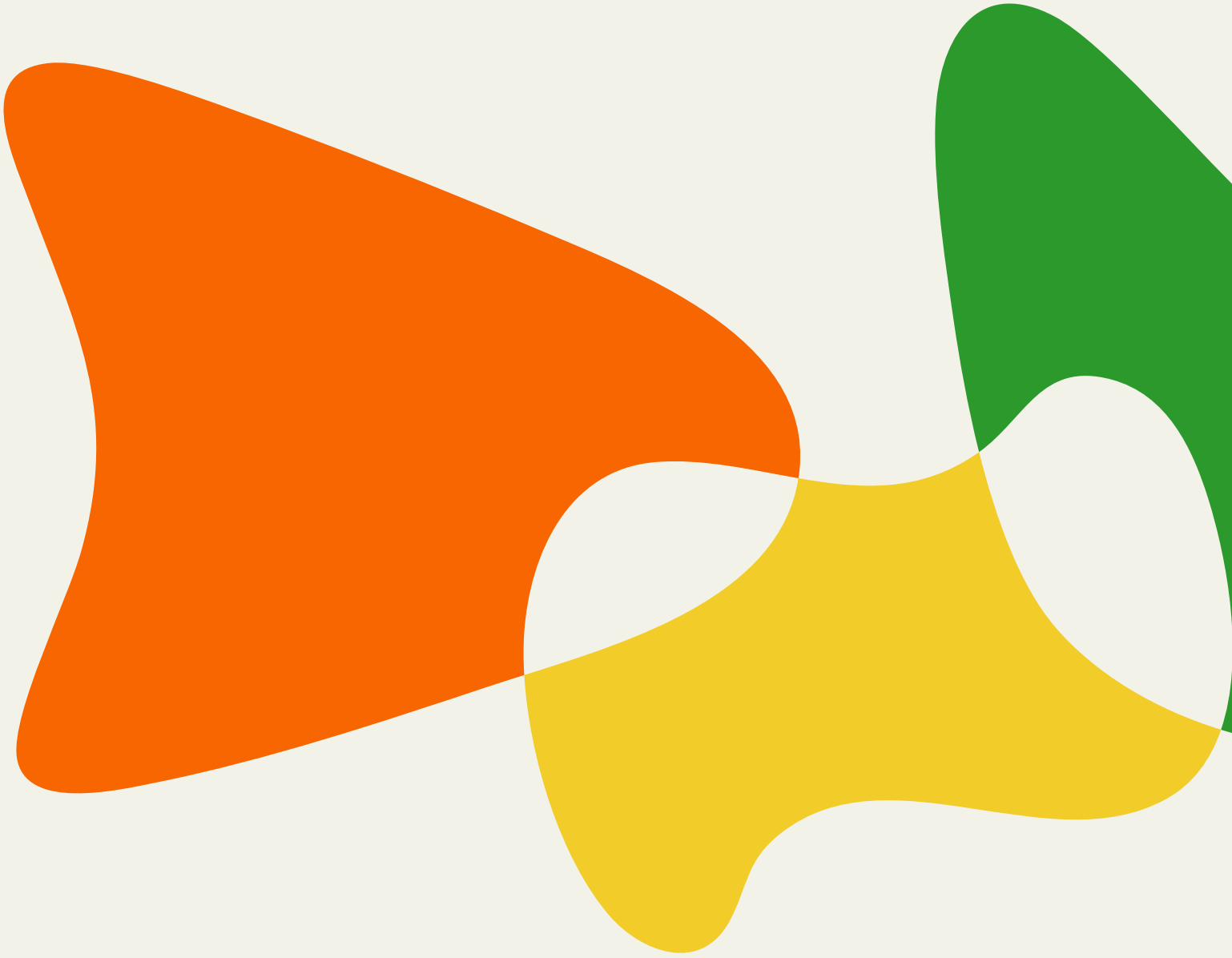
Guide to building a culture of frequent, meaningful recognition

A step-by-step guide to building a scalable recognition calendar for North America — with 12 months of ready-to-use templates



Achievers



Introduction

A robust and frequent employee recognition program reinforces and validates cultural norms while making employees feel seen and heard — qualities that increase in importance as a company increases in size.

Enterprise organizations can especially benefit from consistent employee recognition from leaders and peers, as location differences, team size, and departmental silos can isolate employees and diminish meaningful communication.

A structured monthly recognition calendar reminds employees and leadership of recognition programs and can inspire new ways to recognize employees beyond tired “Thanks for your contribution!” posts.

