

INSPIRING EMPLOYEE MOTIVATION

How to motivate your organization towards real business outcomes

Motivating a multigenerational workforce

You've no doubt heard about millennials in the workforce. This generation, often defined as those born between 1981–1996 (give or take a few years), gets a lot of press. And while [Pew research](#) shows that millennials now comprise the largest percentage of the American workforce, they're certainly not the only generation in the workforce.

In fact, there are now up to five active generational groups in your office: the Silent/Greatest generation (born in 1945 or earlier), baby boomers (born 1946–1964), Gen X (born 1965–1980), millennials (born 1981–1996), and Gen Z (born in 1997 or later). The vast age range and characteristics of these generations translate into a workforce that's increasingly diverse.

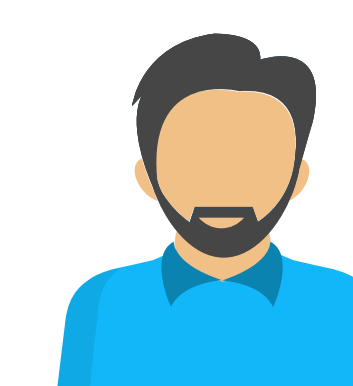
In today's multigenerational and diverse workplace, employees have increasingly [different motivators](#). **Millennials, for example, tend to feel the need to connect their work with a larger purpose, while most Gen Xers and boomers are more motivated by job security and financial opportunities, benefits.** And employees at different life stages (such as those who are caring for aging parents vs. those who are just entering the workforce) will have different priorities in their personal lives that may impact their work as well.

These generational factors mean that the tools you offer for motivating employees can't be one-size-fits-all.



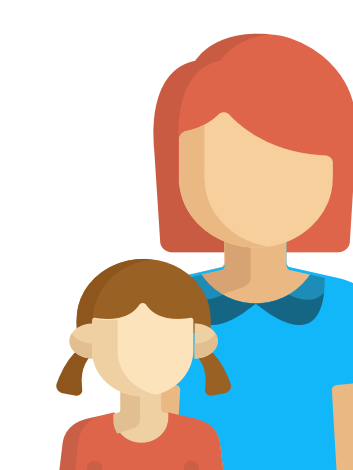
Gen Z

Flexibility and Purpose



Millennials

Choice and Connection



Gen X

Work-Life Balance



Baby Boomers

Job Security and Retirement



Silent/Greatest

Benefits and Passing the Torch

Why prioritize employee motivation?

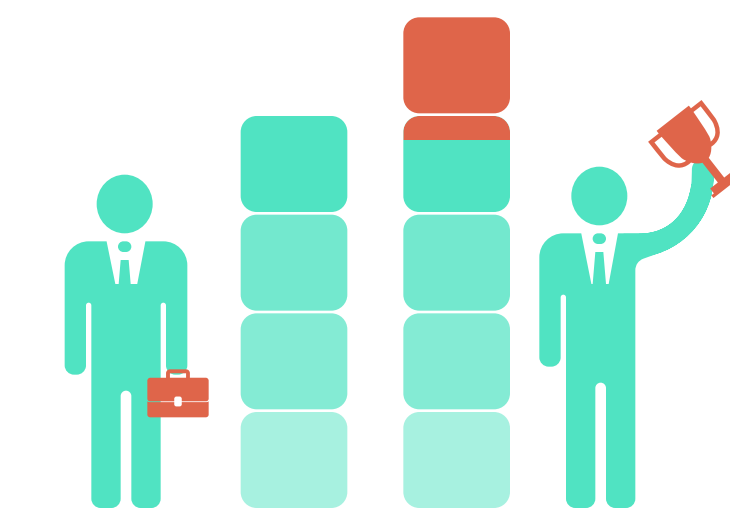
Understanding the passions, drivers, and the “what gets me out of bed each morning” for your employees is critical, because employee motivation and business results go hand in hand.

