

2009 RPI BEST PRACTICE STANDARDS® AWARD Winner

Standard 7 – Program Change and Flexibility
TELUS Communications

*They successfully evolved an existing recognition program
into something much greater.*

A Recognition Professionals International White Paper

For its successful remake of an existing recognition program - yielding a cutting-edge plan that is meaningful, simple to use, and open to continuous improvement - TELUS Communications was honored with a 2009 RPI Best Practice Standards® Award for Standard 7 – Program Change and Flexibility.

Following is a brief background of the organization and its new recognition program - with a more in-depth look at the Program Change and Flexibility aspect responsible for the RPI honor (p. 7).

About TELUS Communications

TELUS is a leading national telecommunications company in Canada with \$9.7 billion in annual revenue, 36,000 employees, and 11.6 million customer connections that include 6.1 million wireless subscribers, 4.2 million wireline network access lines and 1.2 million Internet subscribers. The company provides a wide range of communications products and services including data, Internet protocol (IP), voice, entertainment, and video.

In support of its philosophy to *give where they live* – and fully supported by the recognition program - the organization, its team members, and retirees have contributed \$135 million to charitable and not-for-profit organizations and volunteered more than 2.6 million hours of service to local communities since 2000.

Program Overview

The company instituted a trailblazing recognition program in 1999. After seven years, the program “Team Machine” – which was remarkable in its day, was becoming merely functional.

In 2007, the five-member recognition team, along with active input from CEO Darren Entwistle – decided to rejuvenate, revamp, and rename the program. They chose the name *Bravo* – a word that’s meaningful to employees who speak both French and English.

Bravo was designed by incorporating feedback from TELUS team member focus groups, suggestions to the recognition team, and surveys.

All full-time, part-time, and temporary team members can participate in Bravo. Contractors can send and receive e-cards but cannot receive points. Compared to the previous program, Bravo:

- Is simpler, easier to use, and more brand-friendly
- Is supported with a better catalog that includes a broader range of offerings
- Allows the option of donating points to charity
- Has a more streamlined nomination and approval process
- Is more consistent throughout the organization

Although many recognition programs are tied to RPI’s 7 Best Practice Standards®, TELUS took it a step further by encouraging departments to develop individual components based on the standards.

Recognition Strategy

The recognition strategy directly supports TELUS’ goal of becoming an employer of choice and also promotes the philosophy that it is the fundamental right of team members to be supported, developed, and recognized for their efforts in achieving business goals.

The Bravo program is tightly linked to the following four TELUS values:

- We embrace change and initiate opportunity.
- We have a passion for growth.
- We believe in the spirit of teamwork.
- We have the courage to innovate.

The five-member recognition team, serving 36,000 employees designed a system with the following highlights:

- It enables team members to send recognition using e-cards and awards.
- It includes a flexible points option.
- It is a points-based system where team members receive points through nominations.
- It includes a rewards catalog with a wide variety of merchandise (including TELUS products) and gift cards.
- It uses an approval process for nominations with automatic e-mail notifications.

BRAVO WAS
DESIGNED BY
INCORPORATING
FEEDBACK FROM
TELUS TEAM
MEMBER FOCUS
GROUPS,
SUGGESTIONS TO
THE RECOGNITION
TEAM, AND
SURVEYS.

- It is fully tax compliant – gifts are reported to payroll on a weekly basis.
- It enables team members to donate their Bravo points to charity once a year.

Bravo is highlighted by its charitable and environmental components. Team members can donate their Bravo points to TELUS' Charitable Giving Campaign, where the value of their points is contributed to a wide variety of charities across Canada.

As part of TELUS' career milestone program, team members are recognized every five years with a gift of Bravo points. They can choose between a plaque made of recycled materials or having a tree planted on their behalf. Every time a team member chooses to plant a tree, TELUS donates money to Tree Canada (a tree-promoting organization).

Management Responsibility

TELUS CEO Darren Entwistle initiated the first recognition program nine years ago when he first joined the company. He also initiated the 2007 effort that resulted in the new program. Management is involved at every level of the Bravo program, from reviewing feedback and measurements to approving a generous amount of funding to giving awards.

