



Bringing It All Together – Celebrating Recognition Throughout the Year

By Jess Myers, RPI

Don't Put Off Recognition Until the End of the Year!

Chances are you've long ago planned your organization's big holiday event or celebration for December. But hopefully this year-end celebration is the culmination of many recognition opportunities and events over the course of the year.

That's right, it's not enough to have just one big blowout at the end of the year. Regular employee recognition, and recognition events planned throughout the year, is a vital part of creating and maintaining a recognition culture.

Service Awards Don't Drive Performance

Many companies use their year-end event to recognize employees for years of service. In fact, a WorldatWork study showed that this type of recognition is the most used type of employee recognition. Another study from Bersin & Associates found that **87 percent of all recognition programs focused on tenure.**

While still a great way to recognize employees, tenure-based recognition misses a lot of opportunities. With employees switching jobs at an ever-increasing rate (especially among millennials), tenures tend to be much shorter. In fact, a **Gallup study showed that 21 percent of millennials say they have changed jobs within the past year.** That's three times the number of non-millennials. **If you are waiting five years to recognize employees you may miss the opportunity to give recognition and you may end up losing high potential employees before they ever make it to the five-year mark.**

"Tensure" is a long held tradition in the field of recognition, but more and more companies are seeing the value of **achievement based recognition.**

Employee Recognition Using the Three-Dimensional Approach

Asked about how leaders could best improve engagement, **58 percent of employees responded "give recognition."** (Psychometrics, A Study of Employee Engagement in the

Canadian Workplace). The key to making recognition work is **making it frequent.**

Through academic study and best practices from top organizations, RPI has found and recommended that the best system for giving recognition is a three-dimensional approach. This includes **Day-to-Day, Informal and Formal recognition.**

Day-to-Day Recognition is fairly self explanatory. It is the epitome of frequent. It can be really simple, like a thank you note or verbal recognition at a team meeting. It could also include ways for employees to give peers or fellow team members praise. It can include simple rewards, or even small events, that recognize employees for a job well done.

Informal Recognition is similar, recognizing employees or teams for achieving certain milestones or completing projects. Celebrations may include low cost mementos or refreshments as a way to celebrate achievements or outstanding positive behavior.

Formal Recognition usually includes more defined measurements of achievement, usually lined to organizational goals. This often includes a nomination and selection process and a formal awards ceremony. This is generally done at an annual event, like an awards dinner or other type of formal celebration.

It's All Recognition and It's All Celebration

While there are many ways to give recognition throughout the year, what it comes down to is that recognition is really celebrating an individual or team for success. Everybody wants to be appreciated. Whether it's appropriate to recognize achievements with small gestures or elaborate events, it should be done frequently and sincerely. The result will be a more engaged, more productive organization.