Motivated employees are proven to drive business impact —they experience [lower turnover and absenteeism](#).

Motivation is also tied directly to business outcomes. **Engaged companies outperform others on the stock market [by 22%](#).**

In businesses with highly motivated teams, profitability increased by 21%, sales productivity by 20%, and output quality by 40%, according to research published in the [Harvard Extension School](#) blog. In the same article, Peter Martel, writes, *“Employees want to feel valued, and the best way to express that value is through investment in the individual.”*

And lastly, motivated employees are incredibly contagious —when their peers see motivated teammates excited to tackle a new project, or arrive to work each day smiling and ready to go (even if it’s a byproduct of caffeination!), this infectious energy contributes to a more positive company culture and elevates the motivated employee’s surrounding network to a higher playing field.



Engaged companies outperform the stock market by [22%](#)



Peter Martel

Sr. Talent Development Consultant,
Harvard Business School

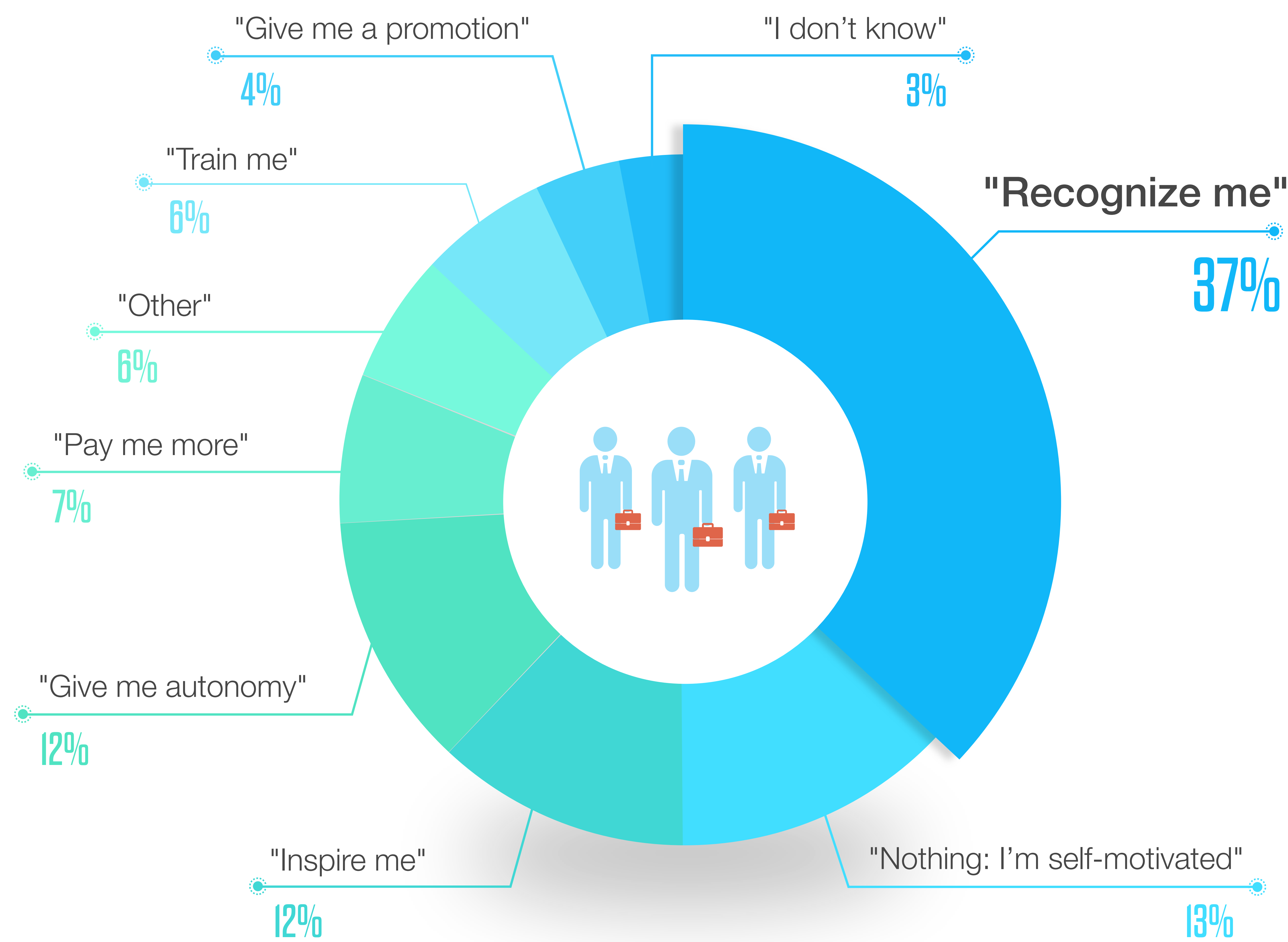
“Employees want to feel valued, and the best way to express that value is through investment in the individual.”

