebratory lunches to bulk-buying gift cards, the labor and costs associated with "manual" recognition can add up quickly. This method of recognition tends to be sporadic, unpredictable, inequitable, and time-consuming for leaders or HR employees to manage.

An effective program normally pays for itself and more in the form of increased motivation, productivity, engagement, and retention. Not to mention, they don't take a lot of time to manage! In a [survey of Bonusly admins](#), 73% said that they spend two hours or less per month managing the program.

But why?

Understanding employee recognition is the first step, and in the next chapter, we'll share why employee recognition is important. Read more below to learn about the many benefits of employee recognition and how using a recognition program like Bonusly can be an extremely effective way for teams to feel valued, perform better, stay engaged, and more. We invite you to tour the platform and join us for a demo to learn more about how you can start building a recognition-rich organizational culture.

2. Why is Employee Recognition Important?

A well-implemented employee recognition program has the power to impact many aspects of a business including engagement, turnover, productivity, morale, and purpose. A non-existent, unintuitive, or poorly-implemented employee recognition program can have the opposite effect, decreasing motivation and even pushing good employees away.

Meanwhile, engaged employees are beneficial for workplaces in every way: they're higher performers, they're connected and committed to their company, and they're willing to go above and beyond their role. In organizations that put a heavy emphasis on praising and recognizing employee achievements, engagement levels, productivity, and performance increase by between 14-60%.

According to Bonusly's Employee Engagement and Modern Workplace Report, highly engaged employees are over **two times more likely** to work for a company with an employee recognition program than actively disengaged employees. As well, 84% of

highly engaged employees were recognized when they went above and beyond at work compared to only 25% of actively disengaged employees. It's no wonder that successful organizations across the world prioritize engagement through recognition.

But the needle hasn't moved much: 63% of employees feel unappreciated by their employer on a daily basis. Here's what those organizations stand to lose when they don't prioritize employee recognition:

Retention

Do you know how much employee turnover costs you each year?

You and your team no doubt monitor spending on advertising, software, and professional development, but you may not know the true cost of employee turnover—which is why it's probably costing more than you think. 💸

Between writing and posting job descriptions, time spent on screening and interviewing candidates, negotiating salary and signing bonuses, the cost of just *finding* a new employee adds up. Not to mention the time and effort it takes to *onboard* a new employee. You can use our cost of employee turnover calculator to understand your baseline, but it's important to remember that like an iceberg, much of the cost associated with turnover is hidden.
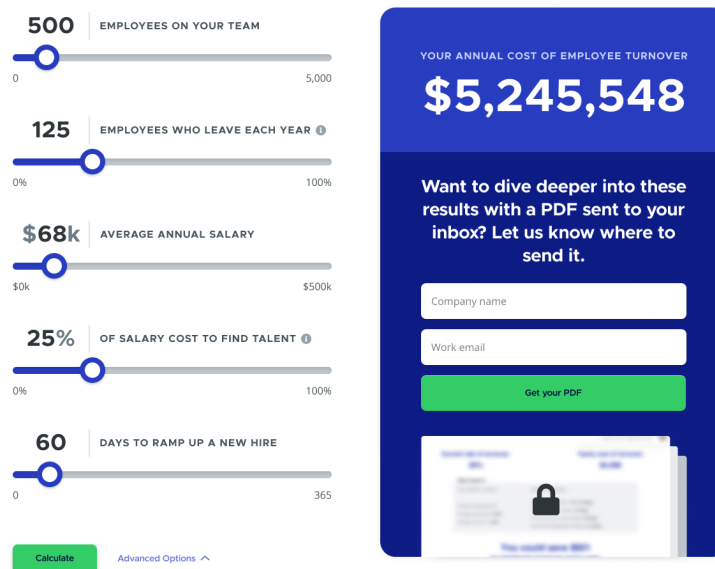
Indirect costs of employee turnover include decreased productivity, lost historical knowledge, and lower morale. When an employee leaves, the team absorbs additional responsibilities which leads to burned out, unhappy team members, and a bruised company culture. Even once an organization has hired someone to fill an open position, that new employee needs to be oriented and trained. While welcoming a new team member is typically an exciting time, it's important to note that productivity will likely drop with the addition of a new team member before it goes up.

