



Driving employee engagement through recognition.

If you're not leading from the top, it may be causing you more internal issues than you realise.



BY Tom Goodwin WITH Matt Seadon 18 Feb 2020



There's a tendency for business owners to see financial remuneration as the be-all and end-all of employee recognition. Why, they ask, is additional recognition for employees necessary when they're already being paid for turning up to work? Surely that's enough, right?

Absolutely not, says Matt Seadon, General Manager APAC at Achievers. As a specialist in social-based recognition, he's well aware of the challenges that HR can encounter from senior management when they attempt to introduce recognition programs into the office.

"One of the important things that we explain to business owners is that recognition programs are happening in any office, whether or not they've been officially endorsed by management," explains Seadon. "The problem there is that there's very little top-down visibility. Applications can be wildly inconsistent from department to department, and even down to employee to employee."

On paper, that might not sound too serious, but Seadon cautions that it can quickly lead to inequality and resentment between employees – all of which can spill over and cause wider workplace issues. Performance,

revenue, retention, and wider workplace culture can all be negatively impacted.

Rather, Seadon notes, companies must look for consistent and values-based means to ensure that employee recognition is both regular and effective. Social recognition programs enable teams to take ownership and take action around recognition. Senior management must actively drive the program, and model the behaviours they want to encourage within the workplace.

"When we talk about recognition, in the social sense, we're talking about giving people tools to identify moments when they can recognise others," Seadon explains. "It leads to better communication among management and co-workers, as well as providing positive reinforcement for great work."





Seadon believes there are wider workplace culture benefits too – something which can't be underestimated in the current working world.

“It's been interesting to watch over the last few years how organisations' cultures have become much more visible,” says Seadon.

“Tools like social media and employer review websites have meant that outsiders can have a much clearer view of what might have traditionally gone on behind closed doors. It definitely has an influence on an organisation's reputation, which can help or harm future recruitment too.”

In terms of recognition frequency, Seadon believes that employers should be recognising employees “as often as possible”.

“We do look at more specific metrics, of course,” laughs Seadon. “One recognition per person per month is the baseline, but more is obviously better. Any good program should also allow managers and employees alike to be prompted when they haven't recognised anyone in a while, too, as well as spotting whether specific staff have been particularly singled out for recognition.”

Seadon notes that Achievers also work closely with clients to look at ways they can remove potential barriers to providing recognition. Recognition, Seadon believes, isn't something that should be too complicated for people to give.

“That's one of the shortcomings that we've seen with other formal or informal recognition programs,” says Seadon. “If you see a co-worker demonstrate great behaviour, it shouldn't be a complicated process to enact that recognition. It's something that people should be easily able to do from any system they are in or in their daily flow of work.”

Ultimately, Seadon is of the opinion that there is a correlation between recognition behaviour and peak performance – tools for recognition are a means to facilitate that.

“HR needs to aid in the process of normalising the practice of recognition across all employees,” says Seadon. “If we're aiding employees in feeling better appreciated in the workplace, we're feeding back into better working environments and better performance in the process.”



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