



The Future of Employee Experience:

A Playbook for Supporting the Whole Human



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Abstract

Where can the employee experience go in a post-pandemic—but still uncertain—world? The expectations around where and when work should happen have been drastically altered over the last three years, with, for the first time, employees firmly in the driver's seat. Long-term loyalty to companies is sinking, and culture is a bigger differentiator than ever. But in a largely remote and hybrid environment, culture no longer equals in-office perks like pizza parties, dress-down days, or ping-pong tables. Instead, the future of the employee experience will focus on what an individual needs in order to be successful. To get there, we must ensure that we're building a culture of trust, connection, and recognition of the whole human in every role.



Part I

Building higher trust

Employers are learning the hard way that they no longer have the upper hand in employee retention. The “don’t ask questions; just trust that we’re doing right by you” mentality that has dominated the last 100 years of corporate employment is over; employees switch companies at a faster rate than ever before. Gen Z workers average a two-year tenure—less than half of the average Gen Xer’s five years (not to mention the eight-year Baby Boomer cycle).¹

So, in today’s increasingly competitive business landscape, where turnover rates are on the rise² and competition for top talent is fierce, a culture that focuses on the whole human is the obvious differentiator in retaining the best employees. But what should that culture look like? It’s not merely a matter of perks, but instead a culture of trust, where employees can ask questions without fear of being reprimanded, and there’s a large-scale understanding of business performance and one’s contributions toward it.

“*In seeking diverse opinions and experiences for better outcomes, our employees hold both a breadth of expertise and knowledge gaps. So, in an effort to live and breathe a knowledge-driven culture, we encourage employees to not only document and share expertise in Guru (we use our own product as our single source of truth) but to be vocal about when they don’t know something. After searching for and not finding information, we celebrate the behavior of asking for guidance or help.*”
—Julia Soffa, Guru

At its core, building trust starts with transparency. When employees feel that management is committed to sharing information openly and honestly, they are more likely to trust their peers and managers as well. This transparency can take many different forms, from regular team meetings and one-on-one check-ins with direct reports to unambiguous, jargonless share-outs on the success of the business and a standardized decision-making process.

Transparency and trust are also key factors in having a workforce that can not only survive change but embrace it. We saw this clearly in the early days of the pandemic when many companies shifted to fully remote work from a largely office-based culture. We’re seeing it continue as the market landscape changes at a faster rate than ever before. Can a business that lacks an essential understanding of trust survive multiple pivots with an intact team? Maybe, but it’s highly likely that decisions that seem to come from a black box will make high performers look elsewhere for more stability. By focusing on transparency and embracing change, companies can create an environment of trust that empowers employees to do their best work and drive success for the entire organization.

So, why do employees lose trust in management? There are a number of common factors that can contribute to this, including poor communication, a lack of support or training, office politics, and no obvious path to advancement. Additionally, stress and burnout can be major contributors if employees feel overworked or unsupported by their peers or managers.

In order to build trust in the workplace, it is important for employers to address these issues head-on by focusing on the building blocks of full transparency like clear communication and documented up-to-date policies, as well as continuity of culture across locations, and frequent recognition of good work.

How to combat low transparency

How do you know whether you have a transparency problem? First, ask the following questions:

- Does the average employee know what your company’s business objectives are?
- Do they understand the “why” behind decision-making?
- Do they know where to find career advancement documentation?
- Can they explain how success in their own roles is measured?

In a company with transparent culture, the answer to all of these questions should be a resounding and unhesitating yes, creating a level of loyalty that 100 in-office climbing gyms and ping pong tables can’t. Getting to “yes” here doesn’t materially cost your company anything, but it does create better retention, better reviews on platforms like Glassdoor, and a better chance of top-level business success, as the team isn’t distracted by the cost of constant backfills and a loss of institutional knowledge.

“*When an employee leaves a company, it’s more than just losing a project lead or a coffee break buddy. There’s institutional knowledge, expertise, and closely built relationships walking out the door.*” —Jennifer De Shields, Guru

That last scenario is what Gallup refers to as self-inflicted damage in their 2019 report This Fixable Problem Costs U.S. Businesses \$1 Trillion. That \$1 trillion problem? Voluntary turnover.

“The cost of replacing an individual employee can range from one-half to two times the employee’s annual salary—and that’s a conservative estimate. So, a 100-person organization that provides an average salary of \$50,000 could have turnover and replacement costs of approximately \$660,000 to \$2.6 million per year.”³

That’s a real impact on any company’s bottom line. Let’s create better experiences that make employees want to stay.