Fortunately, recognition is something all employees appreciate and respond to. It's a critical step in reducing turnover.

In a study by Bersin & Associates, organizations with recognition programs that were highly effective at improving employee engagement had 31% less voluntary turnover than those with ineffective recognition programs. Furthermore, 46% of workers say they have left a job due to feeling unappreciated.

Productivity

Productive employees benefit companies in every way, from increasing profitability to optimizing resources. Productivity is very closely tied to companies' profitability, and is a top driver of success at modern companies. According to Bain & Company, the best companies are 40% more productive than the rest, and have operating margins 30%-50% higher than their industry peers.

What this means is that taking the time to appreciate employees pays huge dividends to your bottom line. Recognition boosts employee engagement, which then increases productivity. One study referenced in Inc. even discovered that 78% of employees would work harder if they were recognized more often. When you add inspiring employees to do their best into the mix, productivity skyrockets:

> "If satisfied employees are productive at an index level of 100, then engaged employees produce at 144, nearly half again as much. But then comes the real kicker: inspired employees score 225 on this scale. From a purely quantitative perspective, in other words, it would take two and a quarter satisfied employees to generate the same output as one inspired employee."
>
> Eric Garton and Michael Mankins, Harvard Business Review

Giving employees the right feedback to know which of their efforts are most appreciated helps everyone better understand the impact of their work and what to prioritize. This doesn't mean you need to give a standing ovation to every employee who made it to work on time, but it's crucial to let everyone know exactly how (and how much) each of their contributions move the organization forward.

Morale

Employee morale is the glue that holds your company together. It's a crucial part of any organization, and should be a top concern on your priorities list. With low morale, nearly every aspect of an employee's contributions will suffer. Increased morale, on the other hand, inspires greater productivity, creativity, and overall satisfaction.

What's the difference between employee morale and employee engagement? Although they're related, they're not the same thing. Employee morale is typically associated with feelings of well-being and job satisfaction. Meanwhile, here's how Bonusly co-founder and CEO Raphael Crawford-Marks describes employee engagement:

> "Engaged employees are typically described as passionate, committed, and enthusiastic—not just about their job, but the company they work for and its overall mission and goals. An engaged employee is aware of both immediate, tactical goals, as well as long-term, strategic ones, and proactively works to advance both."

It's a subtle difference, but it's there. Engaged employees may be satisfied with their jobs, but contented employees are not necessarily engaged with their work. These workers risk losing any emotional connection to their work that they may have had, and their teams suffer from poor productivity. These are the "clock-watchers" and the "hangers-on." They can become dead weight for the company. Thus, having high employee morale is the foundation upon which employee engagement can grow and thrive.

So how do you build that foundation? A SHRM report found that 65% of employees agree respectful treatment of employees at all levels is a significant contributor to their job satisfaction. Because respect can be shown in many ways, personalized approaches make a considerable difference. For example, frequent and visible praise promotes inclusion and a sense of belonging at work that increases job satisfaction. Along those same lines, another research study revealed that, 60% of employees value recognition as much as they value money.

That's why you feel great after a high-five. 👏

Purpose

Recognizing employees' work and their impact on the team encourages a sense of purpose. This type of transparency helps employees understand how their work ties into the bigger picture of the company and how their contributions matter. Purpose at

work is important. In fact, [70% of employees](#) agree that their sense of purpose is defined by their work and 90% say that they would be willing to take a pay cut to do [more meaningful work](#).

As humans, we're motivated by knowing how our work helps others, and recognition is a key part of that. This idea applies anywhere from working toward a company's broader mission to promoting cross-team collaboration.