So how you can **effectively motivate your employees** at scale, given their varied internal motivators, interests, desires, and needs?

Meaningful employee recognition

Recognition can be easily personalized and is a great tool for motivating top talent. In fact, it was ranked as the #1 motivator for employee performance according to research by [O.C. Tanner](#), with **37% of employees choosing “Recognize me” as their top motivator**. The need for recognition was ranked above increased pay, promotions, or work autonomy—crazy when you reflect on how valuable these alternative benefits were ranked decades before when Baby Boomers and Silents ruled the workforce.

Recognition is the #1 motivator for your top talent



Understanding intrinsic vs. extrinsic motivation

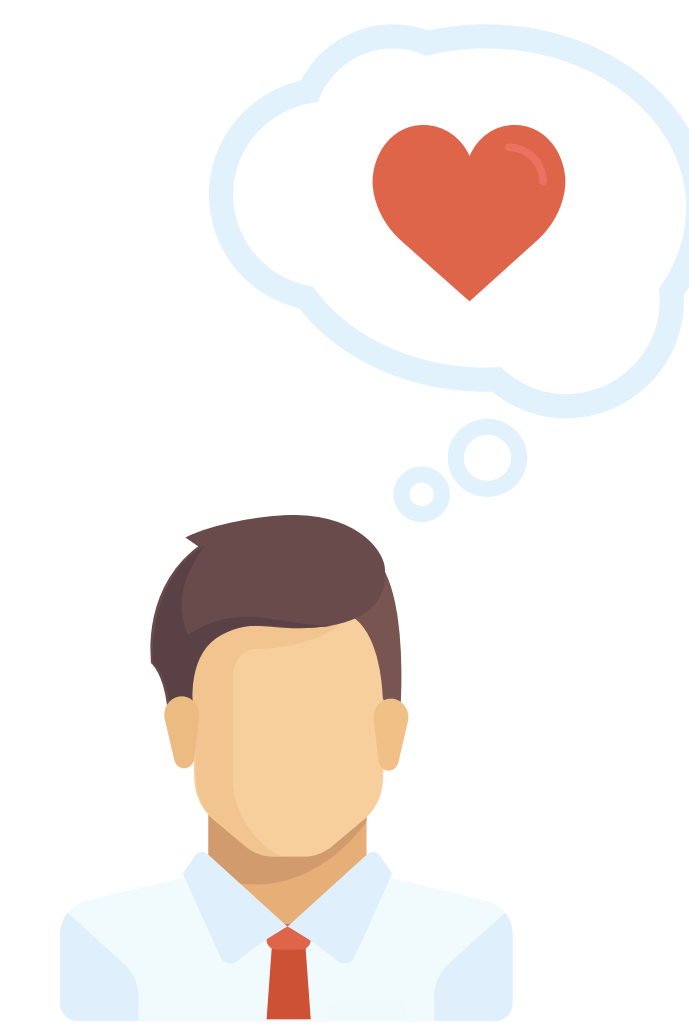
You don't need a Psych degree to understand employee motivation, but it helps to have a basic understanding of the two types: *extrinsic* and *intrinsic*. **Extrinsic motivation comes from outside factors like money, fame, grades, and praise, while intrinsic motivation originates from within the individual and relates to their personal goals or sense of purpose.** When people are extrinsically motivated, they'll perform tasks that aren't necessarily enjoyable because they want that external reward. On the other hand, when people are intrinsically motivated, they find the task inherently rewarding in and of itself.

