



# GLOBAL REWARD AND RECOGNITION

PLUS CASE STUDY FROM COLT TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

**xexec**  
driving engagement

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## Introduction

It's easier than ever for businesses to operate on the international stage and an increasing number of employers now manage staff across the globe. One common challenge amongst such organizations is the need to implement a coherent reward and recognition program across different offices, countries, time zones and languages.

Employee recognition is the activity that employers engage in to acknowledge exceptional performance and encourage specific values or behaviors within their organization. Distinct from salary and benefits, employee recognition has an important role to play in motivating and engaging staff. Recognition can be monetary, non-financial or simply a public acknowledgement of someone's efforts. Often it's simply the act of saying thank you that has the most impact. Yet saying 'thank you' – whether literally, or via gifts and gestures – becomes more complicated when you throw multiple languages, cultures and demographics into the equation. This is the challenge that more and more employers are facing as they look to engage, reward and recognize an international workforce.

Whilst implementing such schemes can be a challenge, there are many clear benefits. Taking a global approach to employee recognition fosters better employee engagement, motivation and wellbeing across the board, ensures consistency across the different regions in which an organization operates and can **maximize efficiencies in terms of administration, human resource and cost.**

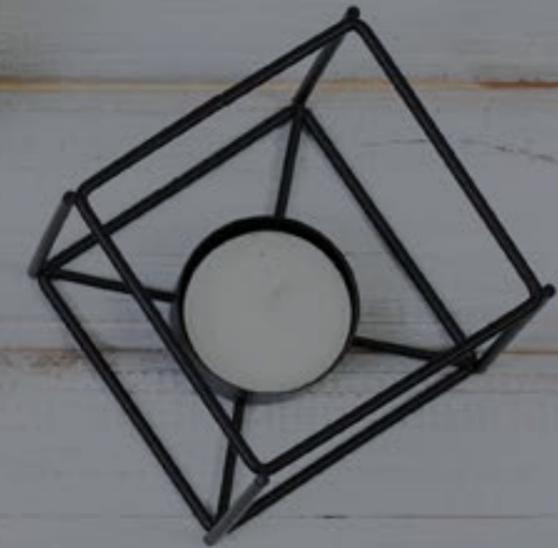
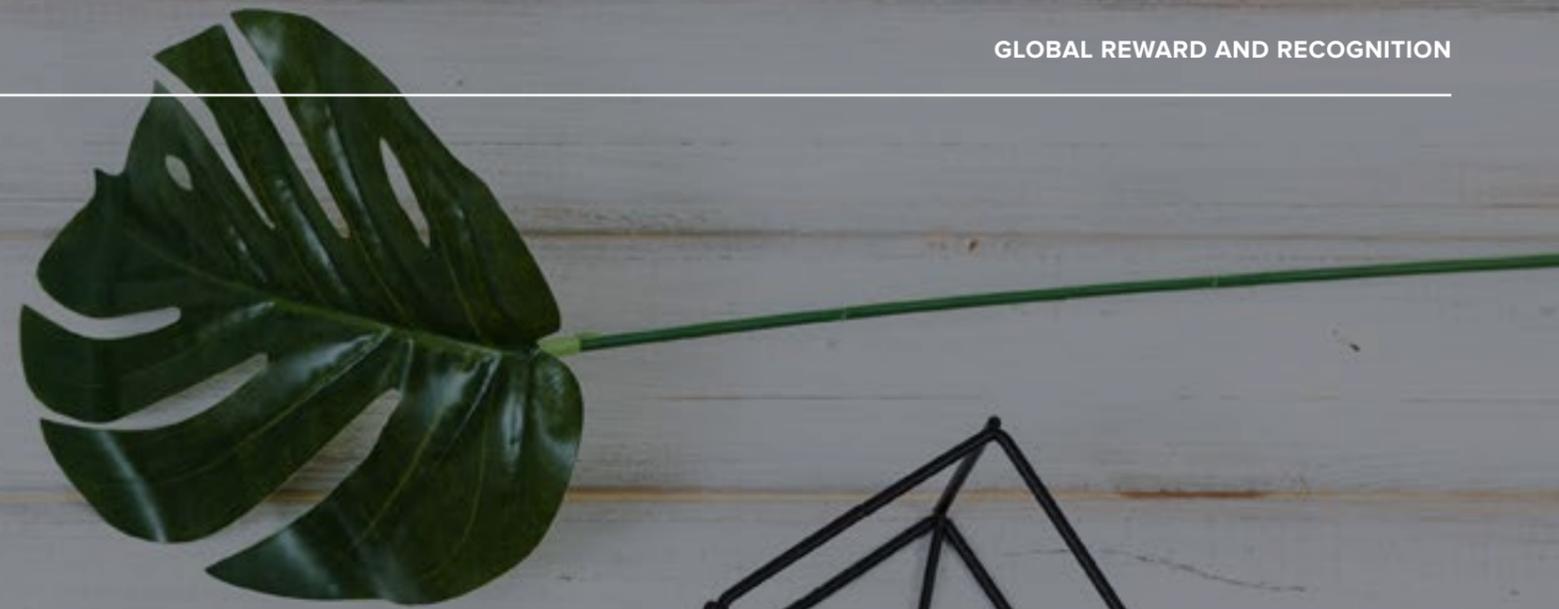
To make a global employee recognition scheme a success, employers need to give local managers the power to localize elements of the strategy whilst at the same time maintaining strategic control.

