



# Your Guide to Navigating COVID-19

How to prepare for the next  
era of employee engagement



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Chapter 1

# Defining a New Era of Employee Engagement

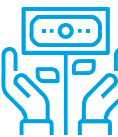
Having a dedicated focus on employee engagement has never been more important.



We know that companies with engaged employees **outperform those without by 202%**



and that highly engaged businesses benefit from a **10% increase in customer ratings**



and a **20% increase in sales**

(Gallup).

Engagement is more than ping pong tables and free lunches. It is about creating an environment and a culture where engaged employees thrive. An engaged employee is someone who **understands and believes** in the direction the organization is going. They understand **how their role affects and contributes** to the organization’s purpose, mission and objectives. And lastly, they genuinely **want the organization to succeed**, and feel shared success with the organization.

And engaged employees build better, stronger, more resilient organizations, in three key ways:

1.

Engaged employees **make better decisions** for their companies and clients because they understand more.

2.

Engaged employees **are more productive** because they like or love what they are doing.

3.

Engaged employees **innovate more** because they deeply want their organization to succeed.

**And it is the company that has that type of workforce that will not only survive, but thrive into the future.**

This has become all the more apparent as employees have turned to their leaders to connect, support and recognize them in the changing world of the COVID-19 pandemic. Throughout the pandemic, employee trust has changed – with statistics at the height of the pandemic in April noting only 32% of U.S. employees saying their organization had trusted leaders and managers to navigate the crisis, rising to 51% of employees believing their employer is well-prepared just a month later.

**As we continue to navigate COVID-19, employee engagement will play a critical role in how employers recover, and how employees respond to their new working environments.**



Showcase all the elements engaged employees crave, in one centralized place.

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**Employees have to feel connected to their business's overall mission, purpose and values and realize how their contributions can impact the recovery and growth of the organization. In the face of adversity, employees will only continue to give their best for their employers if they feel connected to and supported by their organization.**

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And, given the pandemic-related financial stress many companies are experiencing, employers have to do more, with less. HR has never juggled so many hats – improving the employee experience, streamlining processes to positively impact budget and exploring new ways to connect leaders and employees, putting in strategies to increase productivity, just to name a few.

But while the COVID-19 pandemic may have elevated HR to be the shining star of the business, the next era of employee engagement offers an opportunity for HR to be the hero their business will continually rely on to survive and thrive.



Businesses that come out the other side of the COVID-19 pandemic will see their post-COVID-19 employee engagement strategy evolve to one that:



The new era of employee engagement has to be one that is inclusive, personalized and, above all human. When employees were unsure where to turn, what resources were available to them or if they were waking up to losing their job, HR stepped in to be the partner that businesses needed, and that their people craved.

Businesses that continue to put their people first and show employees that they care through meaningful recognition, inclusive wellbeing and open and honest communications will be the ones that employees want to be a part of.

Leaders can do this by creating channels for open and honest conversation and feedback to let employees offer their voice and positively influence cultural transformation. Reaching your entire workforce demographic means putting in place initiatives that allow for a myriad of voices to influence your entire business.



Budget constraints and a changing workplace environment require new ways of working, including how to do more with less – less budget, fewer people and less time. So how can HR partner with their business to best connect, recognize and support their people, without compromising potential business growth? The businesses that work within these constraints to continually innovate will surge ahead of their competition, which means

understanding how to find dual and multi-purpose solutions to business challenges.

**A tick-the-box solution that only serves one purpose isn't going to move the needle on engagement strategy, and certainly won't benefit the budget constraints many businesses are finding themselves in.**

HR leaders should look for new ideas to maximize time and get the best ROI they can out of what they can offer to their people.



## Is agile

Engaged employees are essential to business growth. We know this. But as we navigate through COVID-19, engaged employees are what businesses need to truly transform themselves to get on the path to success. To get there, businesses must take an agile approach to their employee engagement strategy and be willing to accept that their first plan might not be their only plan, and needs to be agile to fulfill the changing needs of their business and their people.

If anything, the COVID-19 pandemic is teaching HR leaders not to be as scared of the unknown as we once were – that with the right tools and teams in place, businesses can withstand even the toughest of times.

The ones that will stand the test of time are the ones that can pivot quickly to put in place successful initiatives.



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**Your employee engagement strategy has the opportunity to transform your business, and your culture, to one that employees will be proud to work their hardest for.**

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## Chapter 2

# Why COVID-19 Made Employee Engagement Even More Important

No matter what your business has been through (or is going through) in the midst of a pandemic, engaged employees remain at the heart of every successful company.

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**An engaged workforce can support rapid recovery and innovation for businesses, even as employees adapt to new remote, flexible and socially-distanced workplaces.**

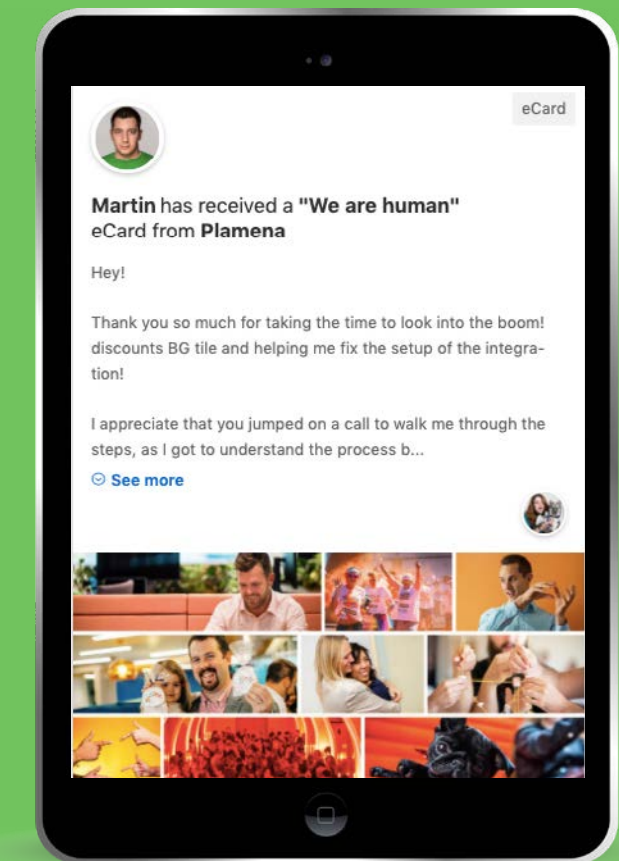


The importance of employee engagement in a post-COVID-19 environment cannot be understated. Leaders have an opportunity to create the environment for employees to feel connected, recognized and supported by doubling down on their mission and making employees feel closer than ever to their organization's "why."

And for organizations that are paying attention to how they treat their people, employee engagement is on the rise. Recent research from Willis Towers Watson found that 90% of companies surveyed believe their culture improved during COVID-19, while 83% believe their employee experience is better. HR isn't far behind, with 63% of HR professionals surveyed believing their organizational culture has improved.

The foundation has been set, in many organizations, but it's up to leaders everywhere to keep the momentum going and make their business even stronger in a post-COVID-19 era. Leaders can continue to improve employee engagement through:

- Ensuring that their people feel connected to their organization (and to one another) even amidst a shift to virtual and remote work, which will continue to be more commonly practiced.
- Helping employees understand how their (potentially changing) roles and day-to-day contributions deliver value, especially to the business's priorities and future sustainability,
- Supporting employees by creating a safe space for concerns around mental, financial and physical health.



Here's an example of recognition aligning to business goals.