Recognition can actually be used to activate both drivers of employee motivation. Here's how: When recognition is given by a manager or trusted peer, it reinforces an employee's contributions to greater company goals, which can tap into *intrinsic motivation*. When recognition is given publicly and tied in with an external reward, it appeals to *extrinsic motivation*.

Let's say a developer worked overtime to produce a code patch that saved the company from losing hundreds of customers due to an incredibly inconvenient bug (like the week of Black Friday kind of bug, for those of you in retail). When the developer is recognized for this major accomplishment, it strengthens their sense of purpose within the organization and their hard work feels *truly seen* and *valued*, encouraging them to repeat similar behaviors to achieve a stronger connection to the organization's goal of delivering an exceptional customer experience (*intrinsic motivation*). It also strengthens their personal brand and reputation as a top developer and overall lifesaver across the wider company, and puts them on the radar of senior engineering leadership (with the fame effect driving their *extrinsic motivation*).



Extrinsic Motivation



Intrinsic Motivation

In summary:

How recognition stimulates **extrinsic** motivators:



When it comes to extrinsic motivation, recognition is **directly linked to praise**, which is a significant external motivator. When a manager or a trusted peer recognizes an employee's contributions, they feel both seen and valued, and are more likely to perform their next task with greater effort.



Recognition positions someone ahead of their peers, **triggering the fame effect**. When someone is seen as a leader, top contributor, best salesperson, etc., it builds their internal brand reputation, and motivates them to maintain their status position and positive perception internally.



Rewards—whether they're monetary, experiential, or physical—**can be linked to compensation or something of value** (something the employee didn't have before). And when the rewards themselves are more unique, scarce, or personally relevant to the employee's interests, they're even more motivated to pursue them.

How recognition stimulates **intrinsic** motivators:



Rewards that are highly relevant to the employee's individual wants and desires are inherently more personal and **evoke feelings of happiness** when received. This is especially true when rewards are something an employee might not have otherwise invested in on their own. For example, being offered guitar lessons, something you loved in high school, but haven't thought to pick up since. Or, finally having the means to go to Disneyland for a much-needed family getaway. These types of experiential rewards **fulfill something deeper in the employee's psyche**, and are more impactful than traditional cash or gift card rewards.



Because recognition helps **link individual behaviors and actions to great work** (vs. perks that are available to all employees, at any time), employees achieve a **stronger sense of purpose** for how they are impacting the organization's business goals (as we noted before, very motivating for younger generations like millennials and Gen Z). And bonus! The more employees who display reward-worthy behavior, the quicker you'll reach your company-wide goals.

So which form of motivation should you prioritize?

Ideally intrinsic, to inspire passion in the employee around the company's longterm needs and business outcomes. However, not all projects and tasks are created equal - those that feel more challenging, stressful or mundane will require external motivators to inspire your employees towards the finish line.