Consistency of communication

One effective strategy for combating low transparency in the workplace is to focus on consistency of communication. By being open and honest with employees about company goals and challenges, managers can build trust and transparency among their teams. Be precise about what’s working well, what isn’t, and what level of continuous process change employees should be prepared for. What works for a company of 100 in Year 5 likely won’t work for the same company 3 years and 500 employees later.

Share frequently and on a predetermined frequency. As an example, Guru created a company-wide calendar that outlines every opportunity for the company to come together and learn, both live and asynchronously:



But this can’t just be all top-down action. Managers should encourage their reports to be open and honest with one another as well. Leaders should create an environment where team members feel safe sharing their thoughts and concerns by actively soliciting feedback, whether it’s during a scheduled meeting or in an informal conversation over lunch.

Clear expectations and visibility across reporting structures and job functions are also critical for building a culture of trust in the workplace. By outlining each employee’s responsibilities and reporting relationships, managers can help minimize the perception of favoritism or bias that can result from fuzzy reporting structures.

Supplement this structure with a common career growth framework. When employees know what the next steps are for their career development within the organization⁴, they are more likely to remain engaged and motivated at work. This framework should also include a company-wide promotion philosophy, which outlines the criteria for employee advancement and ensures that all employees are given equal opportunities to grow and succeed.

	Standard Job Title	Ex. Associate, Principle, Senior
	Typical Years of Related Experience	# of years experience
Technical Knowledge & Application	What you know	The application of level-appropriate theories and methodologies
Complexity & Problem Solving	What is the complexity of your role	What level of scope and complexity to expect from projects for this
Collaboration	Who you interact with and influence	Who employees of this level should regularly expect to interact with (ex. peers, management, internal, external)
Impact & Ownership	Why your work and contributions matter	The level of reach employees of this level should expect to have (ex: team-based, cross-functional, executive)
Impact & Ownership	How you work	What level of oversight employees of this level should expect
	How you make decisions	Whom employees of this level should consult on decisions

Alongside the growth framework and promotion philosophy, share as much information as you can about salaries. This is a touchy topic. Why does insight into salary banding matter? It’s essential for ensuring fairness and equity in the workplace (which every company should strive for), but there’s an added benefit as well: it can provide an antidote to both outright and so-called quiet quitting.

By giving employees visibility into salary bands, they can have greater insight into the rationale behind their pay, as well as that of their peers. This may encourage them to speak up when they think that there are inequities or discrepancies within their area of the company, rather than quietly searching for a new job elsewhere.

Salary transparency can help companies create an environment where employees feel valued and engaged. And when employees are happy, they are more likely to stay in their roles—which ultimately benefits the entire organization. It’s also beneficial in hiring new talent, as it can demonstrate to potential candidates that this is an organization where they will be valued and engaged.

Continuity of culture

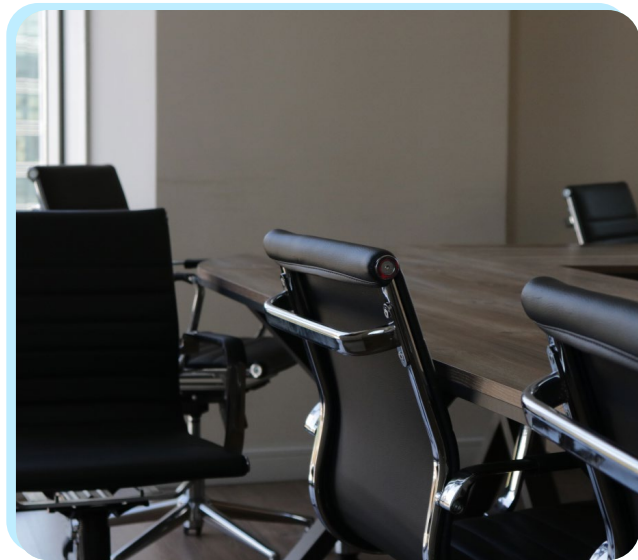
Regardless of where someone is working—in an office or remotely; in different timezones or different regions—companies must maintain consistency with their culture, values, and mission. This requires cultivating a strong sense of community and a shared experience for all employees.

In many legacy companies, especially, there’s a perception gap between leaders and employees around productivity in remote work versus in-office work. For instance, in reporting on morale issues at the Washington Post, the New York Times found the following:

“Discussions about budget reductions come as [Fred Ryan, Publisher and CEO] and has expressed annoyance with senior newsroom leaders at what he sees as a lack of productivity by some journalists at the paper. Last fall, he asked for the company’s chief information officer to pull records on which days employees held video conference meetings, as a way to judge production levels, and found that fewer meetings occurred on Fridays, according to two people with knowledge of the matter.”⁵

In a remote-first environment, productivity can’t be proven by seeing who’s at their desk, and the number of meetings or hours worked is a poor replacement. If these are the success metrics for productivity, it will always seem like in-office employees will always have the upper hand.