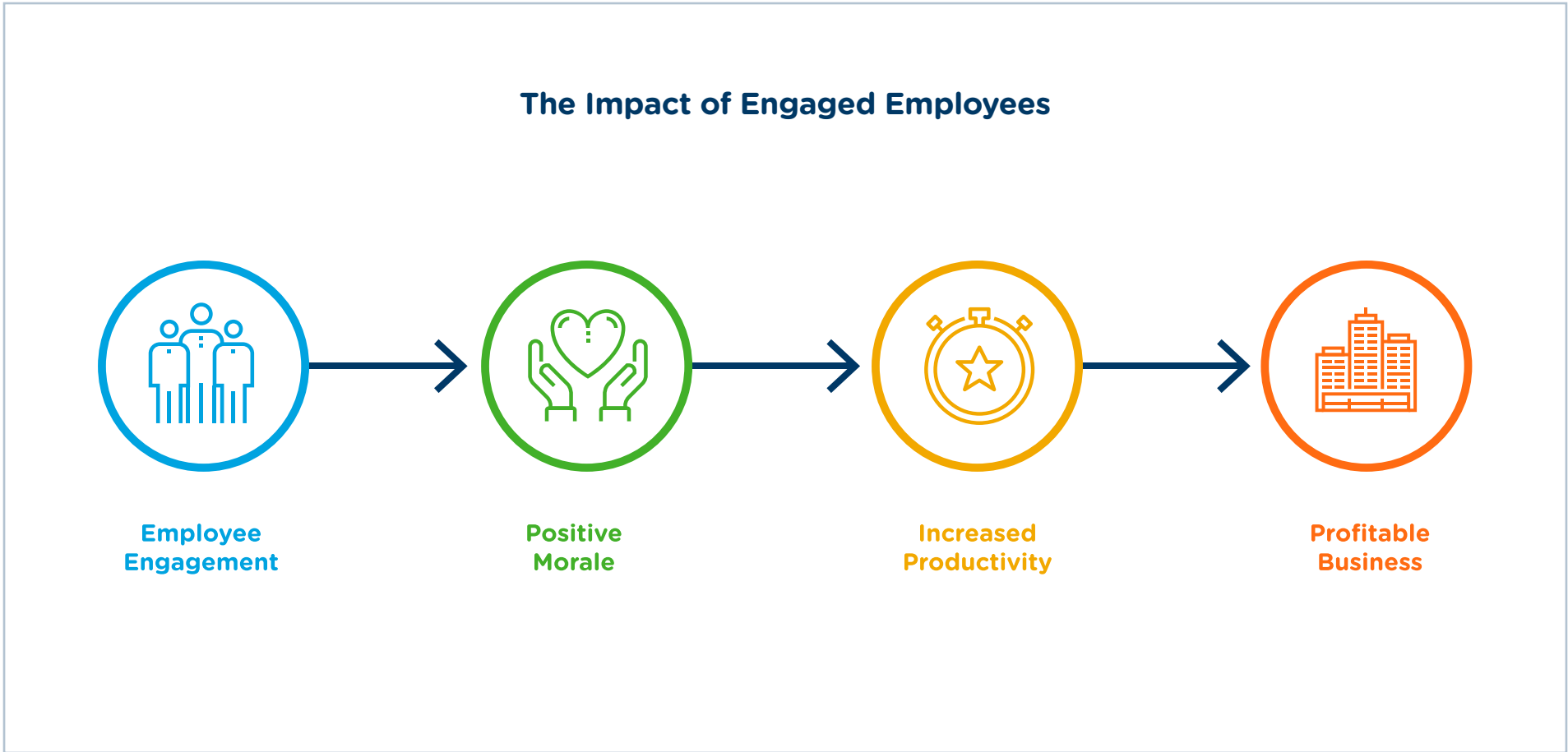
# The link between employee engagement, morale and productivity

Employee morale applies to the overall outlook and attitude of your workforce. In an ever-changing environment, morale can turn overnight if not nurtured and cared for by the business. If your people feel appreciated and supported by their company, they're more likely to work smarter (and harder) to benefit the business. On the flip side, leaders who don't address morale issues will see decreased productivity and a negative effect on customer experience.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, with employees being faced with worries such as health, safety and job security, employee morale continually remains a concern for companies. According to

mental health provider Ginger, 62% of workers surveyed reported losing at least one hour daily in productivity due to COVID-19-related stress, with more than a third of them losing more than two hours daily.

HR leaders who will see their businesses come out on top are focused on creating new and sustainable employee engagement practices that will reinvigorate their top performers, and create the environment for a more engaged, thriving workforce.





Chapter 3

# Changes in Employee Recognition During COVID-19



When it comes to recognizing great work, many are used to having the moment be face-to-face – a “way to go!” high five in the hallway, a teamwide office cheer when something goes well or a bell ringing when the company hits a really big target.

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**But when it comes to employee recognition, we’re going to start to see a different kind of recognition, one that needs to be focused on digital delivery that reaches employees everywhere, no matter where work might be.**

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Embedding a culture of appreciation may have begun with a posterboard of the Employee of the Month, or a spreadsheet of work anniversaries that caused your HR department a headache gathering up

company swag and hand-delivering it. And maybe that worked, in a typical office setting.

Employees now are either embracing remote work as a “new normal” or are slowly making their return to the office, with many still out in the field, spread out from their fellow colleagues and unable to have that typical face-to-face connection, which can lead to feelings of isolation and loneliness.

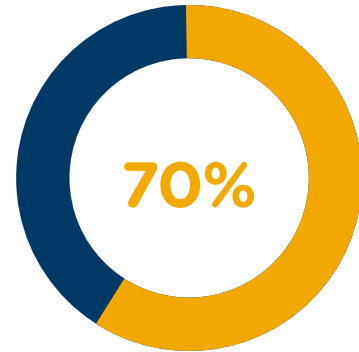


A recent **report** from Buffer showed that **one in five employees** surveyed stated “loneliness” as their top struggle.



And it’s not going away – recent **research** points to a staggering **82% of U.S. office workers who want to continue to work from home** (at least part-time) once the pandemic is over.

To ensure business continuity and eventual growth, creating the environment to make accomplishments visible to the entire business so others know what “great” or even “good” looks like in this post-COVID-19 world is key.



**Our own research has highlighted that more than 70% of employees agree that motivation and morale would improve if managers simply said “thank you” more often, and this has held true, especially as we navigate through COVID-19.**

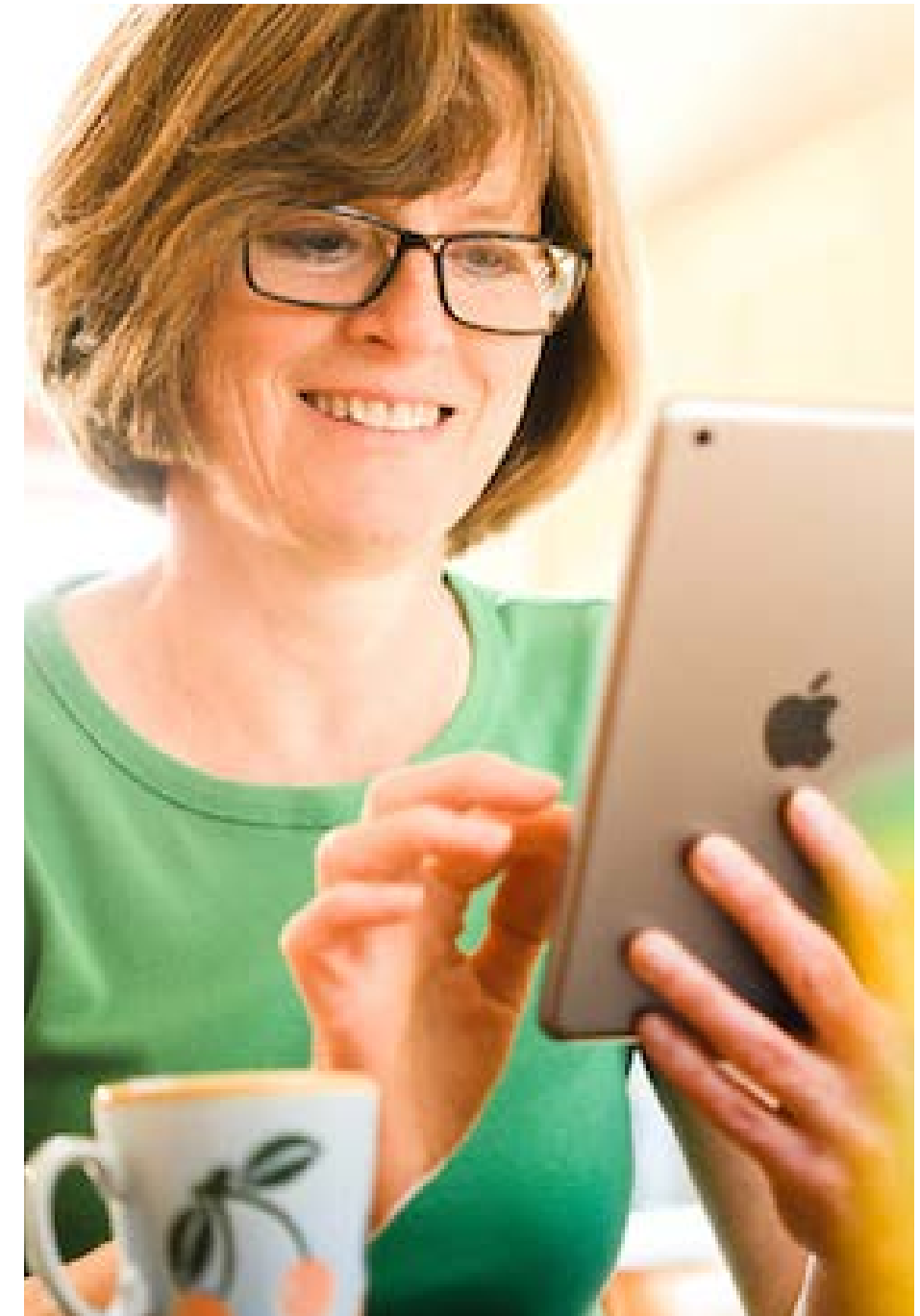
The future of recognition is here. It’s time for companies to move away from manual, time-consuming and expensive processes and embrace flexible, digital, timely recognition.

Timely recognition is especially important so that employees can feel appreciated by their coworkers, managers and leadership at any time, anywhere.

Replacing those organic moments of high fives and cheers doesn’t mean your team can’t feel the benefits of being recognized. Tapping into the power of a digital tool like a focused reward and recognition platform can help to amplify moments of recognition through real-time connections, giving peers and managers an opportunity to add on to the initial moment with comments and reactions.