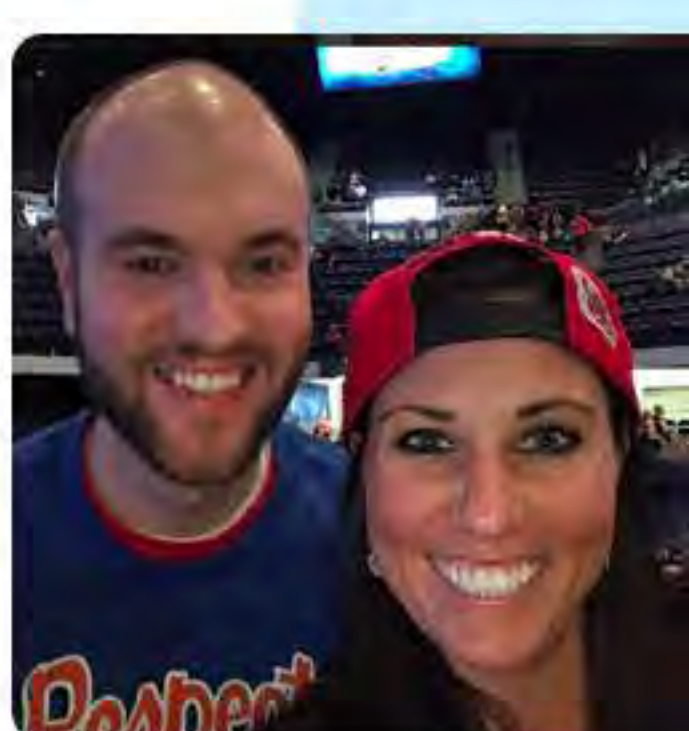
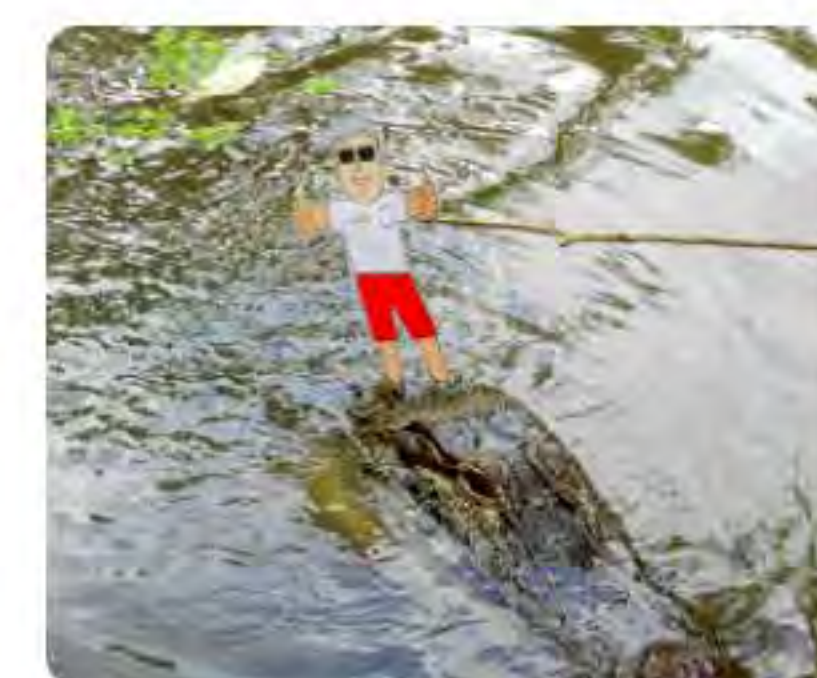
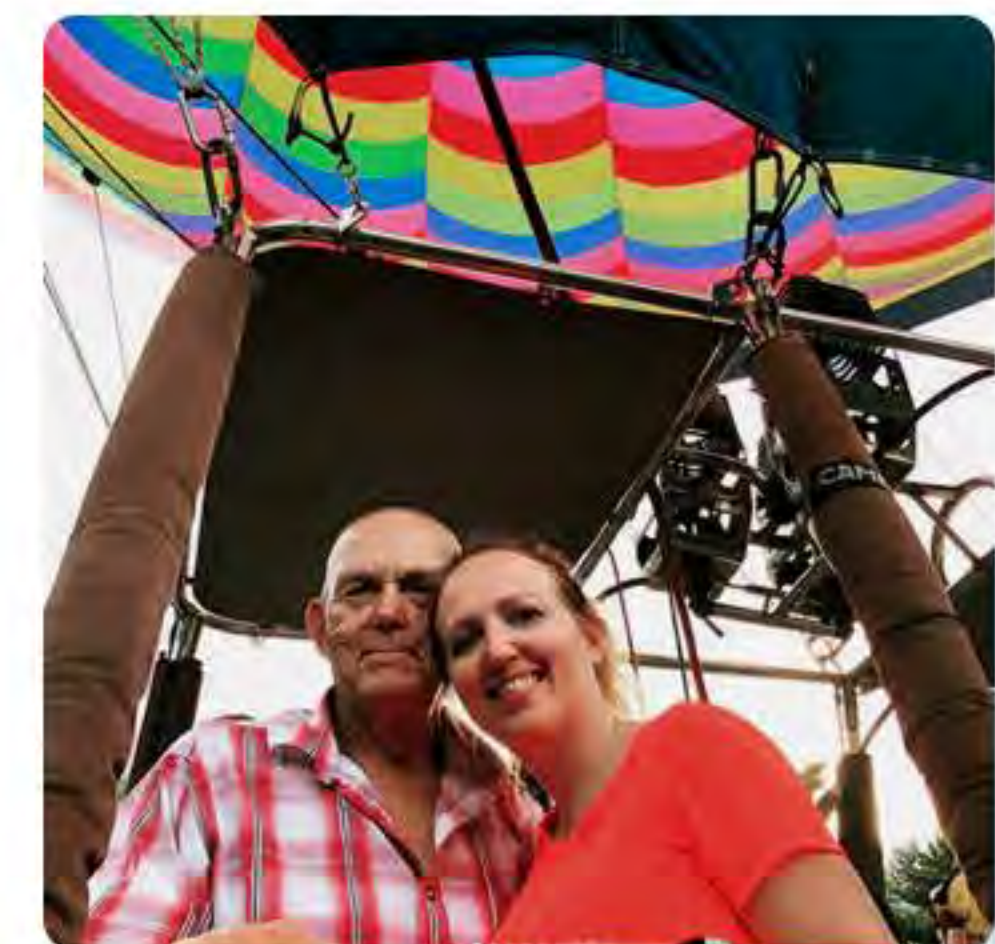
How personalized, experiential rewards motivate employees