It's easy to get caught up in day-to-day work. Frequent and visible recognition reminds everyone that they're all working toward a shared goal.

Communicating clear team goals and values through public recognition also [fosters a sense of community](#), which helps keep employees engaged and alleviates some uncertainty about roles and responsibilities. By recognizing someone for embodying company values, you develop your organizational culture and reinforce objectives in an intentional way.

Next steps

Building a culture and environment based on employee recognition improves each of these important areas, but it's crucial to understand how the foundation fits together before starting to build the rest. In our next chapter, you'll learn about how recognition can take shape at your organization.

We also invite you to learn more about [Bonusly's employee recognition and rewards platform](#)m [join us for a demo](#), or [try Bonusly for free](#) to learn more about how you can start building a recognition-rich organizational culture.
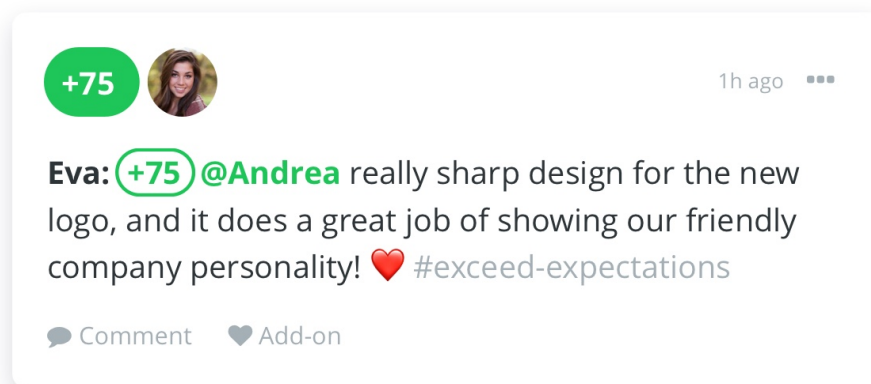
3. Types of Employee Recognition and Rewards

Recognition and reward options vary and how you appreciate employees will depend on your unique team or company needs. Your team could be motivated by a company-sponsored outing, a thoughtful email, or a gift card to their favorite store. It's up to you to understand how to most meaningfully appreciate your team members and with what rewards.

Types of Recognition

Bonuses

There are many types of bonuses, ranging from small to large.

Small bonuses, sometimes called spot bonuses because they're given "on the spot," are small monetary rewards given frequently by one colleague to another in recognition of a valuable contribution. Although small bonuses can be given by managers to their direct reports, they can also be given by other colleagues, and even from a direct report to a manager.

+75
Eva: (+75) **@Andrea** really sharp design for the new logo, and it does a great job of showing our friendly company personality! ❤️ #exceed-expectations

1h ago ●●●

💬 Comment   🤍 Add-on

Small bonuses provide several unique benefits. Like spot bonuses, staff recognition in the form of bonuses can be given in the very moment that a valuable contribution is made by an employee. Employee recognition given in the moment has the greatest potential for impact, because the action is rewarded almost immediately, when it's top-of-mind.

Because these bonuses are small by nature, everyone can give them out often, providing multiple positive instances of employee recognition without dramatically altering an employee's compensation.

Their on-the-spot nature dictates that spot bonuses are given at an irregular cadence, in contrast to annual and quarterly bonuses.

Written praise

Writing thank-you notes can not only show appreciation, but is tangible proof of an employee's contributions. Written praise is a flexible method of recognition and notes of praise are almost universally appreciated, whether written or sent as electronic communication.

Verbal praise

Verbal praise is perhaps the oldest, and longest-standing form of peer-to-peer recognition in the workplace. Verbal praise is given by colleagues, generally in an ad-hoc fashion, in recognition of a staff member's valuable contribution.

Although nearly always informal in nature, verbal praise is occasionally solicited as part of a formal staff recognition program.

When should recognition be given?