Whether that’s on a virtual meeting, or a smaller gathering of teams, the meaning behind the moment of recognition hasn’t changed – contributions to the business’s bottom line should always be recognized.

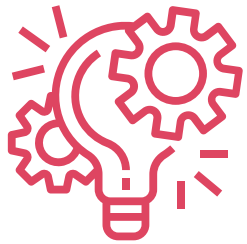
**What gets recognized, gets repeated.**



# It's time to MEND recognition

Could your recognition and reward initiatives use a refresh? If your R&R strategy needs a new start, here are the steps to MEND it:

**Make it Meaningful, Engaging, Noticeable and Digital.**



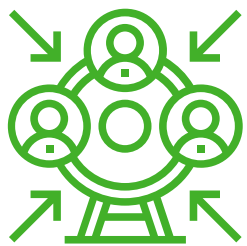
## Meaningful

Share the AVI - Action, Value and Impact of why your employee deserves their moment in the spotlight so others can understand how their contributions matter to the business.



## Noticeable

Reward and recognition has the most impact when it's visible and noticed by the entire business. Showcase accomplishments to reinforce the behaviors you want to see most.



## Engaging

Your people should be excited to receive (and send!) moments of recognition and reward. Enhance your employer brand through digital eCards with photos of your people, brand colors and more.



## Digital

Embrace digital and leave cumbersome, manual R&R behind. Make recognition available to your people no matter where they are through a dedicated app and responsive design.



## How recognition can boost retention

The COVID-19 pandemic has given an opportunity for some employees to shine and demonstrate the incredible value they bring to your organization. These were the people that accepted new challenges, that brought new ideas to the table, helped push your company forward and set a positive example for others.

**Improving your employee recognition strategy can play an important role in retaining these employees, as you want to keep the employees who are modeling the behaviors your company needs to recover and thrive in a post-COVID-19 era.**

Recognition can help make an employee understand and trust that they **matter** to the business, and are **vital** to the company's recovery, as well as to its future success.



# Employee Recognition with Reward Gateway

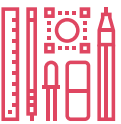
Introduce a recognition program that empowers everyone in your business to show their appreciation for one another, while building a culture of continuous recognition.

When managers and peers facilitate continuous recognition, they contribute to higher levels of employee engagement and productivity. But there’s a disconnect — **54% of employees don’t feel their boss does enough to appreciate them.**

Our own suite of recognition and reward programs helps you showcase achievements across your team and employees with meaningful moments of recognition, while embedding recognition within your company culture with on-the-spot tools accessible anytime, anywhere.

What’s more, our recognition tools help connect your people to your purpose, mission and values by highlighting the behaviors that drive your business forward.

Reward Gateway offers:



**Customized eCards**



**Instant award delivery**



**Peer-to-peer nominations**



**Customized service awards**

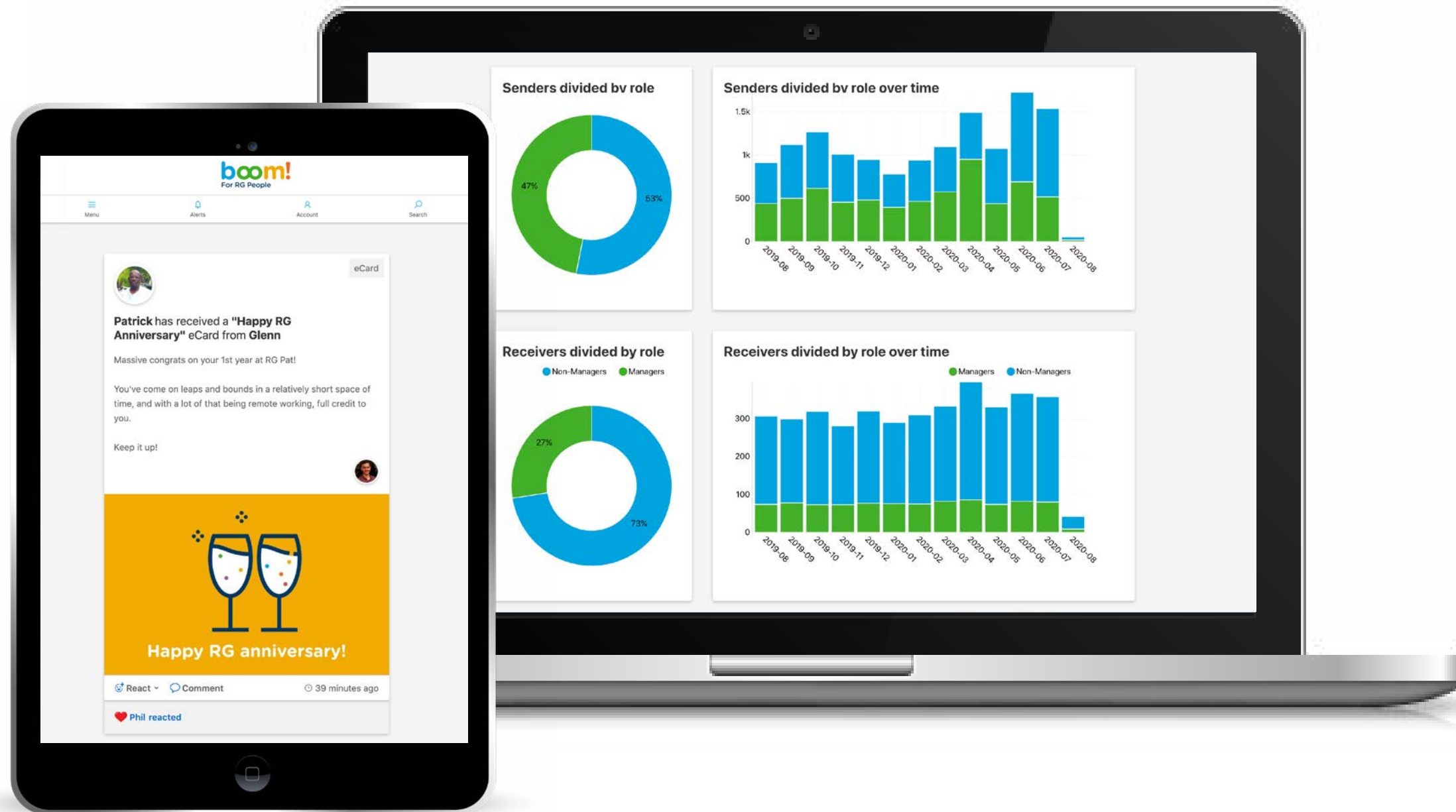


**Branded mobile app**



**Flexible redemption options**





Here's a look at the Reward Gateway recognition suite, which includes timely analytics on who is sending and receiving moments of recognition.



## Chapter 4

# How Will Employee Communications Change After COVID-19?

As the pandemic began to escalate, businesses had to move quickly. For many, communications became a guessing game. How could they keep their employees informed? What should their leaders say? What was the best way to reassure employees and keep them up-to-date with critical information?

When employees were situated in one office, working side-by-side, internal communications was easier to master. A Monday morning huddle, a company-wide email and you were done.

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**But in today's working world, where remote working is becoming the norm and many employees are no longer face-to-face every day, businesses that can pivot their internal communications strategy are the ones that will earn trust – and productivity – from their people.**

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Employers need to cut through the clutter, and reach employees with important information, no matter where or how they work.



an average inbox sends and receives more than

**120**  
emails every day



Digital tools, like an internal communications platform, can help cut through the noise and deliver tailored content – via desktop or phone – to reach employees with the most relevant information.

In an ever-evolving environment, timely communication is critically important to a company's survival. Businesses that already had systems in place to get news out to employees about store closures, furloughs, safety measures and new protocols were one step ahead of their competitors, who lost time and crucial moments of communications trying to patch together or implement new, untested tools in the heat of the moment.

The confusion and discord this created for employees further heightened the stress and productivity loss among employees.

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**Our own clients, who use digital internal communications tools such as blogs and one-stop-shop information hubs, saw a 560% increase in unique blog views year-over-year at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. These blog views were accompanied by an increase in employee comments, as employees connected and communicated with one another about the news and updates they received.**



The COVID-19 pandemic has only reinforced how important it is for companies to provide **open and honest, transparent** and **timely** employee communications. A recent article from “Human Resource Executive” highlights a survey where 69% of employees surveyed labeled the COVID-19 pandemic as the “most stressful time of their entire professional career.”

When faced with a world where employees feared for their health and job security, transparent and open communications helped employees to feel engaged, respected and supported. Businesses that keep visibility at the heart of their internal communications strategy, whether that’s making leadership more visible through timely blogs or sharing company-wide stories of successes through challenging times, could reassure their employees – “We’re here for you.”








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**Visibility improves leadership’s bond with employees, improves engagement, instills confidence with and provides comfort for your people.**

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While leadership visibility is always important, in a remote or dispersed workplace environment, it's even more critical as employees look to their leaders for direction. When senior leaders speak, employees listen. Using a platform to increase awareness of the company strategy and mission – and, importantly, how employees can contribute to that mission – can help keep employees focused and engaged on advancing business objectives.