## Local v global: the macro impact of local initiatives

At a macro level, employee recognition can make a notable difference to operational performance. On a global scale this can be hugely beneficial. Take, for example, an international retailer with a multi-billion pound cost base. If employee recognition initiatives lead to increased engagement and contribute to a 3% uplift in productivity, that will have a much greater impact on operational performance than pushing through hundreds of millions of pounds worth of costs savings.

**So what's the key message here?**

**Small gestures of recognition, on a local level, are crucial to employee engagement and motivation on a global level, so start small, but think big!**



**Aligning your global culture with behavior:**

## **Defining your global culture**

Employee recognition can be used to directly address some of the challenges that arise from having a global workforce. Organizations often struggle to create a genuine culture and set of values that ring true across the globe.

Workplace culture can be hard to define but is essentially the character and personality of an organization, encapsulating the **values, beliefs and behaviors of its people**. Culture has a huge role to play in attracting, engaging and motivating employees.

Employee recognition can make a notable difference here. By being very clear about which behaviors are being rewarded, how and why, employers can clearly reflect the values that really matter to their organization, supporting your workplace culture, wherever in the world a team or individual may be operating.

Awards should be directly linked to the behaviors that support your global culture. These can range from straightforward performance to softer, value-based behaviors such as 'creative thinking', 'showing integrity' or 'self-improvement'. Staff can then nominate their colleagues for exhibiting these behaviors and, by aligning them directly with recognition awards, employers can make a clear link between how employees act and how they are rewarded.