“The number one issue that everyone is struggling with when switching to remote management is the idea of managing outcomes and not inputs. If you set clear metrics and your team is hitting those marks, you don’t have to worry about how many hours they’re spending or when they’re doing the work. You’re managing towards the outcomes that your organization needs.”
—Robert Glazer, CEO & Founder of Acceleration Partners

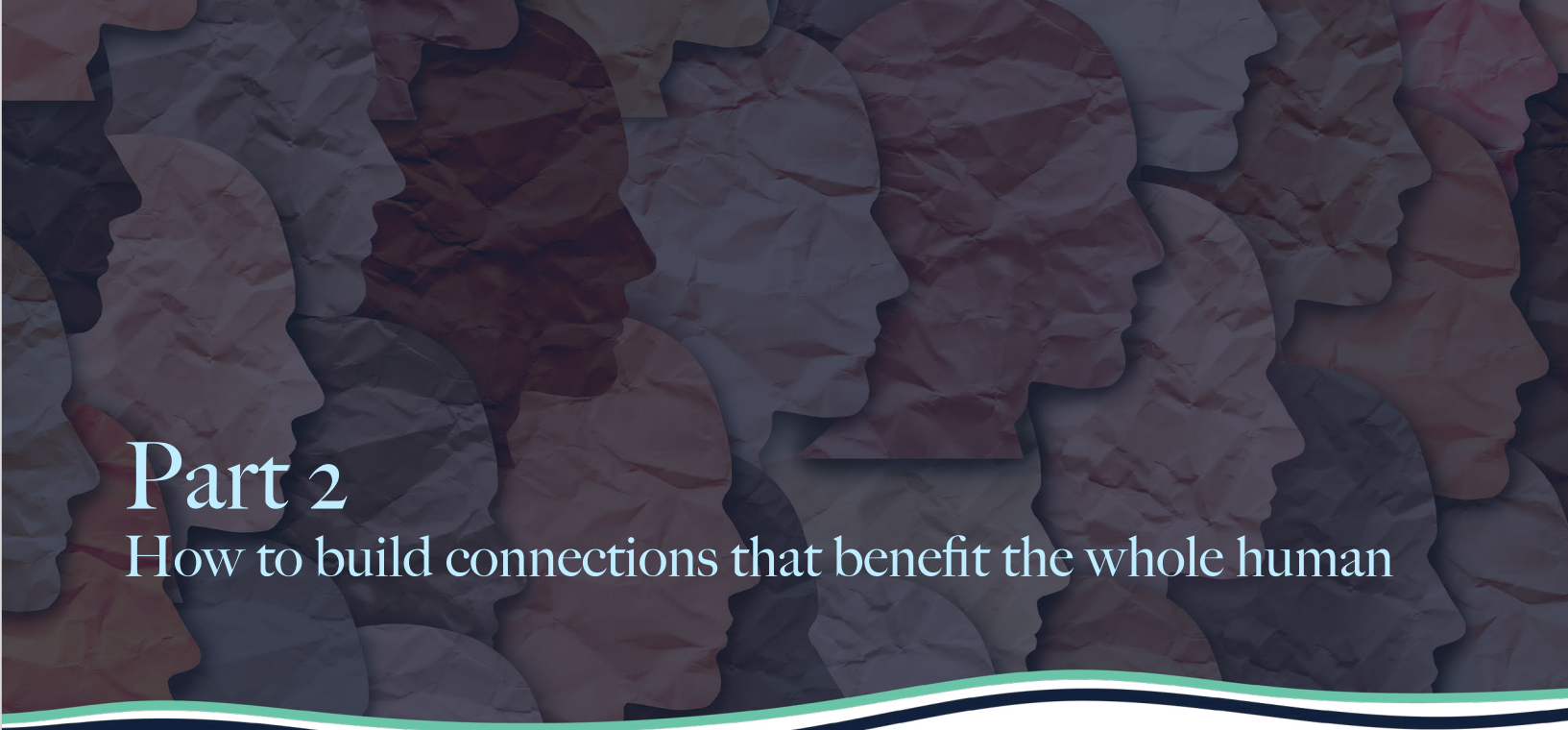


A better solution comes from focusing on the outcome of a person’s work. This requires managers to trust their reports to get their work done regardless of the time and location. The good news is that this allows for a built-in benefit: employees who understand that they’re trusted to work autonomously will reciprocate that trust. If the incentive is simply to be available for a set number of hours, employees may be tempted to log “extra” hours simply in order to demonstrate their commitment, even if they are already getting the job done. That’s unsustainable and will lead to resentment and burnout.