- The powerful communications lessons learned during the height of the pandemic can be integrated into your current employee communications strategy to include:
-  Daily blog updates from members of the Leadership team to connect everyone in the business to company goals and mission
  -  Segmenting communications to deliver timely, relevant information to groups within the business
  -  Opening up channels for feedback so employees can have a voice in what they desire for increased engagement and productivity
  -  Expanding communications media to include video messages, to reach more employees on a human level
  -  Building “digital hubs” to host specific resources and publish timely updates surrounding a particular topic, like returning to the offices
  -  Creating communications to capture the attention of your employees and keep your people aligned with what they need to do to help your business survive and grow in a post-COVID-19 world

# Employee Communications with Reward Gateway


Introduce powerful employee communications tools to connect employees to one another and to business goals. Getting the right message to the right people, at the right time can drive increased productivity through alignment of employees to the organization’s purpose, mission and values and improve employees’ understanding of business goals and important company information.

By centralizing all company communications, businesses can increase focus and awareness on HR and business priorities, including new benefits, business goals, team building and more.


Reward Gateway offers:




**Customized blogs**



**Unlimited pages**

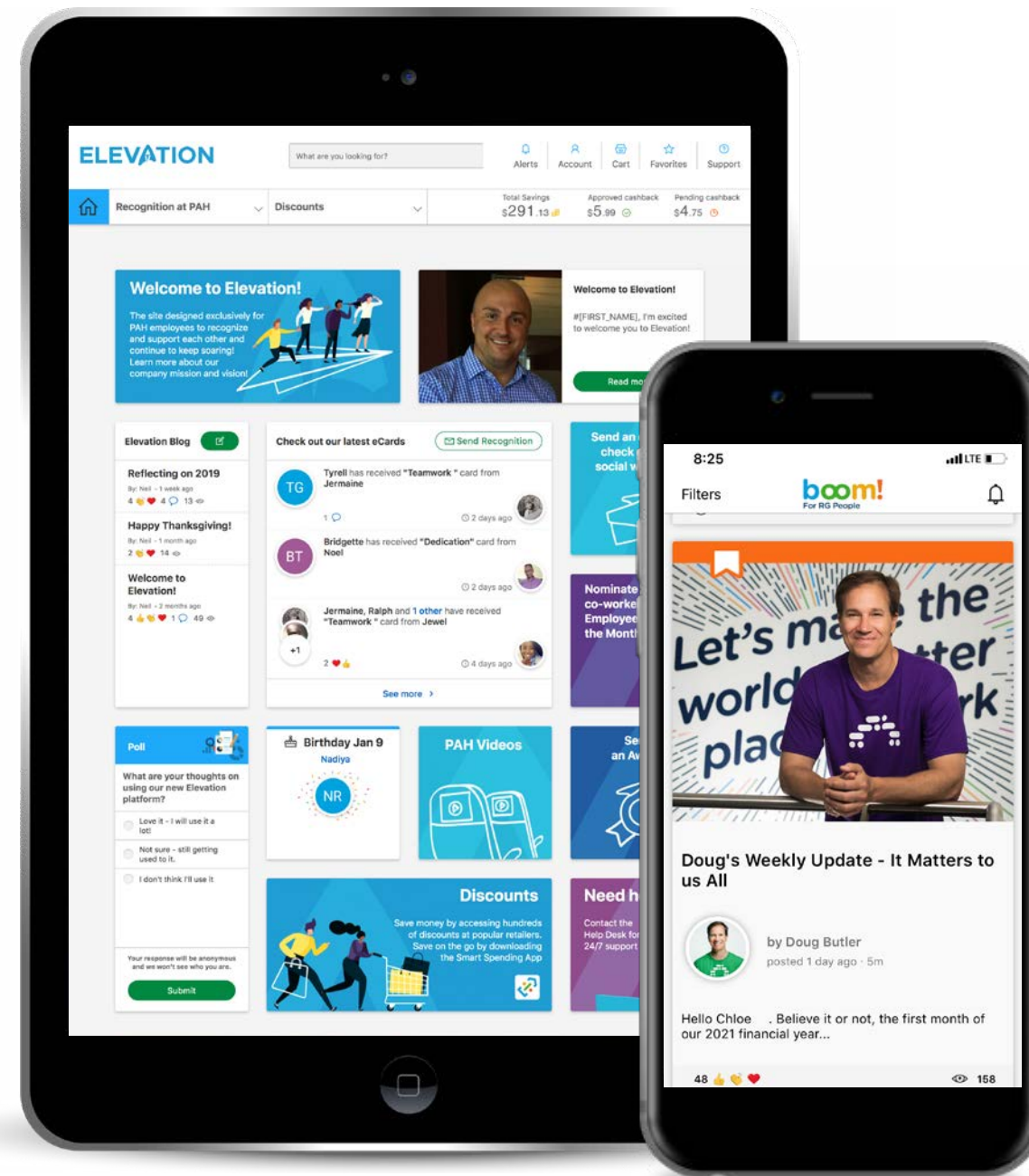


**Auto-schedule and segmenting tools**



**Branded employee engagement app**

Plus with dozens of integrations available with existing communications tools such as Slack, Yammer and more, employees can connect with important company updates anywhere, anytime.



Here's an example of Reward Gateway's communications tools, including mobile-friendly blogs and a centralized place for important company updates.



Chapter 5

# How to Support Employees' Wellbeing Throughout COVID-19 and Beyond



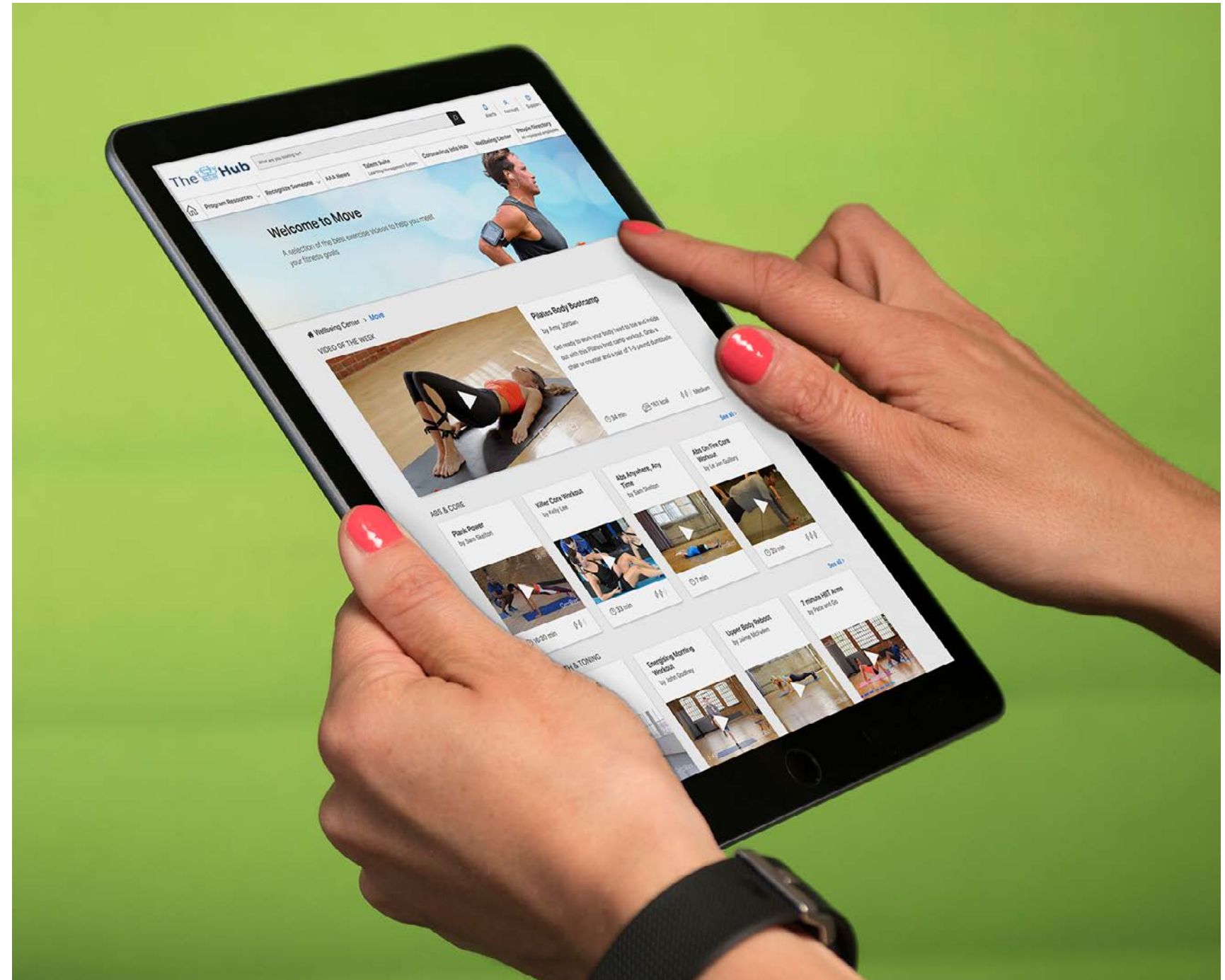
When lockdown measures forced employees to work remotely, and employees who were unable to work from home were on the front lines of a pandemic crisis, employee wellbeing (rightfully) came into focus. How could HR leaders support their people, mentally, physically and even financially to try to help their people get through especially challenging times?