## Collaborative / Global technology

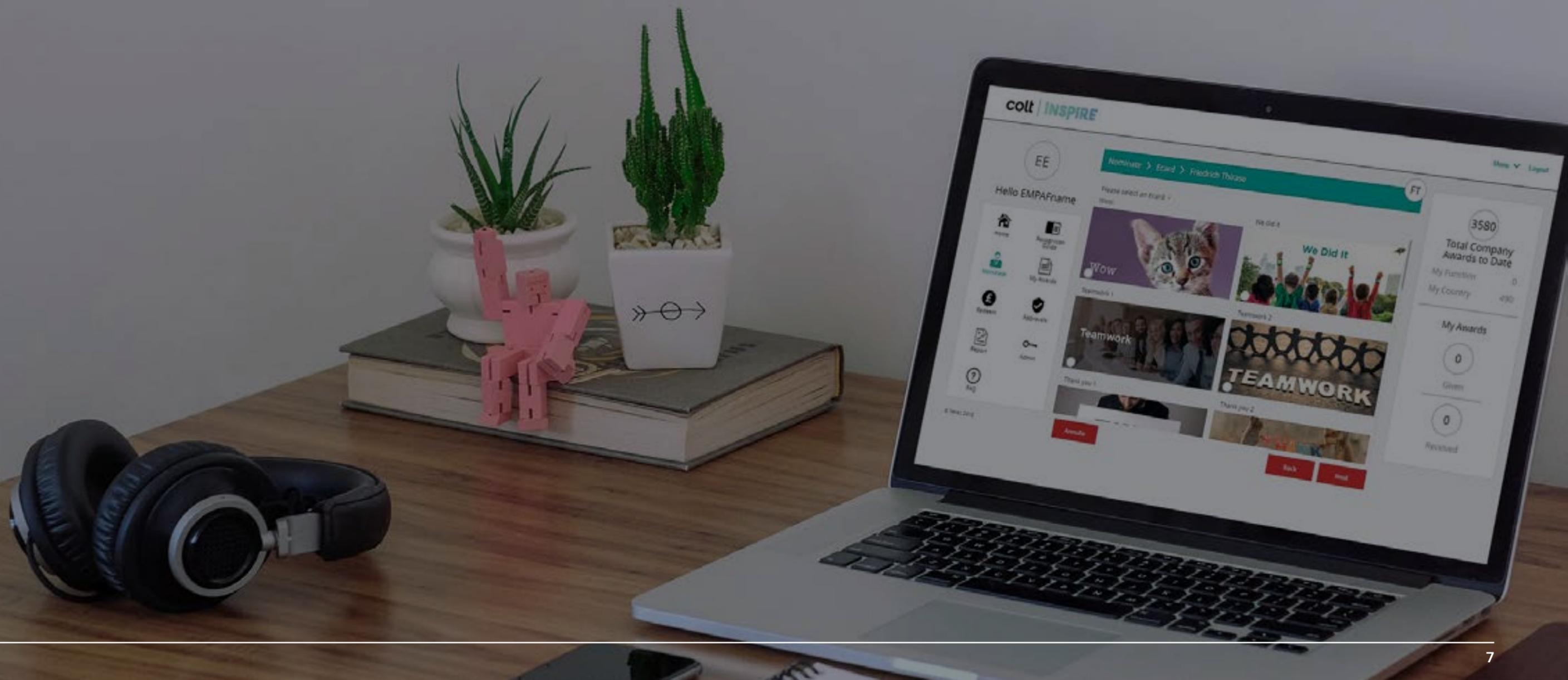
The best employee reward and recognition programs utilise **fully automated, online portals that can be accessed remotely**. These make it quick and easy to nominate colleagues, publicly celebrate staff achievements and redeem rewards. By using a centrally managed online portal as the hub for all recognition-focused activity, organizations can make it easy for workers in any location to get and feel involved with nominating and receiving recognition awards wherever they are, whilst at the same time ensuring there is a consistent, overarching strategy.

The technical functionality of portal-based programs allows for greater social recognition, via tools such as winners walls, message panels, likes and colleague notifications. Automating the approval process for granting recognition awards means that you can introduce operational efficiencies on a global scale whilst also capturing insightful data about how a scheme is operating.



