

How to Make the Shift from Manual to Digital Reward and Recognition Programs



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With the onset of COVID-19 forcing the majority of the global workforce into remote work, companies are finding that their old methods of recognizing, connecting and supporting employees are no longer effective. As morale waivers amidst the uncertainty in the world, it is more important than ever for employees to hear the words "I see you, and I appreciate the hard work you do" on a regular basis.

You might be skeptical about pushing recognition to the top of your agenda, but in fact, recognition can impact many areas of your business. Recognition not only improves employee morale, wellbeing and happiness, but also drives productivity and business results.



According to a recent survey, 82% of American employees don't feel that they are recognized enough, and 40% say that they would work harder if recognition increased. (Harvard Business Review)

As businesses change, recognition programs must adapt to meet the needs of employees, many of whom will continue to work remotely.

While long-service awards, gift cards and simple thank-yous may have worked in the past, in this new environment, manual and in-person recognition strategies are no longer reliable ways to keep our employees happy and engaged.

Recognition programs are only effective if employees embrace them, so by making recognition digital and more accessible, you can reach more people and embed a culture of recognition throughout your company. While manual programs can seem like the "easier" solution to put in place, looking for a scalable digital solution that can expand and change as your company grows will eliminate future headaches that time-consuming manual programs can create.

So what can we do to adapt and change employee recognition for a post-COVID-19 world? We can make our programs flexible, robust and above all digital. Here are five ways that digital employee recognition benefits your company:

1

It helps to connect your dispersed workforce

Whether your workforce is dispersed because of remote work or different office locations, or whether you're hoping to find new ways to spotlight important work that different teams are doing, a digital recognition platform is a great way to bring your organization together.

While manual forms of recognition like employee-of-the-month posters are often not seen by most employees, embracing social recognition like what we offer on our reward and recognition platform allows people across the organization to not only see, but also contribute to employee recognition through comments and reactions, regardless of geographic location.

Having a central, digital space where employees and managers can recognize other employees and see the recognition happening is key to creating a community and a culture of recognition within your organization.

A digital platform allows you to see the recognition happening not only within your team, but also across all teams and departments, improving employee collaboration and connection across your organization.

Additionally, our integrations make it easy to build our program into what you already have. With integrations like Slack, RSS feeds and Microsoft Teams, you can instantly send your employees alerts for company updates and new blog posts to increase readership and improve company-wide communication.



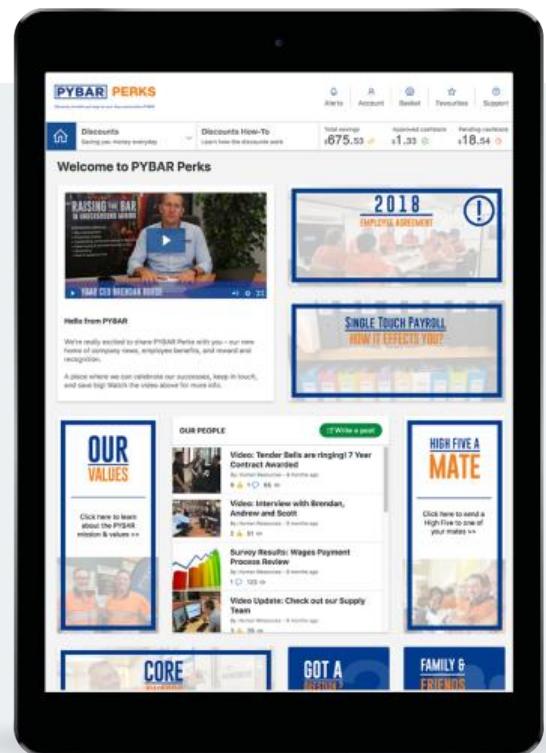
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It makes recognition easy and immediate