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**This focus has only grown stronger as we continue to understand how paramount employee wellbeing is to an organization's overall Employee Value Proposition (EVP).**

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A recent report from Mercer says that while 48% of executives rank employees' wellbeing as a top workforce concern, **only 29% of HR leaders** actually have a health and wellbeing strategy. To help boost the employer brand and support employees, HR leaders need to find ways to innovate their wellbeing initiatives amidst tightening budgets and uncertainty.





## Budget-friendly employee wellbeing initiatives

Luckily, there are several ideas employers can look at to put in place budget-friendly employee wellbeing initiatives. Here are a few ideas:



Offer access to **on-demand videos** and articles to support all pillars of employee wellbeing, from financial to mental and physical. Employees can pick and choose what to engage with, and can access helpful wellbeing support at any time.

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Introduce new ways for employees to save on their own bottom line through **employee discounts programs** and to help them save on everyday items like groceries and popular retailers.

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Provide a free **Employee Assistance Program** (EAP) so your people have a safe space to go to when they're in need of extra support during challenging times.

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Add a **wellbeing allowance benefit** to give a little extra money towards wellbeing initiatives of your employees' choosing.

Wellness should always be on your employee engagement agenda – the right wellbeing programs can reduce absenteeism and decrease your overall business costs, help you build a healthier and more engaged workforce, improve your overall EVP and enhance your employer brand.

# Employee Wellbeing with Reward Gateway

Employee wellbeing has never been more important. Give your employees the education, support and tools they need to be better versions of themselves both at home and at work – no matter where “work” might be. From a plug-and-play solution to a fully-tailored, branded wellbeing platform, we can support your organization wherever you are in your wellness journey to develop an offering that’s personal, proactive and inclusive.

Nurture mind, body and more with expert content from the Wellbeing Center, which includes hundreds of videos and articles accessible anywhere, anytime on the areas of:



### Move

Hundreds of exercise videos for all abilities and goals



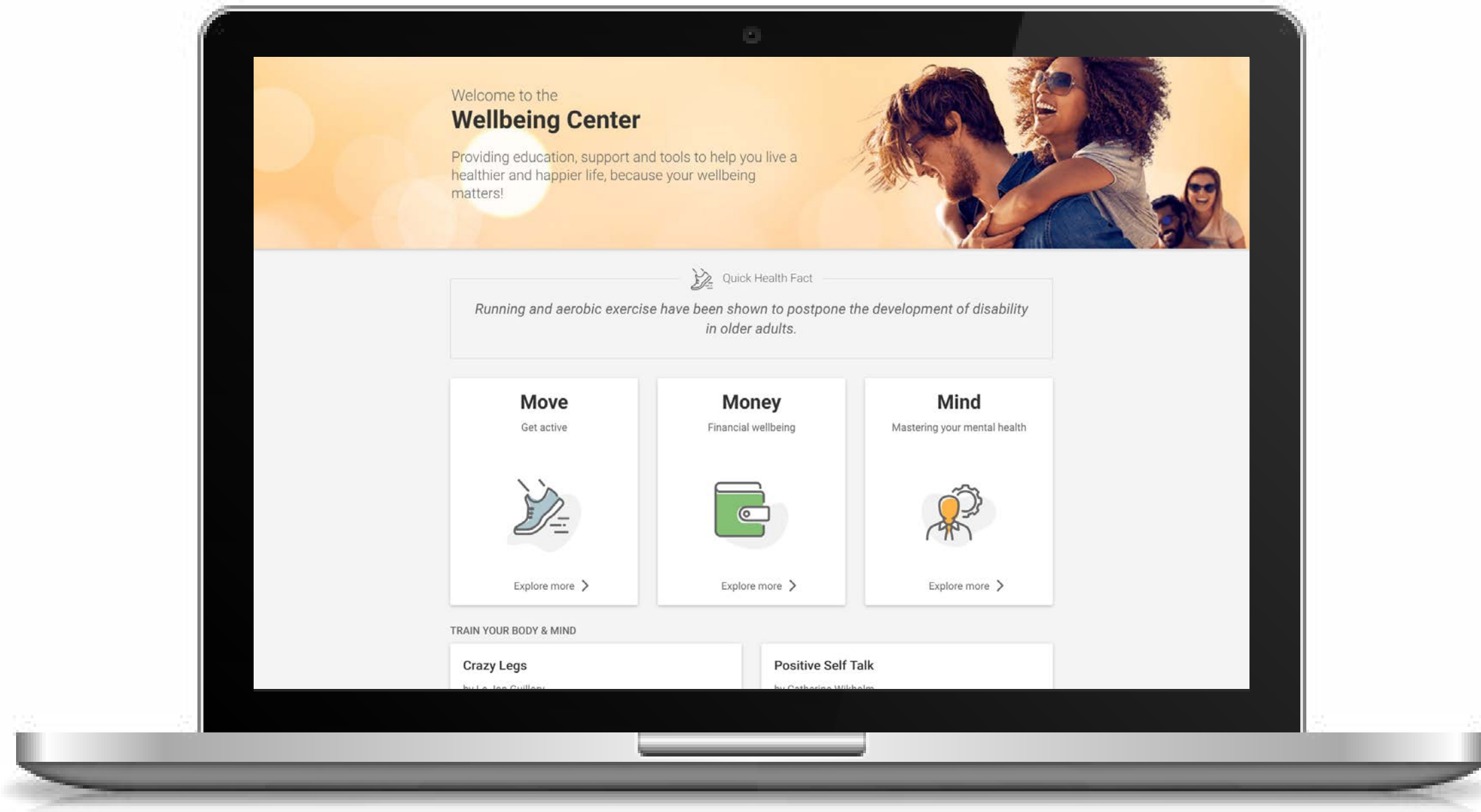
### Money

Impartial expert financial advice



### Mind

Mindfulness videos to manage stress, sleep and more



Here's a look at the Reward Gateway Wellbeing Center, which offers employees a variety of wellbeing-related resources to support them where they need it most.



## Chapter 6

# How Can Companies Adapt to Remote Work?



Remote work is not a new concept, but it is becoming a new normal for organizations around the globe. While almost 30% of employees worked remotely—at least part time—before the spread of COVID-19, **Gartner** predicts this number will reach over 40% post-pandemic.

**This isn't surprising, as during the pandemic 88% of global workers surveyed said they were working from home, according to a spring report from Global Workplace Analytics.**

This trend is likely to continue as more of Gen Z enters the workforce and increases the demand for flexible working.

The nation-wide office closures and recommendations to stay at home, combined with evolving workforce demands, are forcing businesses to transition to remote work – either temporarily or for the long-haul. Here are a few ideas on how to help transition your team to remote work, while still maintaining a connected and productive workforce.



## How to Transition Your Team to Remote Work

### 1 Communicate often and openly.

Communication is key to staying connected while working from home. According to a 2019 Gartner survey, over one-quarter of employees feel isolated when they work remotely. Managers and HR leaders can work together to overcome these communication hurdles by:

- Re-introducing virtual communication platforms into employees' routines
- Establishing regular check-ins with employees (daily or weekly) to help prioritize tasks

- Proactively connecting with employees throughout the workday
- Being transparent about expectations and progress, and encouraging employees to do the same
- Socializing! Host team happy hours or create digital communities to help keep employees connected on a more personal level

### 2 Trust employees to be productive.

There is an inherent level of independence that comes with working from home, and managers who don't trust their employees will find it difficult to transition to remote work. So, it is important to lead with trust. Trust your employees' ability to

self-direct and create structure. Rather than micro-managing their process, focus on employees' output. By doing so, you will motivate them to succeed.

### 3 Emphasize a positive culture of appreciation.

It can be hard to see moments of success in action when employees are not in the office together. As your team adapts to remote work, it is important to maintain a culture of recognition to keep everyone motivated and engaged. Managers can do so by:

- Proactively asking employees about their "wins" of the week, or conducting employee surveys to measure success
- Recognizing specific behaviors or examples of what is going right

- Acknowledging employee achievements with rewards (e.g. spot bonuses) or announcements that receive company-wide visibility
- Encouraging peer-to-peer recognition through eCards and social recognition
- Celebrating birthdays, holidays or special moments with the entire team

By prioritizing employee recognition, trust and communication while working from home, you can maintain a strong company culture, motivate employees to succeed, and encourage productivity and satisfaction throughout the workforce. Now more than ever, businesses must be agile, creative and flexible as the world transitions to remote work.



Examples of tailored eCards to suit the new remote workforce.