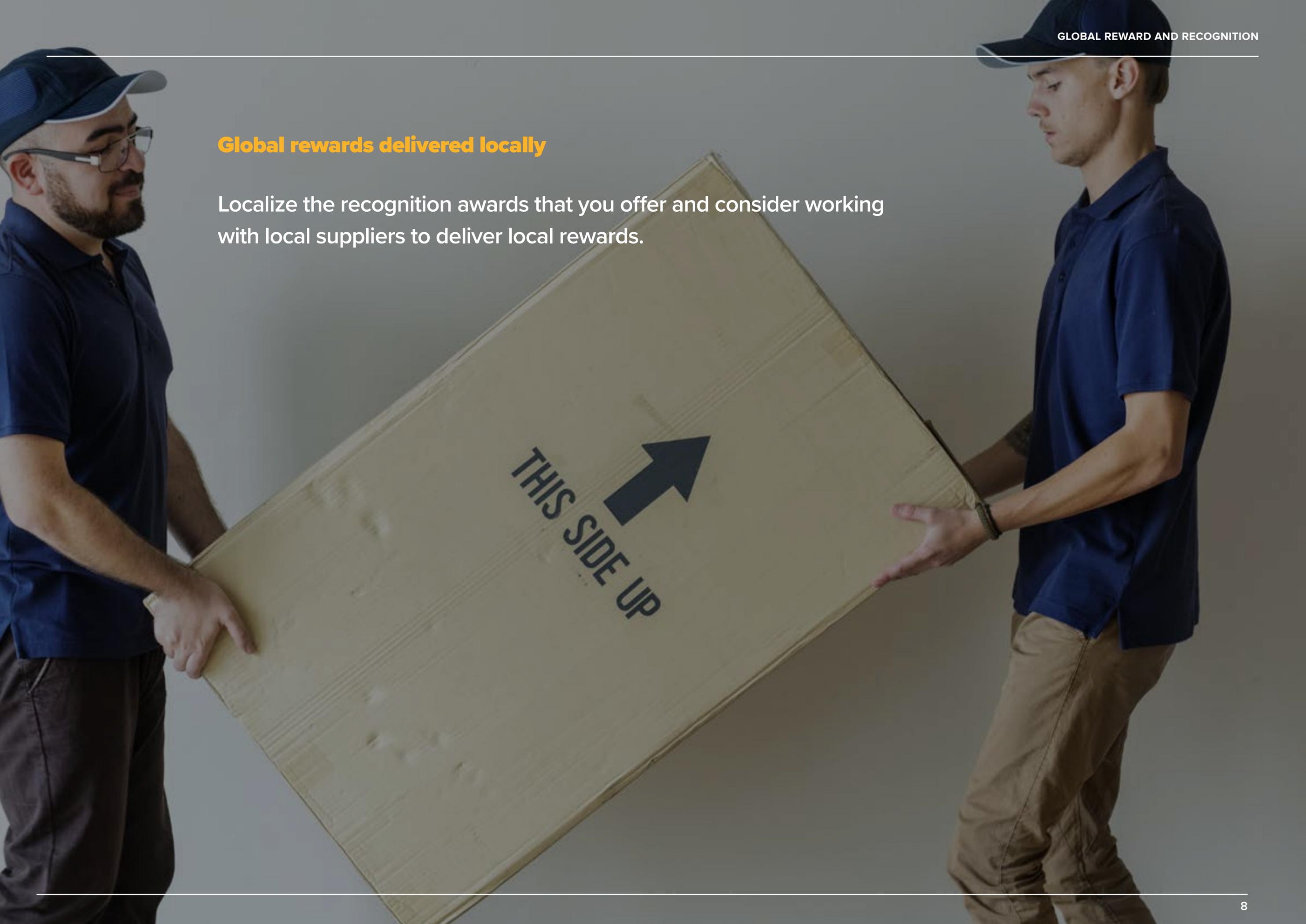
## Global implementation

It's always important to develop a detailed communications plan around the launch of a reward and recognition scheme, even more so on a global level. This should incorporate a range of different channels including posters, presentations, emails, internal intranet platforms, social media platforms, SMS messages, staff handbooks and more. It's particularly important to have local managers engaged from the outset, so it's important to clearly communicate the benefits of employee recognition to them and involve them in the process.



**Global rewards delivered locally**

Localize the recognition awards that you offer and consider working with local suppliers to deliver local rewards.



## Giving managers autonomy to meet their local needs: Understanding global cultural nuances

The starting point of any program should be to determine the best fit for the culture and demographic of your workforce. The challenge with any global organization is that these will differ from location to location. You may be trying to engage and motivate a production factory in Asia on one hand, alongside a sales team in Europe on the other. It's going to be impossible for a central HR or management team to be experts in every culture or geography in which you operate, so it's therefore important to give local managers the autonomy to make a reward scheme appropriate and relevant to their teams. This will allow for cultural sensitivity and flexibility around the key variables such as:

- **Communication:** understanding some of the challenges in using English with non-native speakers, using different languages as well as the different types of non-verbal communication that are specific to individual cultures.
- **Group dynamics:** how individuals interact with their colleagues, friends and family is a big consideration for reward and recognition activity.
- **Local attitudes:** towards things like time keeping; work-life balance, etc.

With these points in mind, managers have a crucial role to play, particularly when it comes to driving social recognition. Team moments are a crucial part of recognition and though digital, social recognition tools now form an important part of many recognition strategies, organizations should not lose sight of the importance of face-to-face presentations as an effective form of 'social recognition'.

Likewise, local managers should be given the autonomy to undertake spontaneous acts of recognition. Our own research on this topic found that receiving rewards spontaneously and for good work was more likely to make employees feel recognized than receiving them at events such as Christmas or on their birthday.



## Living costs and price parity

Living costs can differ dramatically and should be a major consideration. Recent stats from Mercer, for example, found Asian cities dominating its cost of living index, with Hong Kong taking the top spot.

