

# Future offices and future recognition.

Revealing the role of workplace recognition during a pandemic with Achievers.

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BY **Tom Goodwin** WITH **Matt Seadon** and **Kartik Srinivasan** 01 Sep 2020





Even during the best of times for a business, there is a clear link between employee recognition driving employee culture engagement and in turn, better business outcomes. But since the large-scale shift to work from home arrangements, it's becoming increasingly clear that recognition is critical for maintaining connections between employees and management.

"It's a time of unprecedented challenge," says Matt Seadon, General Manager APAC at Achievers. "It's definitely highlighted some issues with legacy reward and recognition programs. If you're in an organisation with a low-frequency, outdated R&R program, it's entirely possible that you haven't had any recognition at all through the whole pandemic."

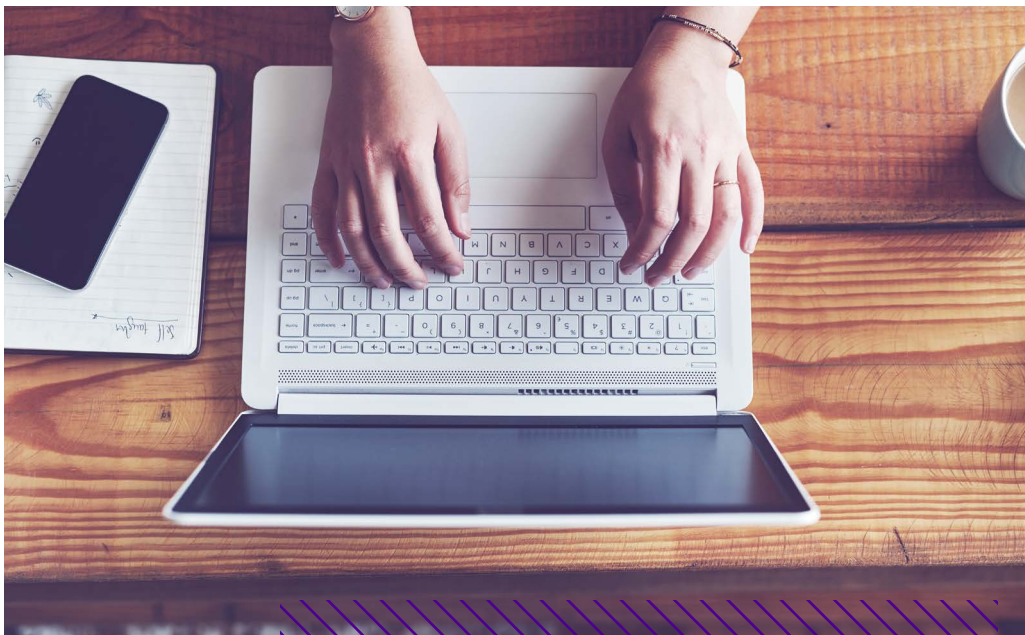
Kartik Srinivasan, Marketing Manager at Achievers, agrees, noting that having connection via recognition is a key imperative – otherwise all of the hard work that's gone into building a successful workplace culture can simply dissipate.

"The pandemic is evolving so fast that traditional reward-led models don't really work," says Srinivasan. "Lots of employees are stuck at home, out of sight and out of mind. If there's no frequency of recognition, you're quite possibly out of touch with their day-to-day needs."

"That's a real problem, because recognition is more important than ever," says Seadon. "In a normal office environment, you get lots of informal connections – which is noted and appreciated – but obviously that's not possible at the moment."

People's engagement levels change on a daily basis, notes Seadon, in part due to personal pressures or work stresses. Accordingly, more frequent recognition is required; and for workplace leaders it can serve as a tool for visibility into the great behaviours of a remote workforce. Seadon is also quick to point out that companies are eagerly embracing recognition as a means to stay connected – if and when they have the right toolset in place.

"Tech is a great enabler in helping businesses both give recognition and in reinforcing positive behaviour, as long as it's assimilated into the daily workflow," says Seadon. "Tech alone won't solve it, but the easier it is to use, the more likely that it will get used."





Seadon points to Achievers' own solutions as an example.

"At our end, we're looking at metrics around program usage – things like weekly or monthly active users," says Seadon. "But at the moment we're seeing significant uptake at our end from both existing and new clients – they've seen the benefits in action before the pandemic, and now recognise the importance of not only continuing, but ramping up recognition behaviour during this period."

From a workplace leader's perspective, says Seadon, there needs to be much greater awareness of the role recognition plays in both calibrating and celebrating the team.

**"I think a little bit of thoughtfulness goes a long way, especially in a time where you can't have the same informal shout-outs or large-scale celebrations for the whole office," says Seadon.**

Srinivasan notes that recognition isn't just top-down, though. In fact, it's often at its most effective when it's peer-to-peer. Given the somewhat stop-start nature of COVID-based restrictions around Australia, it's become increasingly clear that this is something for all staff to embrace. Employees, Srinivasan says, are at the epicentre during this time, and they need to look for ways to foster that connection and productivity.

"When one person expresses themselves, other people feel freer to do as well," says Srinivasan. "Suddenly, we know that we're not the only ones who are feeling that way. So it's not just an HR or manager thing – recognition is very much part of the wider employee experience. It can be difficult to quantify the value but science has demonstrated that there is a net positive impact."

Seadon agrees.

"Everyone should be pushing for more moments of recognition and more moments of fun," says Seadon. "Especially in these times."



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