Chapter 7

# How Can Companies Reinvent Recruitment Strategies?



The coronavirus has upended employment and recruitment as we know it. It has forced many businesses to close, and others to reinvent themselves and invest in new ways of working, while others have seen high-growth and a need to recruit top talent, quickly and efficiently. Even as some companies start to reestablish themselves, it is hard to envision what HR will look like in a post-COVID-19 world. HR leaders are exploring new ways to ensure that their organizations are ready for the next stages of re-opening. How will they be ready, and how will they stand out?

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**The steps that companies take now to improve their recruitment strategy will be essential for coming out on top post-pandemic.**

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So how can you reinvent your recruitment strategy and ensure your business's success?



# How to Prepare for Future Recruitment Success



## Focus on your current employees.

While recruiting new employees may be a key focus, you can leverage the power of your existing employees to do so. Let them know if you are actively seeking new hires. Set up a reward program for anyone who refers candidates, such as a cash bonus or extra day off. By getting existing employees on board with your recruitment strategy, you will be better positioned to find quality applicants who will add to your company culture.



## Build a pipeline, and build connections.

Unemployment in the U.S. is at record high, but no one knows how quickly that may

change. This means top talent is out there. Shift your focus away from employed, passive candidates and instead capture the current market. By building a talent pipeline now, you can begin to build relationships with quality candidates and be better positioned to rebound when hiring resumes.



## Enhance the candidate experience.

A personalized candidate experience is essential if you want to stand out to top talent. Take the time now to revisit your hiring flow and see what's lacking. Ask current employees for feedback on how to improve your recruiting processes. Adopt technology (such as video interviewing and employee engagement platforms) to offer more personalized experiences to remote candidates, as well as current remote employees.



## Build your brand.

A company's brand and employee value proposition will play a critical role in its recruitment strategy. If you want a potential candidate to connect with your company, you will need to build a brand that stands out. Ask yourself:

- What do you want new candidates to know about your company?
- What components of your company will appeal to applicants?
- Are your company values and mission integrated with your hiring flow?
- What will candidates take away from your current website and social media accounts?

One way that employers can bolster their brand is by highlighting their employee recognition program. Share moments of recognition on social media and with applicants during the interview stage. This can show a more “fun” side of the company, and show off how much your organization values its employees.



### **Recognize the value of remote work.**

Workforce dynamics are changing, and remote work is here to stay. With millions of Americans now working from home, companies must be prepared to offer options to work remotely (even going as far as offering options for full-time remote working) in a post-pandemic world. From recruitment to onboarding to talent management, you must have the right systems in place to connect with employees, no matter where they are.

Research shows that remote workers are often more productive than in-office employees, leading many companies to source more remote candidates. By shifting your recruitment strategy to capture remote workers, you will expand your talent pool and reach even more high-quality applicants.





Chapter 8

# How to Retain Star Employees in an Uncertain Working World



As we've moved through this pandemic, the focus for leaders has shifted from safety and survival to establishing a new sense of normal – thinking through elements such as what “success” looks like for our teams and business performance as a whole.

Productivity is key for a business to thrive, with employee engagement and productivity frequently cited as the top challenges for HR leaders.

**During the pandemic, productivity is ebbing and flowing depending on an individual employee's situation.**

There were a variety of factors that influenced productivity, including:



The **employee's work environment** (physical space, equipment to do their job)



The **employee's mental wellbeing** (worrying about family or loved ones, dealing with disruption in day-to-day responsibilities and priorities)



**Uncertainty of the future** (job security, business direction)



**Lack of motivation** (distractions in everyday life, not feeling connected to business)

But despite a number of challenges, the COVID-19 pandemic presents an opportunity for businesses to realize their top performers, who, despite changing and uncertain work environments, maintained

productivity and may have even thrived to become a more powerful contributor during challenging times.

For the future success of businesses in a post-COVID-19 world, those are the employees you want to retain to maintain business continuity and drive innovation.

## 4 ways to retain top performers

Our own research has highlighted that more than 70% of employees agree that motivation and morale would improve if managers simply said “thank you” more often. If we want to cultivate productivity and motivation, our people need us to say, “I see you and I appreciate what you do.”

Having a strategic reward and recognition program that connects employees to thousands of behaviors that drive success

for your business throughout the year can embed the values and behaviors your business needs to survive and thrive in a post-COVID-19 world. Your top performers are key to that success.

We like to call these top performers your company’s “ambassadors,” as part of the Employee Engagement Quadrant. There are many versions of this quadrant, but we believe at Reward Gateway that it’s likely your employees fall into one of the following categories:



Your ambassadors are your stars. These employees not only enjoy their job and consistently deliver high-quality work, they are also loyal to the company and make decisions based on the long-term good and survival of the broader team or group.

They focus on a constructive (not destructive!) approach to questioning management directives or current processes, and bring a positive attitude that brings up the people around them.

Here are a few ways you can show your appreciation for your star employees:



**Recognize them!** You can send a note of thank you via a digital employee reward and recognition program and connect their actions to a value that they've been living, and describe how their contributions are meaningful for the business as a whole.

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**Use technology** to amplify those nitty-gritty moments of success that would otherwise be forgotten, and shine a spotlight on a team or individual in company-wide communications, which is especially helpful if others can follow suit in sending recognition to that individual.

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**Give them an extra bonus** or reward to spend on something they'll truly appreciate. You may not feel comfortable giving your employee a bottle of champagne or picking out a personal gift, so give them the gift of choice by offering a monetary voucher that they can redeem at the retailer they truly want.

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**Involve them** in strategic business conversations, and let them have a voice. A Salesforce **report** revealed that employees who feel their voice is heard at work are 4.6x more likely to feel empowered to perform their best work. Consider bringing them in as a guest to higher-level meetings they may not normally be a part of for a new, valuable perspective for them to feel extra special.



Chapter 9

# Resetting Your Post-Pandemic Employee Engagement Strategy



Although the COVID-19 pandemic has certainly been a daunting time, it has also provided a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for HR leaders. Like many companies who are resetting their business strategies, you now have a unique opportunity to reset your own post-pandemic employee engagement strategy and approach.

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**No matter what your business has faced during the COVID-19 pandemic, what's important is how you come out on the other side.**

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If we seize the moment, we can rise out of this unique time having learned invaluable (and unforeseen) lessons, and come out with stronger and more lasting engagement than at the start.

Josh Bersin, Global Industry Analyst, calls this moment in time “**The Big Reset.**” He describes it as a new way of thinking about work, life, business and leadership, and how it will be based on a reset of our **expectations, priorities** and **how we spend our time**.

Working with Debra Corey, Owner of HR consulting firm DebCo HR LTD we’ve developed a three-step plan that others can use to evolve their own employee engagement strategy:



Step 1:  
**A**ssess

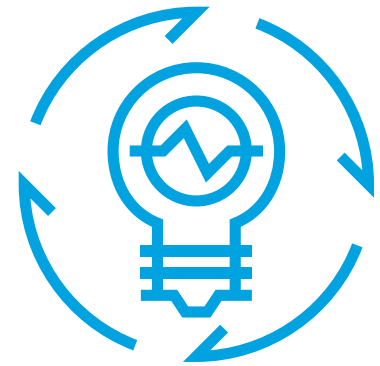


Step 2:  
**B**uild



Step 3:  
**C**onnect

Though these three steps are sequential, they can vary business-to-business, especially as your people’s needs and expectations change. The most important point is not to let perfectionism get in the way of progress – be nimble, be agile and get your new programs and technology out there, quickly.



## Step 1: Assess

The first step in the process is to assess, which is where you pause to reassess and evaluate the following:

- 1 How have your employee engagement strategy and programs changed throughout the pandemic? First, to reflect the evolving situation and secondly, through varying factors impacting your workforce?
- 2 How will your employee engagement strategy and programs continue to change as your business and workforce continue to evolve?
- 3 What lessons have you learned throughout the pandemic regarding engagement programs and actions – what’s worked and what hasn’t?