We'll cover the characteristics of effective recognition in a later chapter, but here's a sneak peek of one of the main components—timeliness. It's important to recognize employees at key moments, whether that's right after a project has been completed, on their work anniversary, or even their birthday.

Events

Employee's first day

Should you recognize employees before they even start working? Absolutely. Besides, we think the stressful process of interviewing, negotiating, and making it through first days or weeks definitely deserves some kudos! The benefits here are twofold: new employees feel welcomed to their team right away, and existing employees are able to break the ice immediately.

Birthdays

Birthdays are a special occasion for a majority of people. If you're in a 9-5 job, chances are employees will be spending a good amount of that special day in the office. While everyone has different preferences around the level of attention they'd like to receive, it's not a bad idea to show them that they are recognized and valued.

Employee Appreciation Day

Employee Appreciation Day is a semi-formal holiday founded by Bob Nelson, a founding board member of Recognition Professional International. Over the past 20 years, other companies have embraced the unofficial holiday, paying homage to their employees on the first Friday in March.

As a low-key "holiday," Employee Appreciation Day is a great opportunity to recognize employees without the pressure of annual or quarterly reviews. Celebrate Employee Appreciation Day with small company-funded events like barbecues, office parties, or with fun decorations!

Milestones

Work anniversaries

Work anniversaries are one of the most common uses of modern employee recognition, but they're often poorly executed. We consider work anniversaries an epiphany moment, and they should be treated as such. Reaching a work anniversary is a key milestone when employees reflect on their past, contemplate their future, and assess their well-being at their workplace. So receiving a simple gift card or plaque can feel impersonal, leaving an employee disillusioned about the work they put into the company.

A work anniversary should represent another year of a job well done, and should be meaningfully recognized. It's a great opportunity to thank the employee for the specific impact they've made over the past 12 months and over the course of their career. But don't just say, "You've made a big impact this year." Explain exactly what the impact was, why it matters, and how crucial their work is to the team, the organization, and the people it serves.

Project completion

It's always a weight off the shoulders when a project is completed, launched, or published, so this is also a great time to recognize all the work that went into the process. Be sure to recognize team members in a timely manner––recognition has much more impact in the moment than when it's delayed.

Year end

A year end or annual bonus is financial compensation given to employees in addition to their base pay. Annual bonuses are given once per year, usually at the end of the fourth business quarter. They can be given for a multitude of reasons, but are usually based on goals, either the performance of the organization, the individual, or both. Depending on the organization or industry, annual bonuses are sometimes expected as part of an employee's total compensation package.

Quarterly review

Quarterly bonuses are similar to annual bonuses, but are metered out more frequently, on a per business quarter basis. Quarterly bonuses are most commonly given as part of a heavily performance-based compensation model. Sales organizations or teams are common users of the quarterly bonus structure.

Building a successful recognition program

Now that you have a solid understanding of what recognition is, why it's important, and how it looks, you're probably curious about how to build your own successful employee recognition program! In the next chapter, we'll teach you how to do just that.

We also invite you to learn more about [Bonusly's employee recognition and rewards platform](#), [join us for a demo](#), or [try Bonusly for free](#) to learn more about how you can start building a recognition-rich organizational culture.

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4. How Do I Build a Case for an Employee Recognition Program?

It's no coincidence that many of the world's most successful organizations use [employee recognition programs](#). As we covered in [Chapter 2](#), when recognition programs are used correctly, they can enrich company culture, increase employee engagement, reduce turnover, and provide a fulfilling employee experience.

Now that you understand the value, how do you get the rest of your company on board?

Well, you're in the right place! 🎉

We're experts at helping organizations introduce recognition programs to their employees, and here are our tips to get buy-in.

- [Understand the characteristics of effective recognition](#)

- [Develop a case for recognition](#)

Understand the characteristics of effective recognition

Before deciding on any employee recognition program, it's necessary for everyone involved to understand the characteristics of effective recognition:

- [Timely](#)
- [Frequent](#)
- [Specific](#)
- [Visible](#)
- [Inclusive](#)
- [Values-based](#)

Timely

Recognition is most effective when given in a timely manner. Unfortunately, the association between contribution and recognition weakens over time. Aim to give recognition as soon as possible to produce a clear connection to positive behavior.