Recognition of good work

While outcome-oriented success metrics should be the key to career advancement, managers should make it a point to recognize and acknowledge good work frequently, both on an individual level as well as company-wide in order to promote a culture of celebration and positivity, instead of silence and fear. This all contributes to the larger culture of trust.

At every stage of the process—not just when a project is complete—managers should be vigilant in recognizing the hard work that their employees are putting in. This is especially important when things don’t go according to plan, as it raises awareness around potential areas for improvement.



Part 2

How to build connections that benefit the whole human

“Now, we say to work: You have to give me a sense of purpose, you have to give me my social life, and you have to give me a sense of community and belonging.” —Simon Sinek⁶

Decades ago, people found their primary sense of purpose and community from various recreational and religious groups outside of work. But as active participation in voluntary organizations continues to trend downwards⁷, we look to work to fulfill the need for community in our lives.

Building a human-centric team culture is key

Over recent years, we’ve experienced a seismic shift in the way we work. What started with COVID-19 was quickly followed by a global talent crisis that left organizations scrambling to attract and retain the very best employees. Originally dubbed the “Great Resignation” this movement has since evolved into a “Great Re-evaluation,” as employees’ expectations have changed to place greater priorities on their relationships, well-being, and happiness.

47%
of people are more likely to put family and personal life over work than they were before the pandemic⁸.

53%
of people are more likely to put family and personal life over work than they were before the pandemic⁸.

63%
of people are more likely to put family and personal life over work than they were before the pandemic⁸.

Employees are far more likely to stay with organizations that emphasize a culture of human connection. The very best employers don’t just recognize that people want to build meaningful human connections, they make it a key part of their corporate culture identity.

Focusing your culture to support the whole human and prioritizing genuine human connections is essential. A culture of human connection is something that needs to be ingrained into every aspect of your organization to build an environment where people feel connected to one another. Culture isn't only built through team bonding events; it's built through all the little interactions and conversations that are being had throughout an organization.

“As a remote employer it’s important for us to allow the time and space for connections to be made. While we provide opportunities for team members to connect and engage with each other throughout the week, we want to empower individuals to make connections outside of those opportunities. We’ve seen some amazing engagement where team members are proactively looking for opportunities to coordinate team activities and social events.”
—Katie Wray, People and Culture Senior Manager, Bucketlist

Areas in your company where you can implement a whole human approach to building human connections

Area #1: New Hire Onboarding

- Ask fun personal questions on new-hire questionnaires that are shared with the company
- Include fun facts during introductions
- Make it a norm to ask about personal life as opposed to just past work experience
- Schedule manager meet & greets, especially with leaders from different departments

Area #2: Professional Development

- In mentorship programs, consider pairings for people who are in or have gone through the same stages in life and can offer advice and perspective on topics like how to work-life balance and deal with stressors.
- Invest in soft skills training like interpersonal self-reflection and relationship-building. Professional development and learning to become a leader itself requires personal development. Individuals need to develop as a whole person and understand themselves, their stressors, how they react to things, how they learn best, etc before they can truly lead and help others improve too.

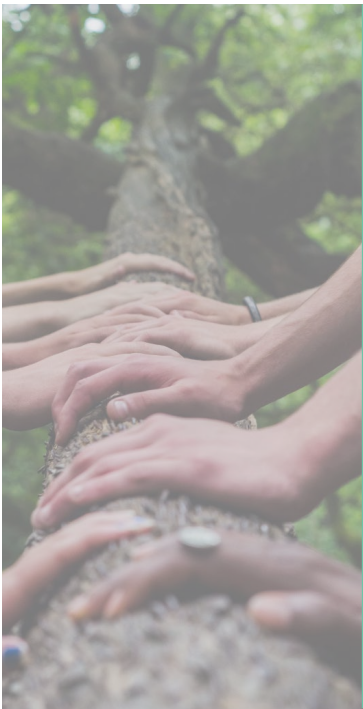
Area #3: Company policies and processes

- Integrate water cooler topics as part of the standard meeting agenda
- Provide access to co-working spaces so that team members can meet
- Implement tools or policies that give people opportunities to connect on a regular cadence
- Consider implementing a company core hours policy that takes different time zones or locations into account to make it easier for people to connect and collaborate

Ask yourself: What does a whole human workplace look like to you? How can your culture reflect this?