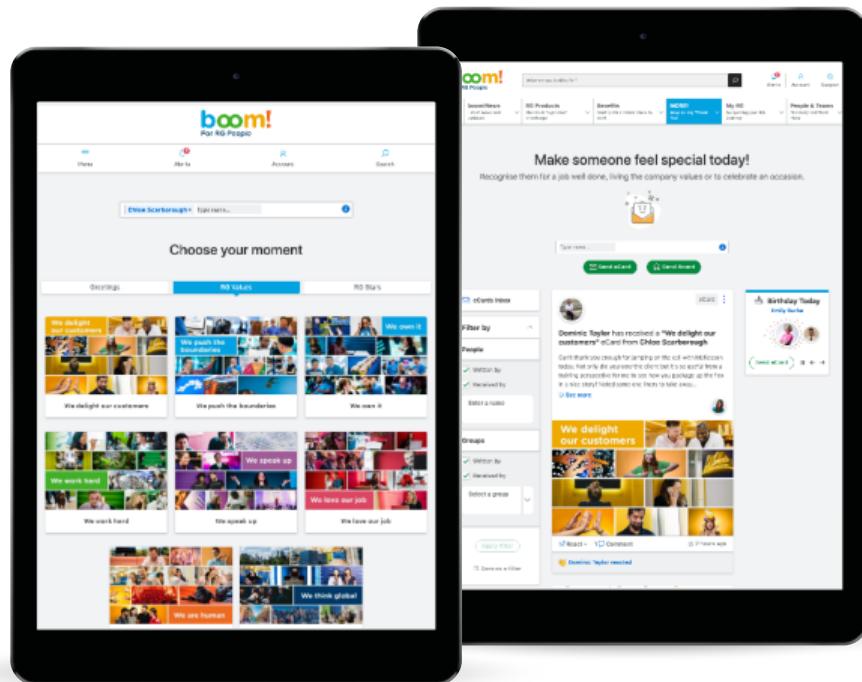
Whereas manual recognition can often delay the process until the recognition no longer feels timely or relevant, digital recognition allows for instant acknowledgement so that employees can be recognized for their praise-worthy actions or hard work in that moment.



PYBAR Mining Services, a Reward Gateway client with more than 800 employees, realized that its manual recognition process was cumbersome and that delayed recognition left employees feeling as though their moment had passed by the time they received their award. Working with Reward Gateway, PYBAR launched its own branded online recognition platform, "PYBAR Perks," where employees and employers could send eCards and "High Five A Mate" when they noticed someone demonstrating their company values.



PYBAR's digital platform successfully engaged employees and improved employee recognition across the board by encouraging both manager-led and peer-to-peer recognition. The platform also had a great impact on communications across a geographically-dispersed workforce – through the implementation of a newsletter and blog on PYBAR Perks, the company improved communication between management and employees that wouldn't have been possible without a centralized digital platform.



An example of eCards employees can choose from, which are then visible on a social recognition wall.

3

It encourages transparency

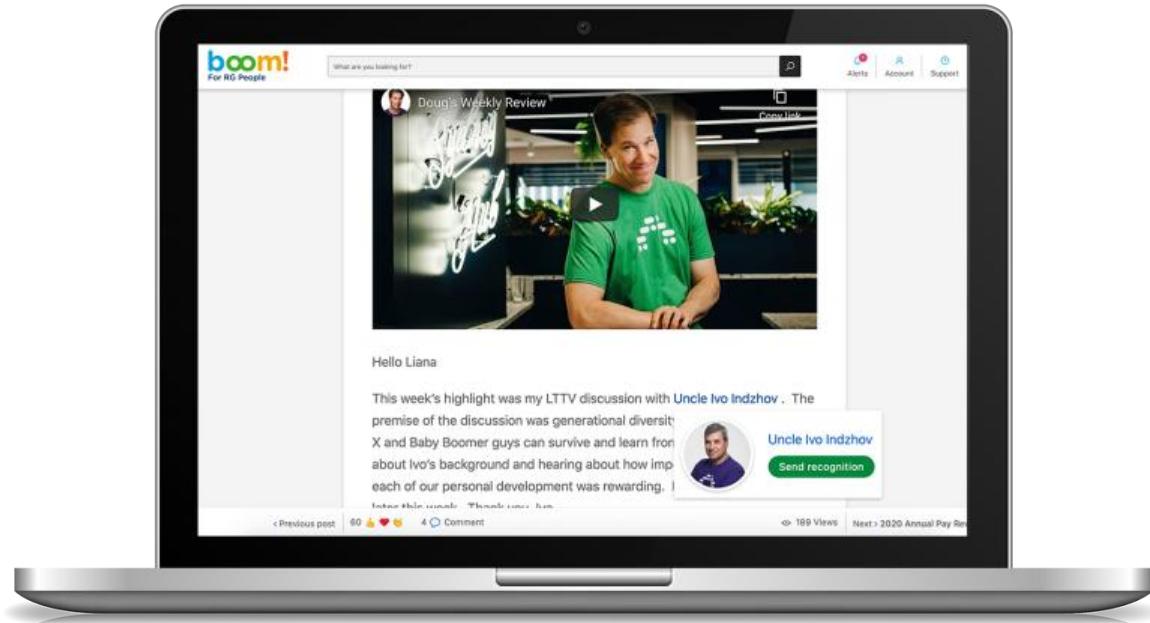
Digital recognition also allows for greater transparency than older, manual forms of recognition. In the past, when an employee was recognized for hard work and rewarded for it, the manager wouldn't make a company-wide announcement saying "I'm recognizing this person for doing this and giving them this award" – the manager would simply recognize the employee privately or with only minimal visibility.