Waiting to recognize a valuable contribution can result in faded impact of that recognition and lost opportunities to encourage the same kind of positive behavior. Too many employees only hear recognition at their annual review.

Frequent

Frequent recognition translates into [more engaged employees, stronger business results, and decreased turnover](#). Employees make contributions every week, and failing to provide regular feedback about those contributions increases the likelihood of individuals feeling undervalued in their role.

You don't need to wait for a huge milestone or achievement to give recognition. It's important to celebrate the small victories, and research backs that up. Take this stat into account: [71%](link) of highly engaged employees work in organizations that recognize employees at least once per month.

Specific

Why is it important to call out and recognize specific contributions?

Specific recognition helps employees understand exactly which of their actions contributed to their team's goal. Being specific means acknowledging the details and context of a task or project, not just a "Thanks, great job!". When feedback isn't specific, it risks coming across as insincere or unclear.

Naturally, this type of praise should occur soon after any contribution. Remember: a quick "great job last month" isn't useless, but it denies the recipient some crucial feedback.

Visible

Private recognition can be effective, but public recognition offers several additional advantages. For one, being recognized publicly magnifies its impact. Sharing praise with a wider audience helps everyone learn about the work being done across the organization, facilitating collaboration and highlighting solutions that might otherwise go unnoticed. It also gives other colleagues the opportunity to join in the recognition, reinforcing positive behavior.

[Visible recognition](link) provides examples of commendable behavior, actions, and contributions that others can repeat. Additionally, that visible recognition can bring to light innovations or challenges that spur valuable discussions within teams.

As a manager, visible recognition can help immensely when the time comes for employee reviews. If you can look back at public examples of contributions that your direct reports have been recognized for by you and the rest of your team, it will be easier to make a case for pay increases, bonuses, and promotions for them.

Inclusive

Inclusive recognition helps foster a sense of equity, belonging, and psychological safety for all employees. Showing each team member that they belong should be a top priority for leaders and managers, and understanding the actions and people who are recognized means understanding what is really valued in your culture. Who is recognized most frequently and for what?
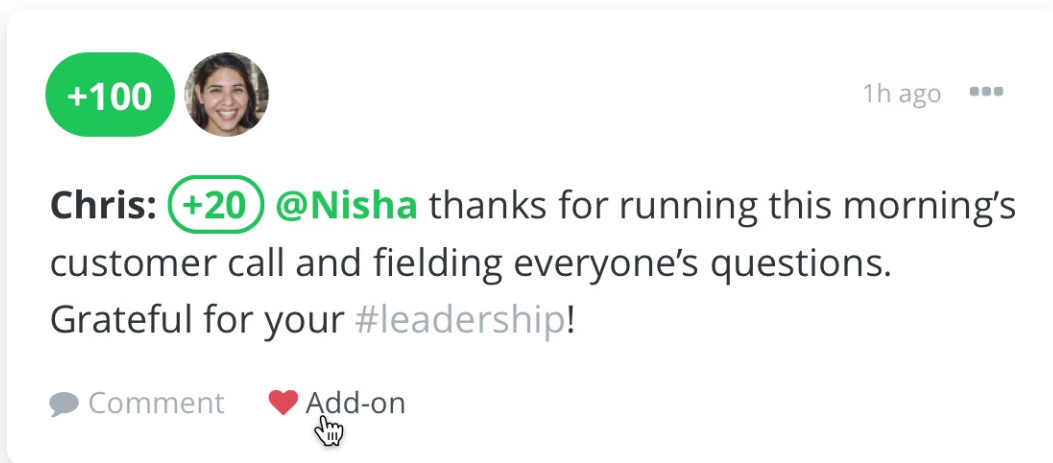
A powerful way to ensure more people are recognized is to diversify the parties responsible for giving recognition. Recognition from all levels provides more opportunities for contributions to be appreciated.