“94% of employees agreed that they’re more productive when they feel connected to their colleagues, and employees who felt connected were more than 4 times as likely to say that they were very satisfied with their jobs and half as likely to leave within the next 12 months.”
—“Your Guide to Building Human Connection at Work” by Enboarder¹⁰

Case Studies: Effective initiatives for a human-centric culture



Case Study #1: Good Deeds Day

“Good Deeds Day is something that’s been with us for a while. Our founder and executive team gives every employee in the company a stipend to go into the community and do good.”—Jean Lynn, Director of HR at Meridian Clinical Research

- Philanthropy is an important part of many people’s lives and helps them feel fulfilled. Acknowledging that as an employer and helping people achieve that sense of purpose is super impactful
- If your leadership team identifies this as a way to help your team feel engaged and connected, contributing to a human-centric culture
- What’s really impactful is that people have a choice with the stipend to do good in ways that are meaningful to them. Some people may choose to donate to their favorite charity or pay for someone else’s meal.



Case Study #2: Bingo with a twist

Team events are the perfect opportunity to focus on getting to know about our team members’ lives outside work. Give people an opportunity to learn about each other’s hobbies, interests, and passions through simple games like Bingo or Trivia

Sample personalized Bingo questions:

- Find someone with a pet bird 🦜
- Find someone who has visited more than 3 continents 🌐
- Find someone who knows more than 5 languages 🗣️
- Find someone who is a twirler 🕺
- Find someone who likes to sing 🎤

A culture of human connection won't happen by accident



One of the biggest impacts of our shift to hybrid and remote working practices is the loss of spontaneous connections: the kind of accidental interactions that you'd have at the water cooler while making a coffee or passing someone in a hallway. Days in-office are regularly punctuated by these moments and they help to create the kind of human connections that people crave.

63% of employees find that their coworkers had the biggest influence on their feelings of connectedness.
—Enboarder

But in a distributed workforce, where some (or all) team members are remote, these moments no longer happen by accident; we have to create these opportunities for human connections. Intentionality is key. Your organization must take steps to actively create the conditions that breed connectedness.

This involves the constant and conscious effort to provide opportunities for equal access to human connections. No matter whether someone is working remotely or in-office, they should be able to have casual conversations with colleagues and attend any team events without feeling left out. Events should take outside-of-work commitments into account. Perhaps having the choice of participating asynchronously or virtually—and during core work hours—would allow more people to attend. Having equal ability to build relationships in the workplace—no matter where you're located or what your personal life entails—will help people feel included and valued.



“Where we need to spend our energy is in ensuring that we're not putting up any barriers that would prevent our people from feeling the connection they so desperately need to thrive.”
—Enboarder

Strategies to foster intentional connections

Strategy #1

Incorporate specific questions that increase personal conversations into meeting agendas

We often ask people, “How are you doing?” And they'll respond with something like “fine”, even when things aren't fine because that's the societal expectation. A good way to get an answer is to make our questions more specific and direct.

Adding thoughtful questions directly into the structure of your meetings is a powerful way to ensure that connections are being built in a meaningful way.

Examples:

- What's going well in your role? Any wins (big or small) this week?
- What challenges are you facing? Where are you stuck?
- What is the business doing, or can be doing, to make you more successful?
- What's the morale around you?
- On a scale of 1-10, how happy are you? Why?
- What's the best thing that happened to you this week, either at work or outside of it?
- What were some great contributions made by other team members?
- Provide feedback on how I can be a better leader

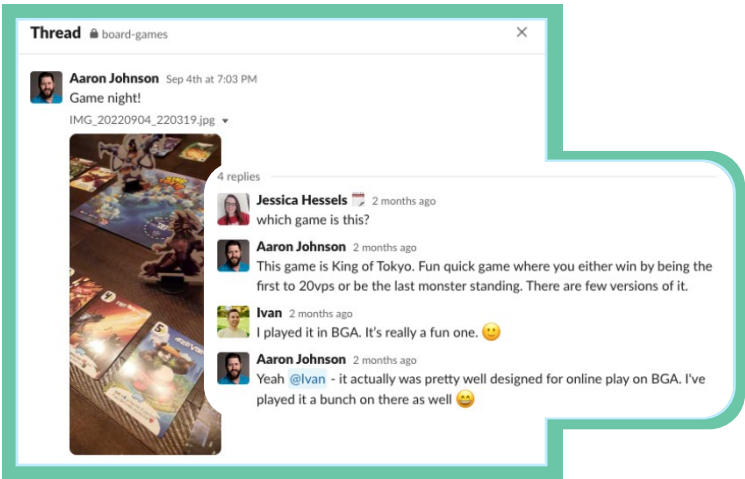
Strategy #2

Utilizing Slack channels to help people find others who share common interests

Whether you use Slack for team communications or another platform, create channels where team members can gather and bond over shared interests outside of work.