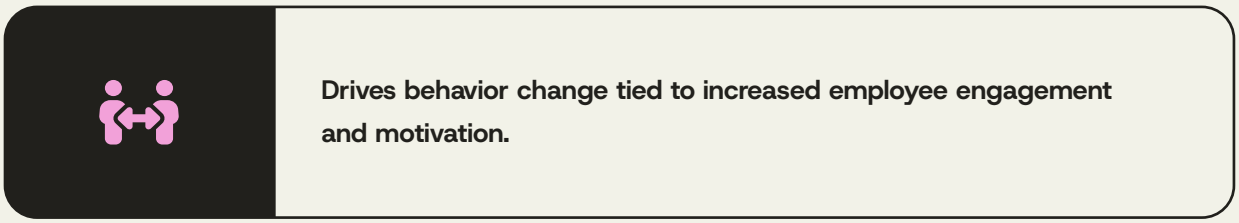
A calendar that guides and suggests relevant recognition supports employee engagement, retention, and productivity by increasing the frequency and salience of individual recognition.

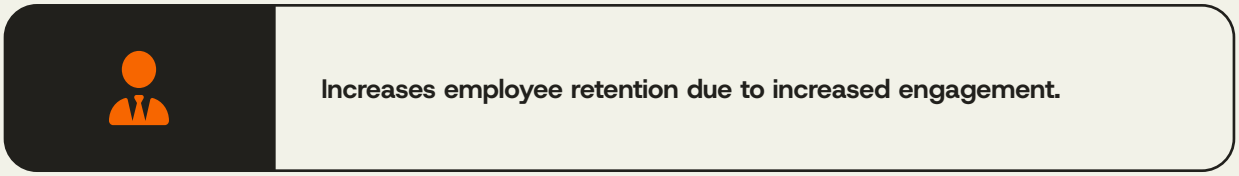
In this playbook, you get:

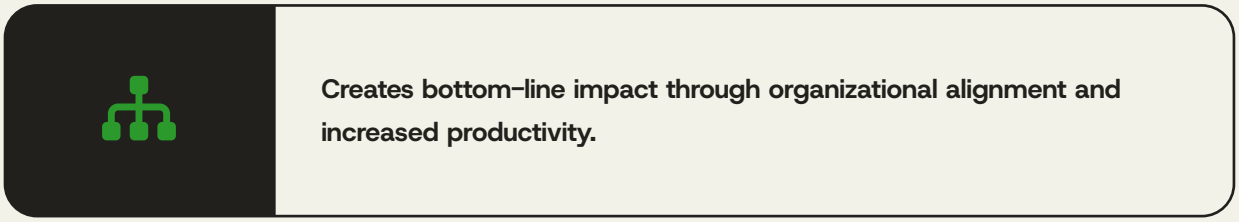
- The reasoning and structure of a winning recognition calendar
- Ideas for recognition posts based on calendar events and industry recognition days
- How to maximize your recognition impact beyond individual posts

Why create a monthly recognition calendar?

A monthly recognition calendar is an easy way to map out support of your recognition program and make recognition prompts seasonally or contextually appropriate. This helps to build a systematic, structured recognition program that:







Calendars reinforce recognition behaviors, sparking a fundamental shift in company culture that drives productive behaviors at scale.

Recognition at non-profit housing and healthcare service Wesley decreased turnover rates over two years **from 67.5% to 34.5%.** This drove an increased sense of belonging and saved the non-profit from increasingly costly recruitment efforts by encouraging nurses to regularly recognize their peers and overcome location challenges.

WESLEY

34.5%
turnover after two years of recognition

Key elements of a winning recognition calendar

To create a winning recognition calendar, start with culturally relevant holidays in the region. For North America, Valentine's Day, Thanksgiving, and New Year's Day can provide seasonal holiday and special observance highlights.

Add to that with professional and cultural observances like Mental Health Awareness Month or Employee Benefits Day.

And don't forget your organizational or departmental milestones like key employee anniversaries (1 year, 5 years, etc.) or product completion or launch days.

A successful recognition calendar incorporates several key factors:

Frequency

Science shows frequent, meaningful recognition shapes behavior and drives results. A winning calendar ensures your workforce stays aligned to company values — every month, week, and day.

A calendar shows the recognition program has leadership support and was built with purpose and forethought. When employees know you've planned recognition ideas in advance for every working day of the year, they understand this initiative isn't an afterthought, but a strategic investment in the workforce.