When employees are empowered to recognize peers, praise occurs more frequently while also carrying more context and nuance. A 360-degree recognition program with a foundation of peer recognition provides a better understanding of what a whole team and organization considers valuable while removing the bottlenecks imposed by top-down recognition and breaking down team siloes.

Values-based

Values-based recognition encourages teams to work toward the same vision. When sharing positive feedback, think about how a contribution lines up with your values. If your team culture is really based on a shared set of values, reinforcing those values through praise should be a deep-rooted habit.

Recognition based on values ties tangible actions to the foundation of an organization. It becomes more meaningful and helps a team work toward the same goal, reinforcing positive activity. Can you recall your own [company values](#)?

+100 1h ago •••

Chris: +20 @Nisha thanks for running this morning's customer call and fielding everyone's questions. Grateful for your #leadership!

💬 Comment ❤️ Add-on

Develop a case for recognition

Start by establishing a business case for an employee recognition program that you can share with your supervisor or HR department. Ask yourself what problems an employee recognition program might solve and how solving those problems contributes to your team and business objectives. Show your HR team that the benefits outweigh the costs.

Read this resource: How to Sell Employee Recognition to Your Leadership Team

Be sure to familiarize yourself with the research-based benefits of employee recognition and its effects on improving employee engagement, reducing turnover, increasing productivity, boosting morale, and purpose. Then crunch some numbers! For example, you can use an employee turnover calculator to determine how much your team and maybe even the rest of the company could save using an effective recognition program.

How much does a good recognition program cost to administer? It might surprise you to learn that recognition programs don't have to be expensive to be effective. The majority of companies that include a recognition program in their budgets spend less than 1% of their payroll budgets on them (while keeping the cost of any rewards in mind).

You'll also want to understand the hidden costs and logistics of existing homegrown programs you're currently using as a manager for your team. Running to the store every now and then to buy gift cards for your team of five and handwriting notes for each

person might be relatively simple to start, but when your team grows to 50 or more, these manual programs can become difficult to maintain, requiring a whole new level of planning, oversight, and consistency.

Fortunately, [rewards and recognition software](#) can integrate with existing tools, automate rewards fulfillment, and even [manage work anniversary bonuses](#) for your direct reports.

5. Manager Resources

There are many excellent informational resources available to help you improve all aspects of team culture, from employee recognition to employee engagement. Here are a few great reads:

Bonusly

[The Bonusly blog](#) covers a range of useful topics including leadership and management tips, creative employee reward ideas, and employee engagement advice with downloadable templates and resources throughout. You'll find engaging infographics and regular interviews with industry experts and culture leaders who share their insights on a range of important topics.

[Subscribe to the Bonusly newsletter](#) to get updates sent to your inbox every two weeks.

Bonusly manager resources

- [6 Techniques to Improve One-on-One Meetings](#)

- [One-on-One Meeting Agenda Template for Managers & Employees](#)

- [7 Unique Team Building Ideas for Managers](#)

- [Make Team Recognition Impactful: 14 Tips for Managers](#)

- [Crucial Things Managers Can Do to Improve Company Culture](#)

- [3 Simple Ways Managers Can Motivate Employees](#)

- [Managers: The Secret Sauce to Building High-Performing Teams](#)

- [How People Managers Influence Retention](#)

- [The Ultimate Retention Checklist for Managers](#)

- [What Makes a Good Manager? 5 Key Qualities](#)

Officevibe Blog

[The Officevibe blog](#) is a great resource. It includes entertaining, yet educational articles and infographics about management, employee engagement, team culture, and how to improve them all. Officevibe's blog also features 'culture talks,' where industry thought leaders share valuable information over video interviews.

When I Work Blog

When I Work is a useful tool for scheduling and communicating with hourly employees, but the [When I Work blog](#) covers a huge range of topics. You can learn new ways to develop better people management skills, recruit and onboard new employees, and manage millennials.