Examples:

- Pets of [insert your company name]
- Yelling channel
- Workout & exercise channel
- Board Games
- Cooking & Food
- Book Club



A tip for intentionality: Whether you schedule regular one-to-ones, company-wide town halls or daily scrums—the key thing to remember is that your leaders have a prominent part to play in role-modeling the behavior you're trying to encourage among your employees.

Building friendships through fun at work

“There needs to be a mindset shift away from work being purely transactional. We need to bring people together to talk about who they are outside of work in order to feel more connected and that we belong at work.”
—Alex Schulte, Marketing at Donut

Lattice found that in 2020, nearly 70% of HR leaders listed employee morale as their top challenge¹¹. Looking for ways to keep spirits high through human connection is a great strategy for employee engagement and retention.

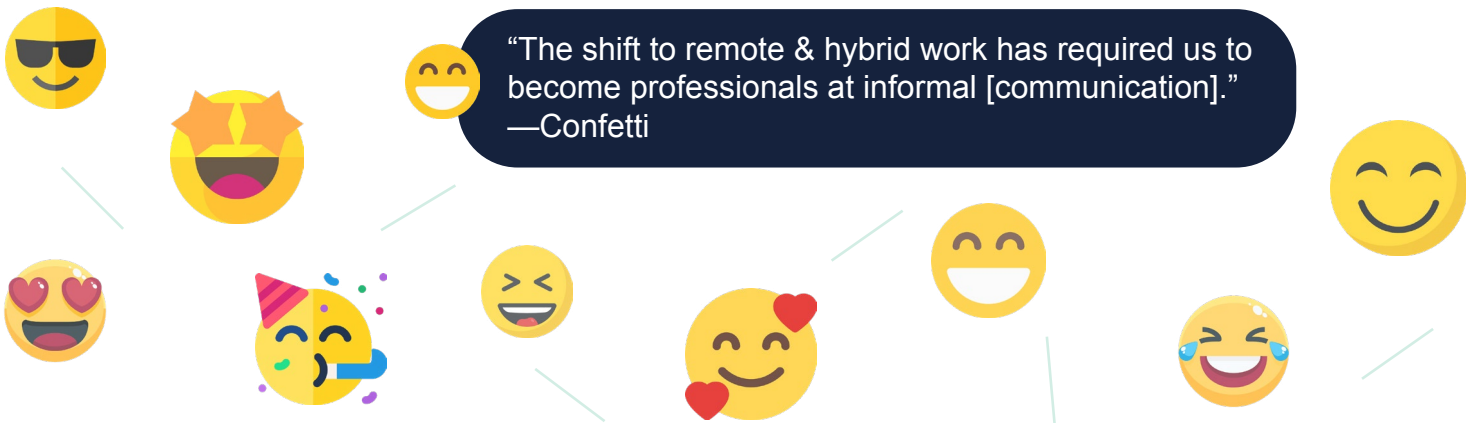
Friendships at work have been shown to boost employee engagement, job satisfaction, and productivity. Indeed, one study found that people who work alongside their friends are seven times more likely to be motivated and productive than those who work in isolation¹². And another study found that employees are 13% more productive when they’re happy¹³.

3 ways to bring fun into the workplace

Tip #1: Don’t be shy with emojis and gifs

Using emojis and gifs are a fun way to help us convey tone and emotion over digital forms of communication. Although they are traditionally seen as informal, they are increasingly being used in the workplace.

- 70% of people believe that emojis help them more accurately express what they’re thinking¹⁴.
- 50% of people believe emojis help create a more personal connection with the person they’re communicating with¹⁵.
- In fact, 73% of emoji users wish they had more emoji customization options to better reflect their personal appearance/identity¹⁶.



Tip #2: Video backgrounds are a window for us to look into the lives of our team members

We catch a glimpse into our colleagues’ lives whenever we video call them—and they allow us to see what’s behind them.

The video background has become a topic of discussion as people share where they’re working from and who we can hear in the background. It’s interesting to comment on the fact that people are working from different rooms or locations. We enjoy seeing their pets, meeting their children, and learning more about their hobbies and interests based on what they show in their background. This gives us a bigger opportunity than ever to look into our team’s lives outside of work and understand who they are outside of work.

Interesting fact:
For those of you who are on the fence about sharing video, studies show that people who consistently use video are over **2x** more likely to find it easier to collaborate and nearly **1.5x** more likely to say it’s easier to connect with colleagues¹⁷.