## 2018 COST OF LIVING RANKING

Trends in Cost of Living: **Top 10 Cities** vs. **Bottom 10 Cities**

Asian cities lead the top 10 when it comes to the cost of living for expatriates by taking six of the top spots in Mercer's annual ranking. On the other end of the spectrum, developing unsafe and war-torn cities populate the bottom of the ranking



Source: Mercer's Cost of Living Ranking 2018

**Price parity: A £50 award in India will have a different value to a £50 award in the UK.**

It's therefore advisable to develop a currency cost of living (parity) index to ensure consistency and price parity across the board and aligned with both local and global budgets. This needs to incorporate much more than just foreign exchange and should take into account consumer goods and services, hospitality and leisure costs in different locations.

Any global scheme will require a multi-currency program, incorporating cost of living index calculators alongside local country redemption catalogues with retail vouchers and multi-currency prepaid cards.

**Other local considerations**

Will schemes need to be delivered in the local language and will you need local language telephone support?

What rewards work best in each location? Vouchers, prepaid cards, physical gifts, office perks, leisure activities, days off? This is not just a question of availability, but of cultural fit.

Are some award schemes less relevant in some cultures? For example, birthday cards, long service awards, and employee of the month?

Will you need different approval processes and budget rules in different countries to reflect different organizational structures? Or can these be simplified and consistent?

Can employees nominate colleagues from other countries, and what does this mean for approvals and budget management?

It's important to take all of these factors into account when developing a global scheme, as they will dictate the design and build of your portal and the back end technology that is running everything.

## Keys to a Successful Employee Recognition Program

**For an employee recognition program to be successful it needs to be:**

**Aligned with the wants and needs of the business:** be very clear about which staff behaviors and performances are being rewarded; how and why.

**Reflective of an organization's values:** recognition awards can focus heavily on things such as effort, enthusiasm or softer, value-based attributes. For example, if 'creative thinking' or values such as 'integrity' are important to your organization, make sure people are recognized for them.

## Measuring success

The best schemes capture an array of data and there are some simple things that you should be looking at. In particular, the level of engagement and approvals (i.e. how many employees are using the scheme).

More broadly, you can assess (via employee surveys before and during the implementation) the extent to which a scheme is delivering against your KPIs. Do your team feel recognized for their work? Do they understand the link between recognition and the company's core values? Are your employees feeling motivated and engaged?