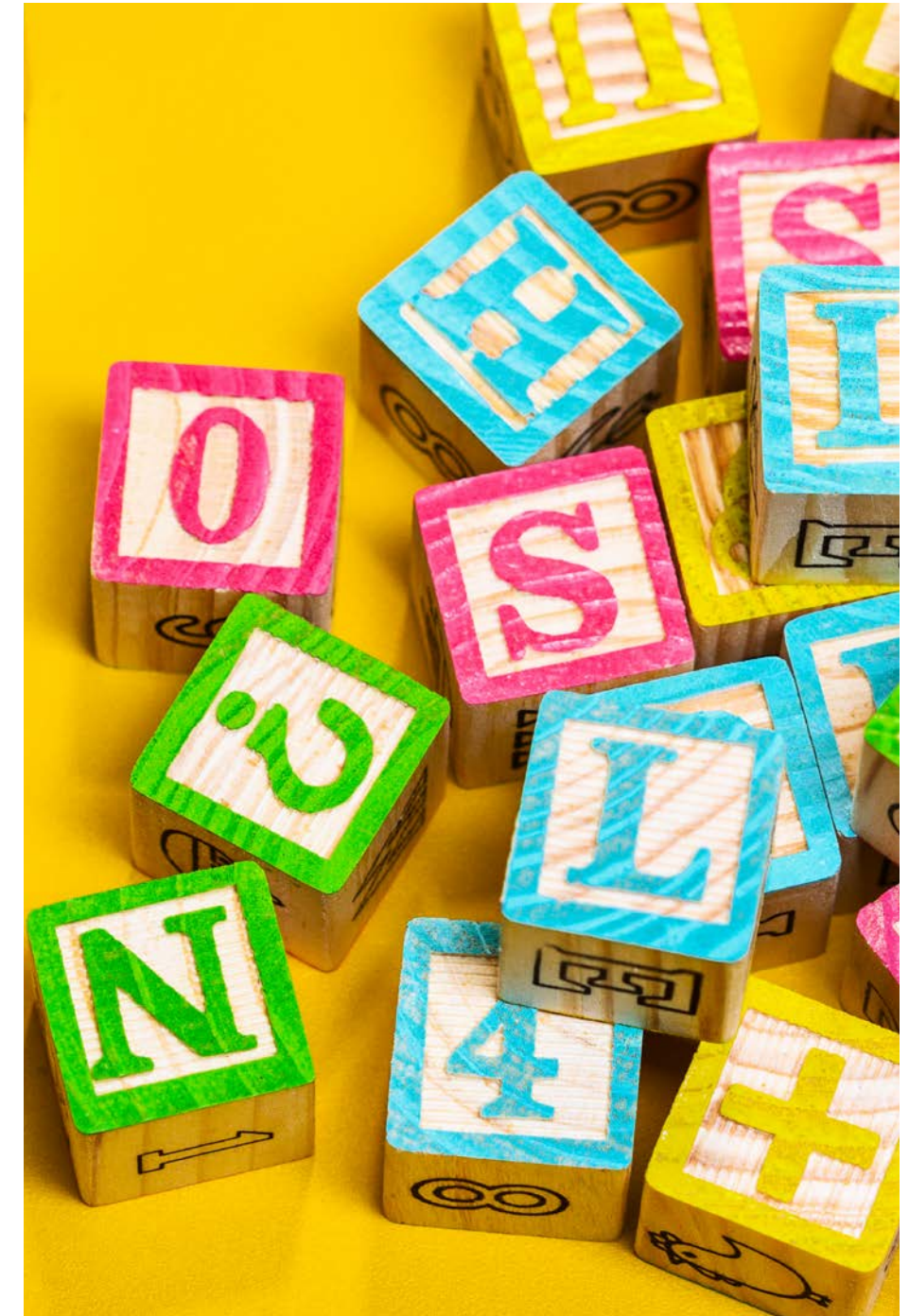
There are two parts to this step, reassessing your **objectives** and then reassessing your **actions**.

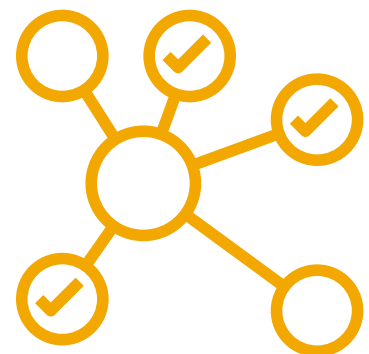


## Step 2: **Build**

**The second step in the process is when you decide the “how.”** This is when you’ll determine how you’re going to change any programs from the previous step that you want to continue. Based on your new objectives, you may also use this step to build new programs that deliver on those objectives.

There are three parts to this step: Gaining feedback, rebuilding or building new programs and then doing a gap analysis to make sure you haven’t missed anything.





## Step 3: Connect

The final step in the process is to connect, which is where you connect all of your findings to move actions forward, reconnecting and engaging with your workforce to execute your strategy.

There are three parts to this step, starting with planning the actual changes, planning how you will re-educate your managers to support the changes, and planning how to re-engage your workforce with your programs.

No matter what engagement solutions you may be looking at, whether that's a new wellbeing initiative, a renewed focus on digital reward and recognition programs or a natural evolution of your employee communications, this 3-step process can help you determine what to keep and what to leave behind to usher in a new era for your business.

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**By choosing the right mix of solutions to connect, recognize and support your workforce, you'll be well-equipped for the next 'new normal' we're approaching.**



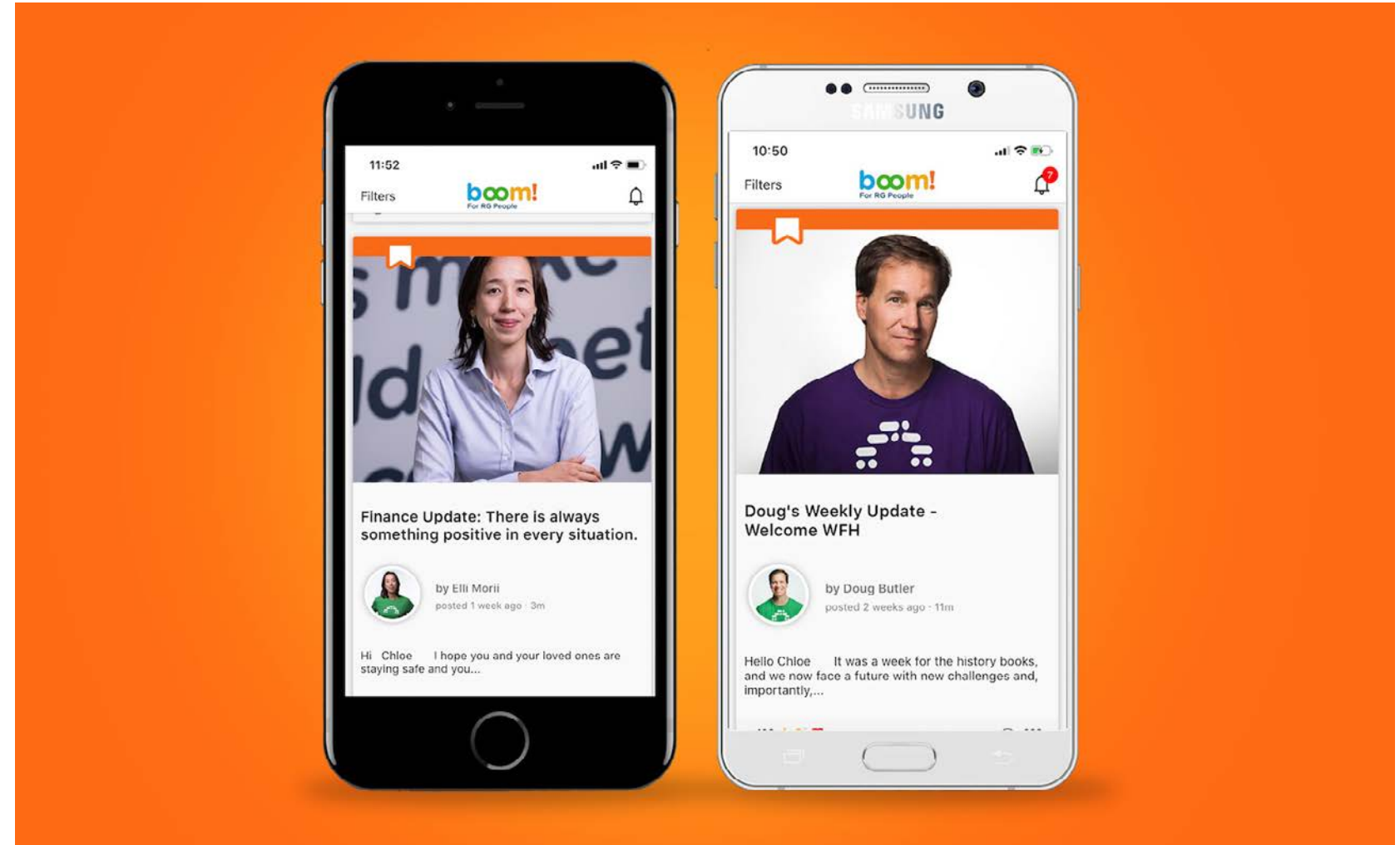


Chapter 10

# Tips on Creating a Workforce Built for the Future

Businesses everywhere are putting actions in place to ensure their survival and are quickly learning lessons on how to build a workforce that will survive well beyond the pandemic. Over the course of the pandemic, a few key themes have emerged as pivotal:

- How can HR leaders create **new and sustainable** employee engagement practices that will reinvigorate productivity?
- How can employees **celebrate contributions** – and cultivate trust – while building authentic connections among their peers and managers?
- What should **businesses invest in** to get ahead, while keeping the reality of budget constraints at bay?
- How can companies **become more streamlined** and efficient without disrupting or damaging their employees' experiences?



Staying connected to your employees is easier when communications and recognition can be in the palm of your hand.

Leaders must think creatively to maximize engagement, recovery and, eventually, look towards growth and their business's future.