Tip #3: Be creative with distributed events

Events are another great way to get people out of work mode and into social settings. Distributed events have started to become the norm but can have a bad reputation for being repetitive, boring, or hard to manage. The key is not to try and recreate what you did in person in a virtual setting, but to embrace the fact that anyone can join in with the fun.

Some ideas from fellow distributed organizations:





Part 3

Building a better work/life balance

One of the biggest challenges facing an increasingly remote workforce is finding a healthy balance between our professional and personal lives. Many people feel pressure to spend long hours at work, even if they're not necessary or productive, simply because that's what their managers expect. But this approach isn't sustainable in the long run. Instead, we need to prioritize autonomy and flexibility so that employees can manage their own time effectively.

Post-pandemic, what people want from work and what they're willing to give in return has fundamentally changed; people's priorities have changed.

- 47% of people are more likely to put family and personal life over work than they were before the pandemic¹⁸.
- 53% of people are more likely to prioritize their health and well-being over work than before the pandemic¹⁸.
- 63% of job seekers say that work-life balance is a top priority¹⁹.
- 92% of the people who voluntarily left their job in the first quarter of 2020 felt that "life is too short to stay in a job they weren't passionate about."²⁰

“People are finding jobs that give them the right pay, benefits and work arrangements in the longer term. There's now a greater ability for people to fit work into their lives, instead of having lives that squeeze into their work.”
—Anthony Klotz, Associate Professor of Management, Texas A&M University²¹

Yes, it's time to stop micro-managing your employees. Stop worrying about whether tasks get checked off in a specific order. Instead, work to get them unblocked so they can focus on what's truly important for achieving success—whether that means streamlining processes, improving communication with colleagues, or finding innovative ways to tackle challenging projects.

Micro-management isn't a good use of anyone's time. Not only are two people working on a task that requires one, but it increases frustration, and doesn't leave enough time for either party to get other tasks done. That might mean working later, leaving less time to recharge, and putting you and your report at higher risk of burnout.

Combating burnout

Openness and honesty are base-level requirements to combat burnout. If you notice that your reports are consistently working overtime, or are feeling stressed or overwhelmed, it's important to have a candid and productive conversation about how to prioritize work more effectively. That means re-focusing on impactful work by checking to make sure no one is burning hours on a vanity project that has no business value, connecting them with experts who can get them the answers they need, and perhaps encouraging them to simply take a break—something that doesn't happen often enough.

A culture of trust allows managers to have those frank conversations about time off. Time off is a source of anxiety for a lot of people; in fact, 56% of Americans admit to checking in with work while on vacation!²² That's a huge impact on the quality of time off. There should be no expectation that someone should work while on PTO. If you're seeing that people are "just checking Slack!" or "sending a quick email!" while they're out of the office, gently make it clear that they don't need to and will not be penalized for not doing so ("Hey, aren't you on vacation? Log off and enjoy the sunshine! I'll get you up to speed when you get back.")

Especially in an unlimited PTO workplace, track how much time off your direct reports are taking. If it looks like they're going many months between significant PTO, remind them that they should take some time ("I noticed you don't have any time off scheduled for the back half of the year; are you waiting to put it in, or were you not planning to? I don't want you to risk burnout by going so long between vacations.")

Productivity vs. availability

Companies as a whole and managers in particular also need to understand and explain the difference between being productive and being available. This is especially important when it comes to remote work.

If a person is frequently active on Microsoft Teams, Slack, or email during what would be considered "after hours", they may not be disengaging enough from work and getting the time to recharge that they need. Managers should have a conversation about whether or not team members need to be constantly "on" (even when no one needs them) to remove any ambiguity or hesitation. They may simply be working a different schedule and haven't let you know yet ("Oh yeah, I work 7 hours during the day and then 2 hours at night after the kids have gone to bed so I can get focus time"), or they may feel pressured to stay connected. It's up to you to remove that pressure and reinforce the importance of the life part of the work-life balance.

Part 4

Recognition and Rewards

With all the shifts to the workplace over the past few years, and the emergence of terms such as ‘quiet quitting’ and ‘the great reshuffle’ circulating, now is the time to sit back and ask yourself: as a company, are we doing enough to show appreciation to our employees?

Quiet quitting is only one great example of the need for stronger employee recognition and appreciation. As the workplace changes, so do the people that make up a large majority of the workforce, namely Millennials and Gen X. This new workforce is demanding more and expecting more from employers—and this is a good thing.

For many of us today, the rhetoric that hard work equates to being a good person is hard to shake off. However, we are seeing people valuing work-life balance, flexibility, and human connections more than ever. 53% of people are more likely to prioritize their health and well-being over work than before the pandemic. In workplaces today, employees are likely to jump to the next job if they don’t feel valued or satisfied. This is why it’s so crucial for companies to be providing employees with unique rewards, benefits, and recognition right from the get-go to try to combat this high turnover we see today.