Today's modern workforce craves personalization, so a "one-size-fits-all" solution won't cut it. So how can you personalize your recognition efforts? **By offering rewards that are relevant and unique to the employee's individual needs.**

The best way to achieve this is through a rewards menu that offers the element of choice, as well as reward offerings that are continually updated and refreshed. **The majority of recognition programs are 10+ years old, which means they're likely outdated and irrelevant.** Who wants a mahogany desk clock when many employees don't even have a dedicated desk anymore? Or an iPad that will only feel cool until Apple's next product release?

Once they receive their Blueboard reward, employees have the ability to choose from hundreds of handcurated experiential rewards (from kitesurfing lessons, to Thai cooking classes, to memorable family vacations), so they get to pick the reward that's most meaningful and exciting for them. **Gifting employees with highly relevant rewards creates feelings of happiness, a strong supporter of *intrinsic* motivators.**

And the data shows that Blueboard rewards are highly motivating to employees. [In our 2017 post-experience research study](#), we found that **95% of employees felt more motivated to perform at a higher level** after completing their Blueboard reward experience. How are your current recognition efforts stacking up?



Motivation-boosting recognition in practice: Stories from the field



Spot Recognition Customer Spotlight: GoPro Legend Awards

GoPro Legend Awards enable managers to recognize employees who deliver above and beyond results aligned with their company values like *Be a Hero*, *Haul Ass*, and *Integrity Always*. Rewarded employees get the opportunity to live out their passions, explore new adventures or embrace their creativity through exciting and GoPro video-worthy Blueboard experiences.