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**You can do this by connecting, supporting and recognizing your people to drive business continuity and growth.**

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When building a workforce fit for the future, consider that businesses that have prioritized aspects of engaging their employees such as communications, recognition and wellbeing are the ones whose people are trusting them more than ever and are well-positioned to continue on to growth and success.

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**When employees are kept in the dark, they fill that void with fear and uncertainty.**

Businesses that create platforms for open and honest communications that reach people wherever they might be working, with the right message, at

the right time, will cultivate trust and confidence in your leaders and your business. Deepen conversations and build strong connections among a dispersed workforce by encouraging employees to participate in two-way conversations on an employee communications platform that enables online social interactions with reactions, commenting and tagging.

Employees who don't feel appreciated aren't going to “show up” for you. Consider how it feels when someone tells you you've done a job well done – it inspires you to work harder, doesn't it? A strategic reward and recognition program can show employees that you appreciate them when it matters most, now and in the future. By creating a culture of appreciation in your business, you can maintain (and improve!) employee morale and continue celebrating the wins, however small or large they might be.

More than ever, employee wellbeing has come into the spotlight. Employers that **care about their people** are the ones who will retain their top performers and build a workforce that will last well into the future.

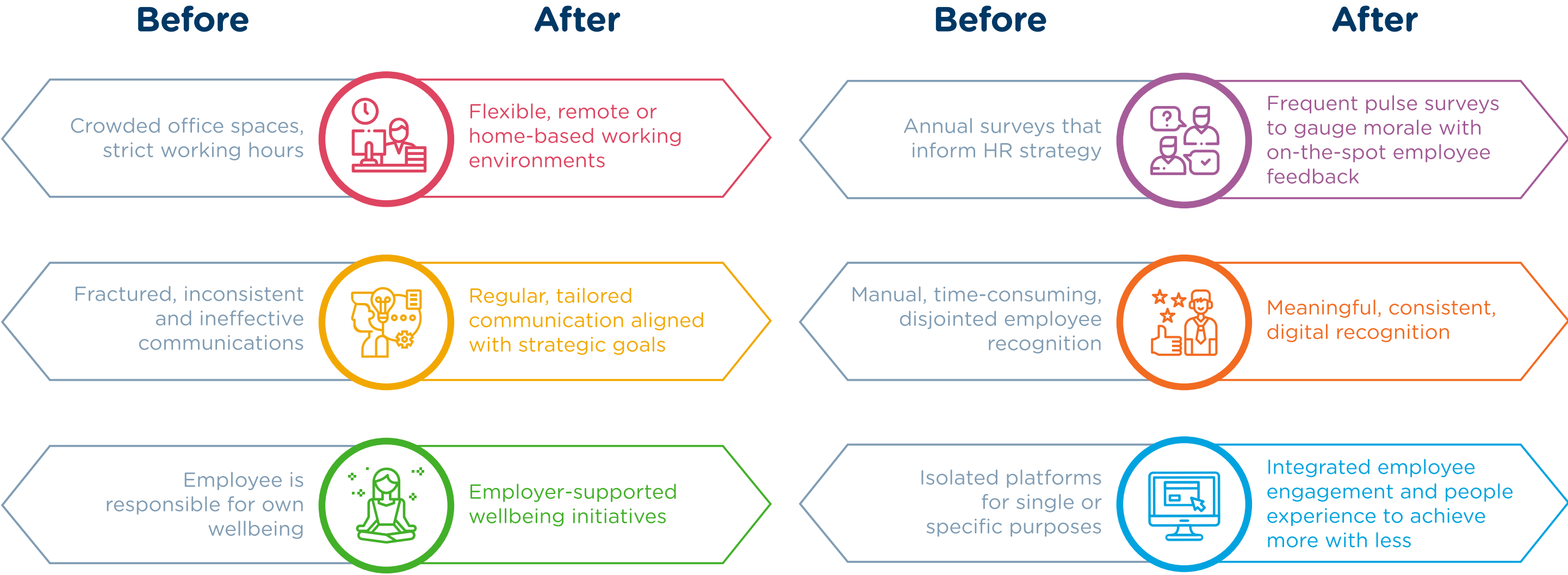
Businesses can support their employees by providing them the tools they need to feel safe, healthy and cared for at work, whether that's in an office environment, a new remote home office or in the field. Bringing all your wellbeing initiatives into one place with a dedicated employee wellbeing program that acts as a one-stop-shop for employee wellbeing can give employees the support they need, while improving your company's overall Employee Value Proposition.



Discover a tailored solution to do more, with less, in one unified hub.

# The Future of Work

Take a look at how the world of work is already evolving:





# Conclusion

HR budgets have always been tight, but in a challenging economy, it can be even harder to get that elusive tick of approval from your Leadership team. That's why it's critical for HR to find ways to do more, with less. Capitalize on an all-in-one solution that brings together the best of recognition, communication, wellbeing, surveys and more, with valuable insights to help prove the ROI of programs and initiatives can bring engagement programs to new heights, without the hefty price tag to match.

**Would you rather be ready for the Future of Work, or be the ones catching up? The choice is yours.**

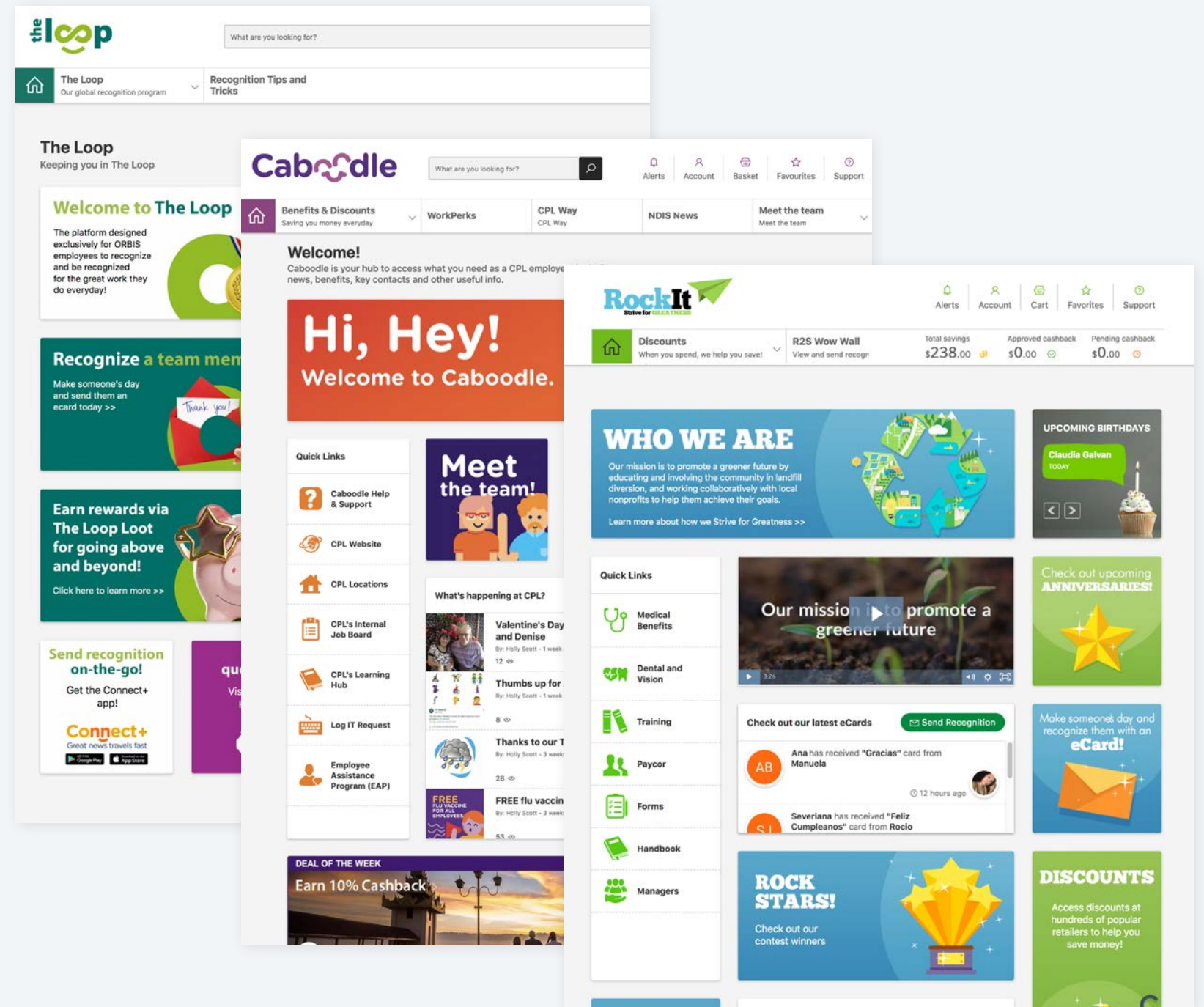
We're here to help you navigate the next era of employee engagement. Get in touch with our team:



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**Web:** [rewardgateway.com](https://rewardgateway.com)



Reward Gateway delivers the only employee engagement platform with industry-leading reward and recognition, communication tools, surveys and employee discounts, all in one place.