Senior leaders track their teams' use of the Bravo program through monthly reports that include the number of team members who nominated others for recognition and received recognition for both awards and e-cards. The CEO also reviews the reports to track usage.

Senior leadership personally awards their own quarterly honor for performance that has led to significant customer and company success. The award comes with long-term (restricted stock unit) incentives.

TEAM MEMBERS CAN
DONATE THEIR
BRAVO POINTS TO
TELUS'
CHARITABLE GIVING
CAMPAIGN, WHERE
THE VALUE OF THEIR
POINTS IS
CONTRIBUTED TO A
WIDE VARIETY OF
CHARITIES ACROSS
CANADA.

Program Measurement

The TELUS recognition strategy is focused on the achievement of two main objectives. The first is to build a culture of appreciation and the second is to drive the adoption of Bravo as the corporate standard for recognition.

The company's employees take a survey once a year – one component measures the degree to which team members feel recognized and appreciated for their contributions. The first survey for the new program showed an 8 percent increase over the previous program the previous year.

Usage/activity reports measure:

- The number of Bravo transactions for specified business units, departments, and teams
- Monthly recognition spending
- Reward catalog redemptions

Reports detailing team member activity show:

- The type of transaction
- Award dates and recognitions sent and received
- Total points per transaction
- The values demonstrated
- The cost center affected
- The total dollar value of nominations and points sent

There are also individual team and business reports, which monitor the progress of the team and business unit. Managers can use the reports to monitor their recognition activity.

Communication Plan

Messaging about the transition from the old recognition program to the new program began in the fall of 2007. These messages were communicated half a year prior to launch to provide advanced notice and create awareness. One of the messaging venues was TELUS' Team Vision – a video newscast that captures corporate stories in short segments

As a data, IP, and wireless provider; TELUS has the advantage of being able to leverage IP, data and video-streaming technology. Current communication channels include the intranet link, the Bravo homepage, team member bulletins, direct e-mail, posters, and the CEO's monthly e-letter.

With 36,000 employees, the five-member recognition team is highly dependent on their business unit representatives.

“We have ambassadors throughout the business,” explained Recognition Director Theresa Gibbons. “We can tap into those people, provide best practice information, and they disseminate it within their business units. Basically, we are training people to do what we do within their local areas. The areas with the strongest ambassador networks have the best results in terms of everything - including team member engagement.”

Recognition Training

Each business unit’s HR team and recognition representatives deliver training on the new system through presentations developed by the corporate recognition team. The recognition team has also presented many live meeting sessions, which provide an overview of the new program and how to use it.

In an effort to encourage managers to develop programs in line with RPI’s Best Practice Standards®, the TELUS recognition team created the following guidelines.

Standard	Key elements	Supporting material
Recognition strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Identify <i>what</i> behaviours, activities, and achievements you wish to recognize in line with TELUS’ values and objectives as well as your area’s strategies and objectives.¹ ✓ Identify how you will recognize with a balance of recognition activities including: building a strong relationship, daily recognition activities, informal, and formal recognition activities ✓ Include individual, team, and peer-to-peer recognition ✓ Leverage Bravo awards ✓ Leverage Bravo points for rewards in your local programs ✓ Know individual preferences for recognition (leverage recognition profiles) ✓ Review and commit to recognition processes and tools 	<p>REVIEW:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition essentials • 2008 Recognition best practice • Bravo manager tool kit • Integrating your recognition programs with Bravo • Recognition books • Recognition videos • Recognition profiles • People tracking tool • Engagement inventory <p>COMPLETE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition strategy worksheets
Management responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Senior leaders are actively involved in the support and execution of the plan ✓ Senior leaders walk the talk and promote the plan ✓ Leaders take ownership for the plan (PPO objectives to drive ownership) ✓ Leaders model best-in-class recognition behaviours ✓ Leaders implement the plan consistently and fairly (leverage the People tracking tool) ✓ Leaders follow taxable benefit reporting to payroll for gifts given outside of Bravo, team member privacy policy in data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PPO • People tracking tool • Engagement inventory • Taxable benefit reporting information and form

¹ All TELUS recognition processes, tools, and budget guidelines have been reviewed and included.

