



# State of Missouri

*Rewards and Recognition*

## Rewards and Recognition Field Book

A comprehensive approach to rewarding and recognizing team members.



*This page intentionally left blank.*

## Top 5 Ideas and Resources for Team Member Recognition

The purpose of this section is to provide a **quick list of key activities and resources** for all levels of State of Missouri leaders to use to recognize and reward team members.

### 1. **Formally recognize team members.** Examples of formal recognition include:

- Departmental Initiative. Create a reward tied to a department or division initiative such as process improvement, customer service, or creativity and innovation.
- Departmental Core Values. Create a reward tied to the department's core values such as respect, teamwork or integrity.
- Departmental Core Purpose. Create a reward tied to the department's core purpose such as service, sharing knowledge, empowering citizens.
- Department-specific Circumstances. Facing tough budget times or a situation that's got the team feeling down? Give a light-hearted recognition such as a penny-pincher award to someone who found a way to save money.

### 2. **Informally recognize team members.** Examples of informal recognition include:

- Say "Thank you."
- Smile.
- Greet people by name.
- Recognize individual and team accomplishments and contributions during staff meetings, team huddles, and executive-level meetings.
- Give hand-written cards or letters welcoming individuals to the team, acknowledging good work, encouraging members who are feeling down or suffering a loss.
- Put a thank you sticky note on someone's workstation.
- Tell team members thank you on the intercom or office paging system, if applicable.
- Check-in on team members daily.
- Provide immediate positive reinforcement.
- Praise employees publicly and privately.
- Allow team members to provide feedback and input.
- Implement ideas from the team.
- Recognize the strengths of each team member.
- Repeat positive feedback you received about the team, back to them.
- Encourage a peer-to-peer recognition system.

- 3. Learn more about the importance of recognition.** Examples of books include:
- Chapman, Bob & Sisodia, Raj (2015). *Everybody Matters: The Extraordinary Power of Caring for Your People Like Family*
  - Chapman, Gary & White, Paul (2019). *The 5 Languages of Appreciation in the Workplace: Empowering Organizations by Encouraging People*
  - Novak, David (2012). *Taking People With You: The Only Way to Make Big Things Happen*
  - Novak, David & Bourg, Christa (2016). *O Great One! A Little Story About the Awesome Power of Recognition*
  - Pink, Daniel (2011). *Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us*
  - Sinek, Simon (2017). *Leaders Eat Last: Why Some Teams Pull Together and Others Don't*
- 4. Learn more about how to use recognition.** Examples from MO Learning include:
- Simon T. Bailey: Making Recognition a Routine
  - Noah Fleming: Rewards and Recognition
- 5. Find new ideas and inspiration on how to recognize team members.** Examples of websites include:
- *Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) Managing Employee Recognition Programs.*  
Available at: <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/tools-and-samples/toolkits/pages/employeerecognitionprograms.aspx>
  - *State Employee Recognition Ideas.*  
Available at: [www.ia.mo.gov/SERW/recognition\\_ideas](http://www.ia.mo.gov/SERW/recognition_ideas)
  - Bob Chapman: Truly Human Leadership (Ted Talk)
  - Daniel Pink: The Puzzle of Motivation (Ted Talk)
  - Laura Trice: Remember to Say Thank You (Ted Talk)

# Best Practices for Using Non-Financial Rewards and Recognition

The purpose of this section is to provide a **comprehensive guide** for all levels of State of Missouri leaders to recognize and reward a team member's contribution to the department.

## What are Non-financial Rewards and Recognition?<sup>1</sup>

Rewards and Recognition are not synonymous. Rewards are things that the department or supervisors give to colleagues as the result of work conducted; you want to reward results. Recognition is the act of praising colleagues for a certain level or quality of work; you want to reinforce behaviors you want to continue through recognition. Non-financial rewards and recognition are not related to pay.

There is a distinction between formal recognition, which is a predetermined program such as Employee of the Month, or Years of Service; and informal recognition, which is a spontaneous gesture such as a high-five, special shout-out during a meeting, or a handwritten note. The rule of thumb is to provide informal recognition whenever an accomplishment or behavior is worthy of praise, and provide a formal recognition for every four informal.

## Why are Recognition Programs Important?<sup>1</sup>

Recognition for a job well done is one of the top motivators for employees. Non-financial recognition ties directly to the basic human need to be appreciated and acknowledged. The impact of a well-implemented recognition program instills a rich culture of acceptance and satisfaction in the workplace.

## What are the Benefits of a Recognition Program?

- **Increase engagement, morale, and motivation.** 70% of employees say that motivation and morale would improve “massively” if leaders would say “thank you” more.<sup>2</sup>
- **Increase productivity, performance, and quality.** 40% of people employed in America say they would put more effort and energy into their work if they were recognized more often.<sup>3</sup>
- **Retain top performers and identify low performers.** 31% lower voluntary turnover at companies who scored in the top 20% for building a “recognition-rich culture.”<sup>4</sup>

## What Makes a Recognition Program Effective?<sup>5</sup>

- **Genuine.** Include details and context to avoid coming across insincere or unclear.
- **Timely.** Key moments right after an achievement to give a clear connection to positive behavior.
- **Frequent.** Celebrate small victories as they happen. Recognize at least once a month.
- **Specific.** Provides clarity for what is being recognized.
- **Visible.** Sets an example for behavior, actions, and contributions that others can repeat.
- **Inclusive.** Equity, belonging, and psychological safety for team members.
- **Values-based.** Encourages team to work towards the same vision and values by tying tangible actions to an overall goal.

