

# 10 <sup>TOP</sup> Ways to Make Recognition More Meaningful

As a leader with direct reports, a critical part of your role is to model, expect and reward the values we ask others to demonstrate. When we recognize others in meaningful ways, we build trust, and better connect employees to our mission and vision. Meaningful recognition drives employee engagement, which fuels job satisfaction, collaboration, productivity and so much more.

So, what is 'meaningful recognition'? Simply put, it is thanking or acknowledging someone in a way that is valuable to them. Here's some ways to make the recognition you give more meaningful for your employee.

**1 Ask.** The best way to find out how an employee wishes to be recognized is to ask!

**Be Timely.** When appropriate, thank someone as close to the behavior/performance/event in time as possible. **2**

**3 Be Specific.** Start with thanks, but don't stop there! Recognition should also include the specific actions/behaviors demonstrated and the difference it made.

**Make it Personal.** Make sure your acknowledgement could not be given to anyone else (e.g. "Great job"); find ways to connect with the individual. **4**

**5 Make it Frequent.** Service anniversaries and completion of projects are great times to celebrate but leave long periods of time in-between; look for opportunities to recognize effort and behaviors that will lead to results.

**Connect it.** Recognition is more effective when it's given in context. Point out how this person's behavior or achievement demonstrates our values, helps achieve a team goal, or gets us closer to realizing our mission and vision. **6**

**7 Own it.** Recognition should come from your own experiences, expectations and observations, not from third-party sources.

**Include Positive Impact.** In addition to recognizing a desired behavior or achievement, share how this made a difference. **8**

**9 Be Authentic.** Mean it when you give it! Make it about your employee – not you – and remember that an ounce of your style and simple but honest 'low tech' praise is worth a pound of auto-response emails.

**Appropriate in Volume and Scale.** Recognition should match the level of effort and results. Undeserved or over-praising can be perceived as random and hollow, and can lead to feelings of mis-trust. **10**