	<p>collection, rules around team member information retention strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Leverage the Engagement Inventory tool for self-reflection 	
Program measurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Monitor recognition scores yearly using Pulsecheck ✓ Collect anecdotal feedback on how your plan is being received (conversations, focus groups) ✓ Collect quantitative feedback on how your plan is being received (e-Survey) ✓ Monitor recognition activities in line with your plan – collect data on number of awards, nominations, recognition recipients etc. – use manager reports in Bravo ✓ Review SAP recognition budget actuals monthly <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p> NOTE: Recognition activity through Bravo will be reported monthly by business unit to the ELT and Darren to ensure Bravo is being used as the corporate standard for recognition.</p> </div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pulsecheck • e-Survey • Bravo reports
Communication plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Document and promote your recognition plan with all leaders outlining the behaviours, activities, and achievements (what) to recognize as well as the recognition vehicles and methods (how) ✓ Communicate the recognition plan to all team members as appropriate ✓ Help team members see how they contribute to a culture of appreciation – recognition is not only top down (use the Recognition Inventory) ✓ Celebrate team members frequently with wide communications of their performance as appropriate (consider individual preferences for public vs. private recognition) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition profiles • Recognition inventory
Recognition training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Ensure new hires are orientated to your recognition plan elements ✓ Ensure your leaders know the basics of recognition and appreciation (leverage the Skills Essentials Recognition module – coming soon, Expectations & Practices for new leaders, or e-learning) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expectations & practices • Motivation – Motivating through rewards & recognition • Skills essentials recognition module – coming soon • Recommended reading

<p>Awards and celebrations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Include career milestone and ovation award celebrations in your plan ✓ Leverage attendance at celebrations by all levels of leaders ✓ Include formal recognition at road shows, leadership meetings, business unit meetings ✓ Consider including a formal awards ceremony in your plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career milestone celebration guidelines
<p>Program change and flexibility</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Utilize program measurement and feedback results to evolve your program and continue improving it over time ✓ Review your plan at least yearly to ensure it continues to meet your area’s strategies and objectives 	

In addition to having many similarities to the old system, the new system was designed to be highly intuitive and easy to use. As a result, the training approach is focused on creating awareness of changes to policies and the program without requiring time-consuming, high-touch, step-by step instruction.

Recognition Events and Celebrations

Each business unit in TELUS organizes its own events. The event marketing team works closely with each unit to help them make the event brand-friendly while keeping the overall message unique to that team’s goals and objectives.



TELUS High Performer Award Ceremony

Celebrating team members’ milestones is a key component of event planning. Managers are encouraged to consider the unique characteristics of the team member and plan an event that is highly individualized.



TELUS’ Best Practice Change and Flexibility Strategy

The commitment to meaningful change and flexibility is evident in the way the recognition team made the transition from the former “Team Machine” program to Bravo.

Theresa explained, “The key metric that we measure at TELUS is engagement. For Team Machine, that metric told us that we were hovering around 50 percent and that was quite poor. Team Machine had been in place for seven years. It had not changed significantly during that time and it had become stale. People weren’t really bought in. We didn’t have gift cards and there was a huge, huge demand. People thought the product catalog was a little bit boring. We were operating a program that was dying.”

Although the former recognition program was leading edge at the time and won TELUS an RPI Best Practice Standards® Award in 2002, the program eventually became stale and usage declined. It was time for a change. Team member feedback revealed that the application no longer reflected the TELUS brand; the catalog needed new and more diverse merchandise options including gift cards; and adoption and use was inconsistent across business units. Despite interim fixes to make some improvements, it was clear that a complete overhaul was required.

In 2006, TELUS CEO Entwistle made the decision to build the replacement application. By making this decision, he committed significant resources and funding, showing his commitment to driving a recognition culture at TELUS with two key goals.