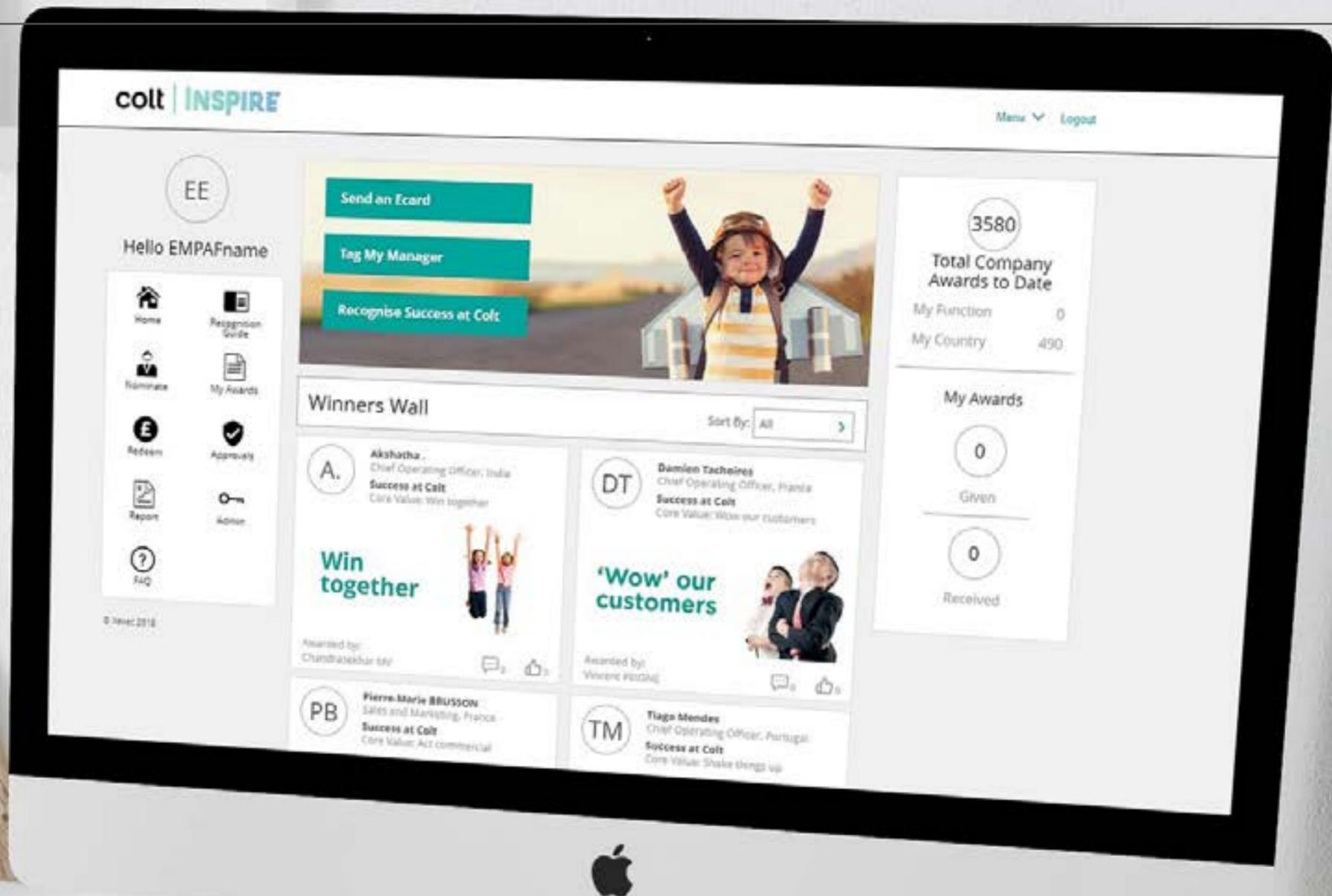


CASE STUDY

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# COLT TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

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## Business Overview

Colt Technology Services is a global provider of agile, high bandwidth connectivity solutions, that employs more than 5,000 people, across 22 countries in Europe, Asia and North America.

Its diverse international workforce ranges from tech savvy and computer literate technicians to high-performing sales and management professionals as well as a range of back office and support staff.

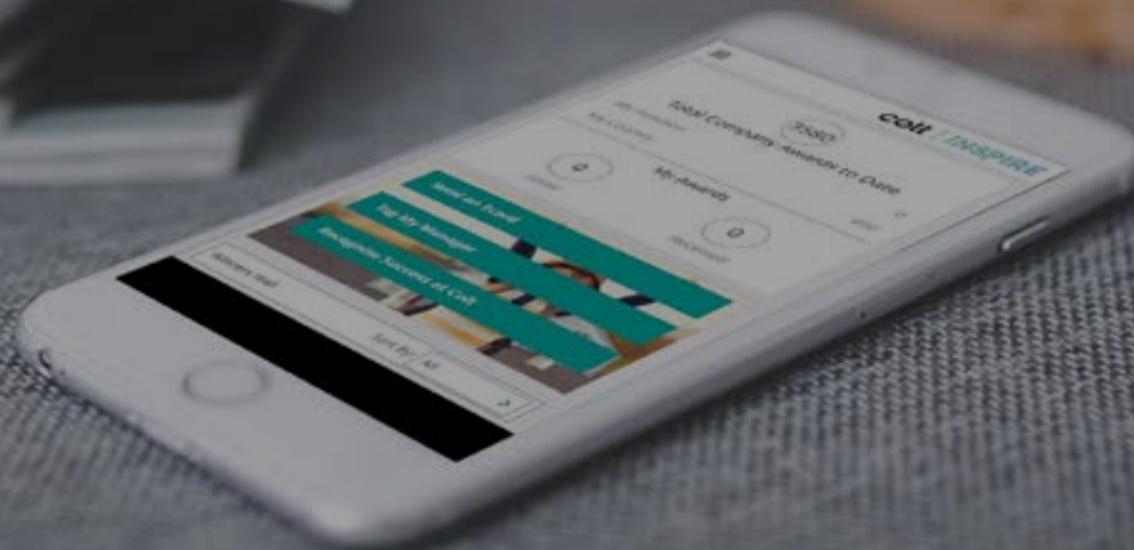
In its own words, Colt: “strives to be the most customer-oriented business in the industry” and, in line with this core business objective, aims to foster a “challenger culture” amongst its staff. A crucial part of this strategy relies upon recognizing the team members who fundamentally contribute to what the business stands for.

## The Challenge

Colt approached Xexec to develop a comprehensive employee recognition program that would support the organization's vibrant and exciting culture by effectively engaging its diverse international workforce.