Next Steps

Now that you know what to look for in employee recognition tools and have a few resources to bookmark, we invite you to take a tour of [Bonusly](#), [schedule a demo](#), or [try Bonusly for free](#) if you're interested in learning more.

When you're ready to learn about unique examples of employee recognition in action, take a look at our guide's next chapter.

6. 11 Unique Examples of Employee Recognition in Action

Now that you have the tools you need to build a culture of appreciation, it's time to get started.

It's not always easy to come up with creative ways to recognize and reward your teammates for their great work, so we put together a list of unique examples from some of our favorite companies across the globe.

Just like the people and contributions they're celebrating, these recognition techniques are unique. These examples incorporate the key characteristics of effective employee recognition:

- Timely
- Frequent
- Specific
- Visible
- Inclusive
- Values-based

Andrew Schrader | Chobani

Employee recognition program Bonusly

"Everyone gets caught up in their day-to-day work, which is why it's great to have Bonusly: feedback and instant gratification never get old."

"When I receive a bonus and I wasn't expecting one, I get all cheesy about it. There's this thought that runs through my head: Oh, wow, I implemented this project and I bug everyone to participate, so of course I know it's important, but it still feels good to receive a bonus!"

"Having the ability to recognize someone immediately is the most valuable part of Bonusly. Whether you have 20 employees or 2,000, it doesn't matter."

"More than 75% of Chobani employees actively use Bonusly."

"Bonusly has definitely had a measurable impact on our Great Places to Work® survey results. Just a few months after we launched Bonusly, our score in the recognition category had the biggest improvement!"

Monthly emails to highlight praise

"We send a '[This Month on Bonusly](#)!' email to managers to promote an ongoing culture of recognition and encourage them to continue recognizing their direct reports. Everyone's participation is meaningful."

Victoria Melcher | [BigCommerce](#)

"We've been so thankful to Bonusly for helping us allow peer recognition to come through organically—it's just been so helpful for keeping us together," says Victoria. "It builds up our team morale and lets us signal to each other that we're going to continue to lift each other up and we're going to continue to strive together."

Company Values

"All recognition in Bonusly is connected to hashtags of our company values: #teamonamission, #makeadifferenceeveryday, #thinkbig, #customersfirst, and #actwithintegrity. With Bonusly, we can easily tie our behaviors to our values every day. It fosters a culture that you want to be a part of."

"Company values matter because employees face tough decisions every day. The right way isn't always the easy way, and you want employees to do what's right for your organization every time. This has been only more true during the pandemic, when people have been working from home and have less daily guidance or interaction with their managers and team members. With Bonusly, we're able to reinforce those values and have employees champion what it means to be a part of BigCommerce."

Lindsey Kampmeier | [Ordermark](#)

Virtual celebrations

"Our sales team had established norms for celebrating in Slack when they close deals, so they continued doing shout-outs that way when we went remote. But other teams didn't have those traditions in place, so the majority of individual contributions weren't getting recognized or surfaced to the whole organization."

"I saw that Bonusly could address both of these concerns. It was a really impactful tool for us to adopt while we were remote and needing new ways to engage with one another."

Award nominations

"We leverage Bonusly Analytics to choose the recipients for our more formal monthly Ordy Awards. Bonusly has made our nominations process more equitable and data-driven."

"We used to try collecting nominations from employees," says Lindsey. "Now, we look at who received the most recognition for a specific Company Value Hashtag in the last month. It's a far more reliable and fair way to recognize and reward those top performers."

Becky Cantieri | [SurveyMonkey](#)

Visible recognition

"Feeling valued and recognized is important to the human condition. Recognition delights us and energizes us to do more"

"We were one of the earlier adopters of Bonusly. It's core to our recognition program and a thoughtful way to connect the work of our employees to the value they deliver for our customers."