1. To drive a culture of appreciation at TELUS that will positively impact team member engagement
2. To create an application that becomes the corporate standard for recognition at TELUS and is used consistently and frequently across all business areas

As a result, the HR Recognition team conducted research and collected team member feedback regarding:

- What they liked and disliked about the old program
- Their ideas for a new program
- How the application should look
- Their preferences for a new reward catalog
- Award structure and award value

The goal was to develop and build a leading-edge recognition application and recognition program that would re-energize team TELUS and foster a culture of appreciation. Bravo would be used as a tool to reward and recognize team members, house recognition information, and robustly link other current and future programs.

**DESPITE INTERIM FIXES TO MAKE SOME
IMPROVEMENTS, IT WAS CLEAR THAT A COMPLETE
OVERHAUL WAS REQUIRED.**

“There were some things about the old program that worked,” Theresa said. “We liked the way the awards were linked to demonstrating the company values – those values really unify everyone. We also kept the points-based system, the flexible option of sending points, and the basic catalog – although we enhanced it in a number of ways.” Some of the improvements:

- The new program showcases a TELUS future-friendly look and feel aligned to the company’s brand, core values, and business ownership culture.
- The system supports team members by guiding them through process steps and providing helpful information and tips to complete cards, submit award nominations and point transactions, and enrich their reward catalog shopping experience.
- A simplified award nomination approval framework driven by team member signing authority, eliminates multiple manager approvals and makes the timeliness of awards more immediate;
- A new, broader award structure will provide awards at four levels.
- There is a greater variety in product catalog choices including the latest electronics and gift certificates to a wide variety of retailers
- Award recipients can redeem points for charitable donations.

“There are still areas within the business – especially those that had developed their own recognition programs - that are having problems dropping them,” Theresa said. “While we want them to replace their gifts and awards with the corporate standard, we are being a little bit lenient, because some business units want to make recognition highly personalized and we are still working on that.”

Team members contact the recognition team on a regular basis to provide feedback on the recognition programs. This feedback is in the form of:

- E-mail to the TELUS’ recognition mailbox
- E-mail and voicemail to recognition team members
- Live presentations and information sessions
- Team member satisfaction surveys
- Monthly reporting and financial reporting

As the recognition team collects feedback, they note general trends and schedule focus groups to dive deeper into the feedback issues. The focus groups allow the team to gain a clearer understanding and determine if, when, and how to move forward. Taking this approach involves users in solutions that will address the real issues at hand.

“It’s important to engage people in focus groups – a cross section of employees on different topics – not just the design,” Theresa said. “If you show that you’ve gone through this fair process and have been transparent – people are more likely to buy into it.”

This planning for Bravo Phase II is currently underway, the recognition team hopes to add the ability to upload and add digital photos to e-cards. They also want to personalize recognition by adding recognition profiles that will allow team members to share their personal preferences for recognition and allow managers to send specific gifts from the catalog.

“In order to see where we need to change, we look at key metrics, such as where our recognition dollars are being spent, and see where we are trending up or down,” Theresa said. “The engagement of the people in any change is always important. Communications have to be very tight and strong. The promotion must also be strong.”

The Bravo recognition team is committed to ensuring that the program never becomes static – that it continuously evolves.

Finally

Using the CEO’s vision, recognition industry-standard guidelines, successful components of the former program, and their own intuition and expertise, the TELUS recognition team created a world-class program that employees, managers, and administrators can believe in.

Recognition Professionals International is pleased to honor TELUS Communications with a 2009 RPI Best Practice Standards® award for its new model of program change and flexibility.

Recognition Professionals International (RPI)
1000 Westgate Drive, Suite 252 St. Paul, MN 55114
Ph. 651-290-7490
Fax 651-290-2266
RPI@recognition.org
www.recognition.org

About Recognition Professionals International (RPI)

Recognition Professionals International (RPI), formerly known as National Association for Employee Recognition (NAER), is the only non-profit professional association at the forefront of employee recognition through its sole focus on recognition innovations and education as a systematic method for improvements in the workplace. RPI is endorsed by top authorities in the industry, and is the only association offering Certified Recognition Professional (CRP) courses and designation.