## Who Gives Recognition?<sup>5</sup>

Everyone in the department should be expected to give and receive recognition.

- **Top-Down.** The traditional form of recognition where leaders witness and appreciate the contributions of team members.
- **Bottom-Up.** A form of recognition that comes from frontline staff to leaders.
- **Peer-to-Peer.** A genuine expression of appreciation exchanged between co-workers.

## How to Give Recognition?

- Written praise
- Verbal praise
- Small gifts/tokens
- Organization-funded events

## When to Give Recognition?

- First day of employment
- Birthday
- After or during an accomplishment
- After a desired behavior
- Milestones
  - Work anniversary
  - Project completion
  - Promotions
  - Achievements
- Don't wait for designated employee appreciation days to give recognition



## Where to Start?<sup>5</sup>

Leaders must be aware of their responsibility to provide recognition to their team. To cultivate a successful recognition program, all leaders and supervisors must be engaged with and learn ways to motivate and inspire each team member.

All teams are comprised of individuals with different styles such as introverts, extroverts, individuals who prefer public praise versus one-on-one recognition. One type of recognition may not motivate all team members in the same way. Above all, leaders and supervisors must be sincere when delivering recognition.

**What types of behaviors should be rewarded and recognized?** Effective recognition is tied to department and division values! If delayed deliverables is a challenge in your department, then reward deliverables completed early or on time.

If your department is working in silos, then applaud cross-departmental collaborations.



**How should the desired behavior be rewarded?** It's important to know your team and reward behavior accordingly. Connecting praise to a tangible reward or experience can remind team members of their achievements long after praise is given.

**How often should recognition occur?** Effective praise is frequent, so it's important to regularly recognize your team. Get in the habit of giving immediate recognition and reiterating that with praise during team meetings. Leaders and supervisors need to vary the forms of recognition, including adding new things, experimenting with existing activities, or eliminating others that have run their course and are no longer motivating the team.

**Who should recognition come from?** Recognition is traditionally top-down, or given by leaders, but peer and 360-degree recognition can be even more effective.

**Team members should have a voice and choice.** Engage teams to better understand what motivates them, what types of things they like, and the types of rewards they're most interested in. For example, if you're rewarding team members with food, make sure you are aware of dietary restrictions, favorite foods, etc.

## Implementation Factors to Consider

The following excerpt was taken from: Mason, E. (February 12, 2019) *The Art and Science of Recognition: 5 Best Practices for Employee Recognition Programs*.

When introducing a new system or approach, it's important that communication around the roll-out is clear and the implementation is as painless as possible. Any team participating in a new program should be clued in on that program's purpose, how to use it, and when it will take effect.

Here are three factors to consider as you're thinking about implementing or updating a recognition program:

### Alignment

Management should be aligned on the program's purpose, especially when they're leading the roll-out of the program. Teams and employees may start to feel jaded if no one is taking it seriously. Imagine being on a team where the manager withholds recognition and doesn't think it's important, while watching the team next door receive reward after reward—it would be demoralizing.

Recognition should also be aligned with organizational objectives and goals; creating recognition programs around behaviors that the business doesn't value leads to confusion and may have the negative impact of directing energy away from company goals. Consider it a *reinforcement of existing priorities*.

### Visibility

Managers should strive for publicly-visible recognition, especially at the start of any recognition program. Employees should be able to see when their peers are recognized, fostering a culture of recognition. Data from that recognition should be visible for teams to help improve communication.

### Delivery

With current technology, how recognition is delivered is also critical to determine. How will recognition or rewards be delivered in your organization?

Meet your employees where they're at. If you regularly communicate through a collaboration tool like Slack, find a program that integrates with it. Use existing team meetings to reiterate recognition where appropriate, and consider using an automated system to fulfill rewards.



## How to Measure Success?<sup>5</sup>

Successful recognition programs should positively impact other factors like job satisfaction, performance, productivity, and retention. You can use different ways to analyze changes in those areas, like retention data, Pulse survey data, brief interviews or feedback sessions with team members. Departments should gather feedback from team members on a regular basis and make adjustments as necessary.



Also, use data from recognition programs to inform other decisions in your department. Research team member behaviors to determine if a team or an individual is isolated, review *how* teams are connected, and facilitate collaboration to improve team dynamics where needed. Are there teams in your department who are consistently respecting and rewarding members? Study those teams to understand how to take what they are doing to other divisions and departments.

## Sources

<sup>1</sup>Nelson, B. (2005). *Ways to Reward Employees*. New York, NY: Workman Publishing.

<sup>2</sup>Novak, D. (May 9, 2016). Recognizing employees is the simplest way to improve morale. *Harvard Business Review*. Retrieved from: <https://hbr.org/2016/05/recognizing-employees-is-the-simplest-way-to-improve-morale.html>

<sup>3</sup>Duncan, J. (September 6, 2017). *How to Boost Employee Morale and Experience Its Many Benefits*. Retrieved from: <https://blog.bonus.ly/how-to-boost-employee-morale-and-experience-its-many-benefits>

<sup>4</sup>Bersin, J. (June 13, 2012). New Research Unlocks the Secret of Employee Recognition. *Forbes*. Retrieved from: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/joshbersin/2012/06/13/new-research-unlocks-the-secret-of-employee-recognition/#501ce5fe5276>

<sup>5</sup> Mason, E. (February 12, 2019). *The Art and Science of Recognition: 5 Best Practices for Employee Recognition Programs*. Retrieved from: <https://blog.bonus.ly/employee-recognition-best-practices>