Spot Recognition Customer Spotlight: USI Summit Awards

The USI Summit Awards program recognizes outstanding service among technical and administrative associates across the country who build USI's brand in their daily interactions with clients, prospects, carriers, and colleagues.

Each year in April, the entire company joins together to celebrate these top performers through an exciting presentation of a custom desktop award and their choice from the Blueboard Indigo rewards catalog.

Photos from past Summit Award winners on their Blueboard experiences—including skydiving trips, white water rafting adventures, and swimming with dolphins—are proudly displayed in frames throughout the office. A great tool for building motivation and inspiring future winners.

Recognition program ideas for inspiring employee motivation

Based on our experience, the following types of recognition programs are most effective at boosting all forms of employee motivation.



Company-wide spot recognition programs

Spot recognition programs are manager- or peer-led programs that recognize hard work, above-and-beyond effort, or demonstration of core company values. This type of recognition program enables companies to clearly outline reward-worthy behaviors, so that employees can easily participate in exchange for company-wide exposure. **This is an effective way of tapping into extrinsic motivation that's strengthened through praise and fame.**

At the same time, **company-wide programs demonstrate how reward-worthy behaviors help the company achieve its greater mission** or accomplish company-wide business goals, which activates *intrinsic motivation* and a sense of purpose amongst recognized employees.

Plus, experiential rewards that generate buzz and excitement create content for HR teams to leverage in order to build continued program awareness and adoption. **As employees learn about their coworker's skydiving experience at a Town Hall meeting, they'll be talking about it afterwards and looking for ways to earn their own reward.** HR's mission to motivate employees? Accomplished!



Sales incentives and contests

If you're looking to motivate your sales team towards an aggressive goal, **featuring unique Blueboard experiences builds energy and excitement around something of value, serving as an extrinsic motivator.** Sales teams are often saturated with the same old carrots—cash, time off, or gift cards. But how cool would it be to cross something off your bucket list, like learning to surf or taking a trip to Argentina (instead of earning yet another Amazon gift card)?

Experiences create opportunities for conversation as recipients share photos, videos, and stories from their adventures. This simply doesn't happen when they receive a cash bonus or gift card. Seeing others receive rewards—and hearing them recounted in detail over the lunch table—**plays into the competitive nature of the sales culture in a healthy way** and inspires others to work harder to become the next Blueboard winner.

Creating a motivating employee rewards program: tips & tricks

01

Make the program visible: Encourage senior leadership to announce and reinforce your program (especially for company-wide spot recognition) so that employees understand the value that comes from their increased efforts, and the role these efforts play in driving the organization forward.

02

Make the rules clear: Establish training and education materials around the specific actions or behaviors linked to recognition, so that employees are motivated in the right direction and managers know how to properly distribute rewards. At Blueboard, we'll arm you with branded content and collateral to help streamline communication around how to participate.

03

Offer compelling carrots: Rewards that are exciting, personalized, relevant, and shareable make for a successful program. Not sure what to offer? Form a taskforce of representative employees to evaluate reward options. These ambassadors will weigh-in on which rewards will be the most relevant to the community, and can help to champion your rewards program once it rolls out internally.

04

Showcase recognition stories publicly: As reward experiences are completed, bring memories to life through public channels that your employees are already using daily. You can highlight photos or videos on digital channels like Slack or Facebook@Work, spotlight rewarded employees during public meetings like Town Halls, or post photos to physical or digital bulletin boards throughout your offices. As employees see what's possible (and that people are actually getting rewarded), they'll be more motivated to participate and cheer on their peers.



"Blueboard has found the magic in making a company reward so much more meaningful than just getting a gift card or cash. I'll never forget the time we had at the Savage River Lodge and I'm so motivated to refer more candidates to Tradeshift you wouldn't believe it."

- David Cox, **TRADESHIFT**



Want to learn more about how Blueboard

can help you create a personalized recognition program to motivate your top employees?

[Request a demo](#) on our website and we'll look forward to connecting!