Rewards

Recognition is its own reward, but a gift card can go a long way. A recognition calendar helps employees provide consistent and frequent recognition, which increases productivity and positive cultural norms.

Earning periodic monetary rewards for frequently recognizing others (or getting recognized for good behaviors) further reinforces the recognition habit among peers — at a much lower cost than the alternative of lowered productivity and higher turnover.

Monthly recognition calendar template

Use the template below to schedule recognition messages or prompts, or use the ones provided:

January

New Year's Recognition
Write a post about someone whose work ethic or approach has inspired you to set a goal for the coming year.

Example: Your goals for 2026 have inspired me to take on more leadership opportunities this year. Thanks for being such an inspiring peer!

February

Black History Month
Write a post celebrating Black excellence within your organization. Remember to be specific about what makes that person excellent!

Example: In honor of Black History Month, I recognize a colleague whose leadership and vision drive lasting impact. Celebrating Black excellence means honoring contributions that inspire progress and move our organization forward.

Valentine's Day
Write a short "roses are red, violets are blue" poem about a teammate's contribution that you love this week.

Example: Roses are red, violets are blue, production keeps running — and we couldn't do it without you!

March

International Women's Day
Write a post recognizing a woman's contribution within the month of March. Be sure to include how those contributions have impacted you personally.

Example: For International Women's Day, I want to recognize the hard work and dedication she brings to every project. Her contributions bring unparalleled clarity and purpose to our work — and her sense of humor keeps the whole team smiling.

Employee Appreciation Day
Write a post appreciating a fellow employee who quietly contributes to the team success, but is consistently helpful.

Example: To celebrate Employee Appreciation Day, I'm sharing some virtual donuts with this colleague, whose insights and keen analysis show how much they care about both our data AND our people.

April

Earth Day
Recognize an employee who has contributed to the company's sustainability efforts in a material way. Include metrics for an extra bit of clarity!

Example: For Earth Day, I want to recognize a colleague whose commitment to sustainability has made a real difference. Their efforts to find new ways to reduce waste and conserve resources are helping us create a greener future.

Employee Benefits Day
Who on staff has guided you to or reminded you of a company benefit you've used this year? Recognize how they've improved your life today.

Example: For Employee Benefits Day, here's a shoutout to the team member who coordinates with key mental and physical health providers to keep us healthy all year long.

May

Mental Health Awareness Month
Other people contribute to our mental health when they show support, listen to your concerns, and make you feel seen. Recognize an employee who has shown you support in big or small ways.

Example: When I was feeling overwhelmed with deadlines, you took the time to listen and help me prioritize. Your support made a big difference and reminded me I'm not alone. Thank you for being such a supportive teammate.

June

Pride Month
Pride Month is all about how our diversity strengthens our sense of belonging. Recognize an employee whose support of diversity has been instructive or inspiring to you.

Example: For Pride Month, I want to recognize a colleague whose actions have strengthened our culture of inclusion. Their commitment to creating a welcoming environment inspires all of us to show up as our authentic selves and support one another.

July

Canada Day/Independence Day

Recognize an employee who embodies Canadian/American values in their daily work.

Example: On this day when we reflect on what makes us Canadian/American, I'm recognizing a colleague whose dedication, teamwork, and commitment to excellence embody the values we celebrate.

August

Summer productivity boosters

Who have you caught boosting productivity around the office recently? Recognize their accomplishment this week with a great recognition post.

Example: The energy in the office is contagious — and so is the way your recent efforts have helped us work smarter and faster. Thanks for giving productivity a boost!

September

Back to School

Consider who has mentored you in formal and informal ways recently. What did they do that taught you, and what have you learned?

Example: Just like a great teacher at the start of a new school year, your guidance and encouragement have helped me build new skills and tackle challenges with more confidence.

October

Thanksgiving (Canada)

Recognize your favorite peer from another department. How has their work positively impacted your day recently?

Example: This colleague goes above and beyond to keep important information flowing smoothly across teams — work that positively impacts every corner of our organization.

Boss's Day

How has your boss improved your day or week? What did they do, and how did it positively impact your work?

Example: Thank you for your support and guidance this week. Your leadership has made a real difference in keeping the team focused and motivated!

November

Thanksgiving (U.S.)

Send a recognition note to someone from a different department who has shown leadership this month. Tell them what you noticed and why you're grateful for their leadership.

Example: This season, I'm especially grateful for a colleague whose leadership and willingness to lend a hand bring out the best in our team and make work feel a little more like family.

December

Year-end acknowledgements

Look back at the recognition posts you've written this year. Who have you missed, and how did that person contribute to your team's success?