The objective of the recognition program was to strengthen engagement, increase motivation and improve Colt's employee experience by rewarding the behaviors that are vital to the business, making its systems more engaging to use and aligning its practices to be simple and transparent.

Moreover, Colt required a scheme that could be delivered on an international scale, rolling out to its more than 5,000 employees operating across dozens of countries.



## The Solution

Against this backdrop, Xexec created Colt Inspire, underpinned by its award-winning online employee recognition portal, to make it quick and easy to recognize great work, simplify the processing required and generate high levels of engagement amongst staff operating across the globe. Colt and Xexec promoted the program to employees via an integrated launch campaign, across internal print and digital media including email-distributed video teasers.

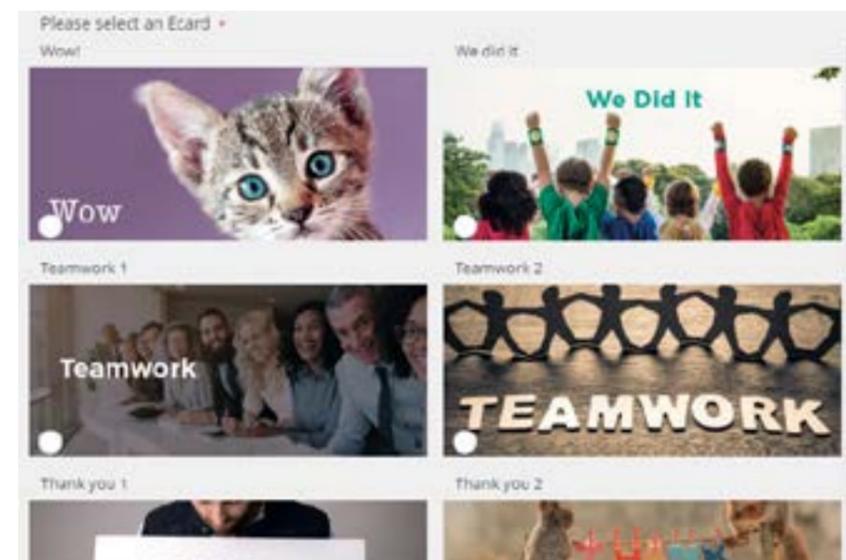
Due to the size and geographical scope of this scheme, this was an ambitious and complex program to develop. Xexec designed the program to mimic many aspects of a social media platform, with functions such as newsfeeds and the ability to tag in employees showing exemplary behavior. At the same time everything was designed to be accessible from a range of different devices to ensure that access was quick, easy and intuitive for employees, wherever in the world they were based, encouraging engagement and, most importantly, nominations.

In response to the international footprint of the organization, Xexec developed a multi-currency program, incorporating cost of living index calculators alongside local country redemption catalogues with retail vouchers and multi-currency prepaid cards.

The portal has been built for mobile, tablet and desktop devices and includes a ‘Facebook’ style newsfeed, with winner entries, messaging and likes.

Colleagues can nominate each other for multiple financial and non-financial awards; including peer-to-peer thank yous, special occasions, instant financial awards, quarterly awards, career milestone awards and a CEO award. Back-end functions include cost centre budget management, bespoke reporting and RSS feeds into the company intranet.

Features such as Xexec’s telephone concierge service were introduced to make remote redemption of rewards and gifts quick and easy. Proxy nominations (ability for colleagues to nominate on behalf of others) were also introduced with this in mind. Other functions such as ‘Tag My Manager’ were designed to encourage employees to think upwards and celebrate achievements of managers as well as their peers and more junior members of the team.



## The Outcome

The platform has enabled staff members to easily recognize and reward each other's contributions on a global basis, making employees across the world feel part of a global team and ensuring their achievements are recognized. After just three months of the scheme going live, there was a huge increase in levels of engagement.

For example:

Over the first 11 weeks:

- Total approved awards 3,234:  
average of 294 per week, circa 1180 per month
- 54% of awards were financial
- Total awards nominated 3619 (i.e. including declined and pending):  
average of 330 per week, circa 1320 per month
- Total countries nominated: 21 (of 22)
- Total currencies involved: 12

The scheme automates the process for granting recognition awards, is completely online and avoids the need for any paper filing (thus introducing operational efficiencies) and automatically collects management information, providing the global team with an array of insightful data on performance and talent management.





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