This method of recognition falls short because it can be misinterpreted as favoritism, and doesn't meet the modern workforce's need for consistent and transparent recognition.

Having easy access to information and visibility of why certain employees are recognized is essential to building employees' trust and avoiding the perception of favoritism at work. Employees want to see what's going on behind the scenes – whether it's changes to company policy or the decision to reward an employee – and having this information visible on an online platform can greatly improve employee-employer trust and build a culture of recognition.

Our eCards allow for this visibility as they are displayed on the "Wow Wall," a social recognition feature that hosts all company-wide eCards that are sent so employees can see who is being recognized and why they have earned the recognition.

In addition to our eCards, our blog functionality can bring even greater visibility to your recognition, as leaders can highlight a person's contribution to the business in a weekly blog update. See how our CEO uses his weekly blog to recognize employees who have gone above and beyond below:



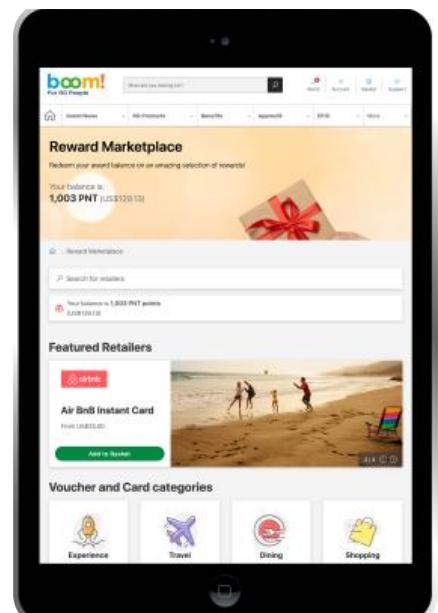
An example of how to easily send employee recognition within a blog post.

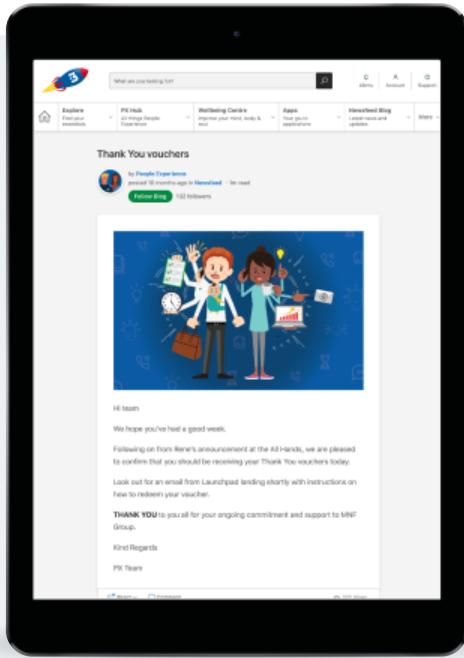
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It allows you to reward all of your employees instantly

Another way digital tools can help you take your recognition even further is by rewarding your employees online with monetary awards. Digital awards are especially useful right now, as most of us are not in offices and cannot give in-person gifts or rewards to employees. With the option to automate bulk awards, you can save time by sending awards to all of your employees at once, and go one step further by customizing awards to match your brand or company values.

Sending gift cards and awards to all of your employees manually is an admin-heavy and time-consuming task, which can lead to inconsistency in how or why you reward employees. Automated bulk awards allow you to instantly reward everyone in the business with minimal effort, so it's easy to send these throughout the year to boost morale when it's needed most. Employees can also redeem these from a large selection of retailers, on an experience that's meaningful to them or other options through a personalized redemption experience.