Example: Your friendliness and spark have brightened my weeks this year. I appreciate the enthusiasm you've shown in our weekly meetings. Thank you for always bringing joy to my work week!

Industry-specific recognition days

Healthcare

Healthcare HR Week (March)

Recognize a member of the HR team's contributions to your team's success. Consider recruiting, benefits support, and advice navigating situations.

Example: Thank you for tirelessly reaching out to quality candidates, vetting them, and providing us with so many great team members this year!

World Health Day (April)

Recognize a member of the staff whose work has touched communities outside of our local office. Consider team members who connect with those from other countries when they visit our office as well as those whose work takes them abroad.

Example: For World Health Day, I'm recognizing a colleague whose work reaches far beyond our walls — building connections and making a positive impact in communities around the world.

National Nurses' Week (May)

Nurses have a reputation for quietly going above and beyond. How has a nurse on staff gone out of their way to improve outcomes for you or a patient this month?

Example: Feeling grateful for the nurse whose care, attention, and quick thinking continue to make a meaningful difference for those they support.

Manufacturing

Manufacturing Day and National Manufacturing Month (October)

Recognize a member of the manufacturing team who you've seen improving processes or consistently upholding plant standards this month.

Example: For Manufacturing Month, I'm recognizing a teammate whose commitment to quality and dedication to improving processes help keep our operations running at their best.

Financial Services

Financial Freedom Month (July)

Recognize a member of the team whose advice or example have inspired you to improve your financial situation?

Example: For Financial Freedom Month, I'm recognizing a colleague whose smart habits and helpful advice have inspired me to make better financial choices.

National Financial Awareness Day (August)

Which staff member have you seen improving the financial awareness of our customers in new or unique ways? Share what you saw!

Example: Your consistent approach to offering helpful advice to customers not only improves the company's bottom line but improves outcomes for our customers. Win-win!

Retail

Customer Service Week (October)

Whose exemplary commitment to customer service has impacted your team recently? Consider who has spent their time investigating an issue or being extra kind.

Example: For Customer Service Week, I'm recognizing a colleague whose patience, problem-solving, and kindness have made a lasting positive impression on both our team and our customers.

Retail Employees' Day (December)

Which floor or stock employee has upheld our value of transparency this week? Give them some recognition-love!

Example: This team member's consistent and detailed inventory notes have improved our customer service and turnaround time. Thank you, we appreciate your transparency!



Tips for implementing your recognition calendar

Planning without implementation helps no one. These best practices will help you improve consistency and drive results faster by increasing recognition frequency:

- **Hone your communication strategy:** Measure the effectiveness of your communication modes, and use the one(s) that improve outcomes. Try Achievers Announcements for increased visibility in the software your employees already use.
- **Prioritize manager training and resources:** Build out effective training and resource libraries so leaders model effective behaviors. Use Manager Toolkits to ensure recognition is consistent and inclusive.
- **Monitor and adjust the calendar based on employee feedback and analytics:** We can't get everything right the first time, but we can leverage flexible reporting and real-time insights to iterate on what is working.
- **Ensure inclusivity and accessibility across a diverse workforce:** Take the time to understand cultural norms across locations and within groups, and build those diverse perspectives into your recognition program.

How Achievers can help you maximize recognition impact

With Achievers, you don't just recognize, you drive meaningful cultural change. Our platform makes recognition scalable, easy, and impactful with features that support your recognition initiative, like:

- **Data-driven insights** that help you improve your campaigns in real time and support your recognition program's success.
- **A proven platform** that drives the highest frequency recognition in the industry.
- **Prebuilt campaigns** that get your recognition strategy moving quickly and keep it going when you get busy.
- **Dedicated 24/7 support** with designated success managers and a robust library of training and toolkits to support global companies.
- **Global scalability** and support in over 100 languages with culturally appropriate rewards.
- **Multichannel capabilities** for dispersed and offline teams.

Achievers' platform is customizable to fit even the most niche of industries and robust enough to bring together global enterprises with many locations across languages, time zones, and cultural differences.

Build the culture your workforce deserves

A recognition calendar isn't just a scheduling tool — it's a catalyst for lasting culture change. A structured recognition calendar drives your program's success by supporting the frequency, variety, and relevance of recognition across your workforce. It's a deceptively simple tool with long-lasting effects on positive cultural behavior.

Shape a workplace where every employee feels seen, heard, and appreciated — and see how Achievers helps the world's best-run businesses do just that.

Ready to see recognition in action?

Get a demo →

Achievers