"Recognition helps ensure employee efforts are visible and that they feel appreciated."

Nicole Pigeon | [Solugenix](#)

Inclusive, visible recognition

Inconsistent recognition wasn't motivating their hybrid team

"It's hard for call center employees to stand out," says Nicole Pigeon, the Operations & Account Manager for Customer Support Services at Solugenix, an IT services firm.

"When a call center support member has an exceptional call, the customer might be pleased, but leadership doesn't necessarily hear from that customer. With our old recognition program, it was hard to see, let alone celebrate, these wins."

"It was also discouraging that we didn't recognize everyone equally. Our work environment includes on-site and remote workers, and sometimes the contributions of our remote employees were less visible than their on-site counterparts."

"Bonusly gave everyone an equal voice. Managers and leaders suddenly had visibility into positive customer interactions and ways that people help each other—all things they couldn't see before."

"We saw high rates of adoption and positive feedback about Bonusly from the start," Nicole says. "People are impressed that our engagement is so high, but I'm not surprised. Our company is all about supporting and recognizing one another, regardless of where someone works. That does wonders for morale."

Connecting teams after acquisition

When Solugenix acquired the company Nicole and her 100-person team worked for, they added their HR and IT support staff to Bonusly to encourage everyone to become familiar with their new colleagues.

"We had to scale quickly and effectively, and we used Bonusly to help us achieve that," Nicole says. "It helped integrate our folks into the larger team in a natural way."

Morale and motivation

"Bonusly worked wonders for team morale during the fast growth and uncertainty of acquisition and the quick move to remote work during the pandemic," Nicole remarks.

"We saw increased engagement as people began to work from home and praise each other on the platform. Everyone can view that praise, which is great exposure for individuals and teams."

"It's pretty simple—when people are recognized for their hard work, they feel better about their job, and do better work."

Scott Orn | <u>Kruze Consulting</u>

Managing burnout during stressful times

During the busy tax season, when the IRS and state tax agencies were experiencing extreme delays that impacted Kruze Consulting's clients, Scott used Bonusly with Frame AI to automate recognition for customer wins. Frame AI is a product that analyzes customer interactions to generate actionable data about customer sentiment, customer effort, and team effort.

With Bonusly and Frame AI together, Scott says his team has "a way to publicly recognize people who jump into the fray to put out fires, meet urgent deadlines, solve specific issues, and handle behind-the-scenes work." In the midst of an increasingly frustrating situation for Kruze's clients, managers of customer success were equipped to encourage and champion their teams.

"This work often goes unnoticed, and the last thing we want is for people to feel their contributions aren't appreciated," he says.

Matthew Lane | <u>Reach Engine</u>

Sense of belonging

"Our most recent cohort of interns asked to be part of Bonusly because they felt like they were missing out. Something as simple as giving our interns their own Bonusly accounts has helped them feel like they're part of our team."

"Some of them are only here two days a week and some of them work remotely, but Bonusly gives them that sense of togetherness and belonging that I think is extremely important in maintaining a healthy corporate culture."

Final thoughts

As a manager, employee recognition is the most impactful way to champion your team. In today's war for talent, top team and company leaders understand the value of true employee recognition when it comes to appreciating and retaining their star employees.

By reading this guide, you should now have all the tools you need to start building a culture of recognition on your team. By ensuring that employee recognition is effective by making it timely, frequent, specific, visible, inclusive, and values-based, your team and company will quickly experience its many benefits.

A dedicated employee recognition program like Bonusly makes building a recognition-rich culture on your team simple. We invite you to tour the platform, join us for a demo, or try Bonusly for free to learn more about how you can start building a thriving team culture.

Bonusly is the fun, smart way to engage all of your employees and improve retention and productivity at every level of your organization.

Bonusly's 360-degree recognition solution makes teamwork visible to everyone, empowering your employees to show their appreciation for each other, build stronger working relationships, and feel a greater sense of belonging.

Learn more about employee recognition at bonus.ly.