A great example of a client who has used the platform to deliver bulk rewards to employees is MNF Group. MNF Group is a growing telecommunications company with more than 400 employees, who all began to work remotely during the pandemic. The People Team wanted to send a care package to every employee to provide extra support during challenging times, but recognized that it would be difficult to provide something to meet all employees' unique needs.

Using their Reward Gateway platform, "Launchpad," the People Team at MNF Group was able to send a \$100 voucher to all employees, which employees could use however they wanted - on clothing, toys for their kids, something for their house - to get the most out of their award. By giving employees the gift of choice, MNF Group was able to ensure that everyone received a gift that was meaningful to them and employees could see that their employer cared about them.

"It made it all so much simpler for our team too — we didn't have to organize delivery to all the different areas, and didn't have to spend money on something that might not have landed for our people. The response has been incredible." - Emma Trehy, People Experience Manager at MNF Group

5

It makes your business flexible and future-proof

The recent, sudden changes in our world have made one thing very clear - we need to be flexible and ready to adapt. Manual recognition programs offer little flexibility, as most rely on people working in the same location for employees' actions to be seen and acknowledged.

Digital reward and recognition programs are essential today because they allow you this flexibility - whether you're looking to boost employee morale through recognition or whether an employee does something noteworthy and you want to reward them, digital reward and recognition programs allow you to do this immediately from anywhere.

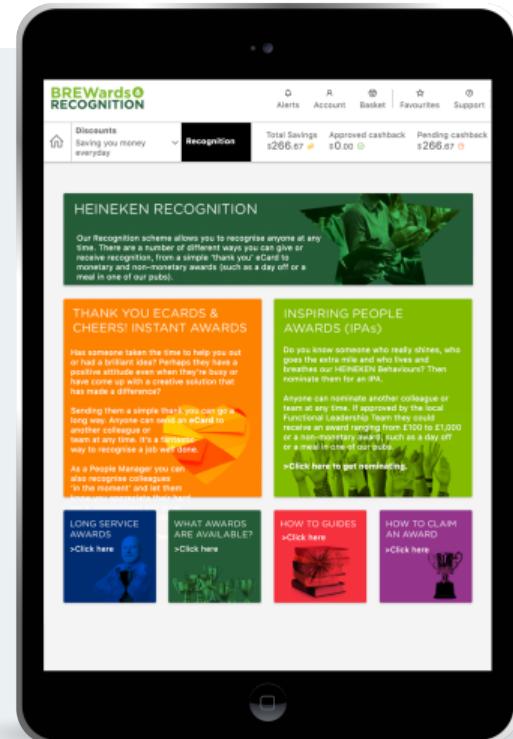
Our platform allows you to build a recognition program that works for your business and follow a framework that aligns with your company values and business goals.

For instance, companies can choose to have tailored eCards, manager-led monetary awards and special custom awards, or just one or two of these reward and recognition elements.



Heineken, a consumer goods and services organization, knew it needed to develop a new modern, flexible and innovative employee recognition program to better engage its people.

Previously, the organization was only reaching and rewarding a small percentage of staff. Working with Reward Gateway, Heineken rebranded its employee recognition program, "BREWards," to create a seamless user journey and add a diverse range of awards to encourage values-led behavior.



Insightful employee feedback and leadership buy-in helped Heineken introduce a multi-layered approach and modernize the entire experience, which was felt across the organization. In fact, the organization saw a 50% increase in employees receiving recognition through the program within the first five months of launching the platform and this number continues to increase.

As our businesses and our employees' needs evolve, our recognition programs must be able to adjust to remain effective. If your recognition program is flexible, it can support your company well into the future. As you make the transition from a manual to a digital recognition program, keep these things in mind:

Recognition should be easy – not difficult and time-consuming

Recognition should reinforce your existing values

Recognition should be flexible

Digital reward and recognition programs make it easy to support, recognize and connect with your employees. Get in touch with us, and we'll show you how we can help you build a tailored, future-proof reward and recognition program.



Learn how Reward Gateway's suite of continuous recognition products for employees can help you make the shift from manual programs to digital R&R. Find out more:

www.rewardgateway.com | engage-us@rewardgateway.com