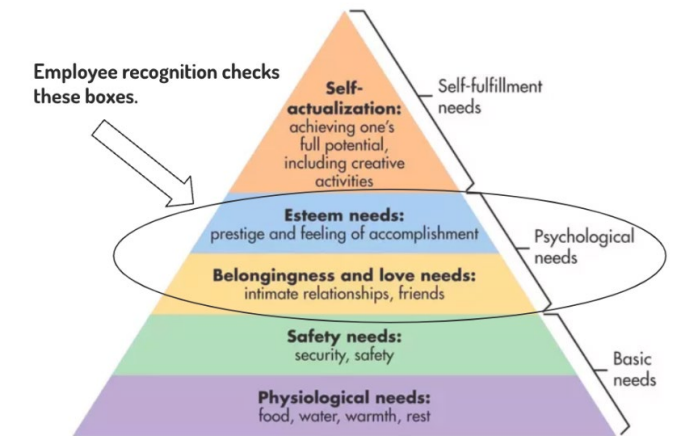
Recognition is a powerful tool to utilize in your organization to retain your employees and keep them engaged. 79% of employees report that they would stop quiet quitting if they were given more recognition at work²³. 69% of employees stated they would work harder and be more committed if their efforts were more appreciated by their company²⁴.

Leaders often wonder whether employee recognition will work at their company. “Will recognition actually help to increase engagement amongst my employees?” The answer is always yes. And that’s because recognition always works when you have consistency and a great strategy behind it.

In the model of Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, right above the basic necessities like food and shelter are psychological needs, which include belongingness and esteem.

Belongingness and esteem can include things like developing personal relationships and finding a sense of purpose and/or accomplishments. What this shows us is that as humans, we’ve actually evolved to need these things to survive. Recognition fulfills this fundamental need in all of us, which is why it’s critical to have it in all aspects of our lives—including at work.

With all that said, you might be asking “How do I build a recognition strategy that is truly impactful and reaches its full potential?” The next section outlines key strategies and tips for building a recognition program that always works in the workplace.



Maslow's hierarchy of needs

Unlocking the power of peer-to-peer recognition

4 tips for making recognition impactful

Timely

While it’s fresh in everyone’s minds

Specific

Tell a mini story

Frequent

Because people forget quickly

Core values

Make it meaningful to the receiver

Traditionally, recognition has been the responsibility of managers and supervisors, who hand out positive feedback as part of formal performance reviews. But recognition doesn’t have to be so formal, nor should it only come from the top down.

That’s the idea behind peer-to-peer feedback, a form of social feedback that democratizes recognition.

This incredibly effective technique empowers everyone—not just managers—to recognize each others’ achievements. It may sound like a small change but it can make a big difference. One study found that peer-to-peer recognition is 35.7% more likely to have a positive impact on financial results than manager-only interactions²⁵.

That’s because peer recognition amplifies the emotional response that people feel when they’re being rewarded; receiving recognition from an entire team increases the frequency and timeliness of the recognition, two of the most important factors in making recognition impactful.

Building a Culture of Recognition where giving recognition – both professionally and personally – is habitual and second nature empowers employees to build more genuine connections and feel a sense of belonging.



Sam James was recognized

Thank you so much for organizing such a fun team bonding event for us! I appreciate all the effort that you put in - from waking up today at the crack of dawn to set up, moderating the event and creating the souvenirs.. unreal! It was loads of fun.



Paul Smith was recognized

Thanks for your patience (yes, you've been awesome!) in continuously working to level up our processes to serve internal teams and customers better. It's always a pleasure to work with you.



Beth Wilson was recognized

It's been a big last few weeks getting all the projects set up. Thank you for all you do to ensure all projects are running smoothly and on time. We couldn't do it without you!



Robert Caldon was recognized

Huge shout out to Robert, he has been an amazing onboarding partner to learn alongside! A lot of great ideas and he is so willing to openly share and have great conversations with.

Challenge: Reframing recognition

Recognition is a great tool to help organizations show their teams what the desired behaviors are. As acknowledged prior, there is a strong argument for focusing on the outcomes of a person's work as opposed to the amount of hours they have input. In alignment with this, organizations should consider ways to reframe the recognitions being given (even when giving a shoutout for extra hours) and move away from harmful language or framing that could lead to increased levels of stress and burnout.

Tips to reframe:

1. Reinforce that success is outcomes-based, not hours worked
2. Focus on how their contribution made you feel and less on the number of extra hours were put in
3. Leadership should reinforce the fact that extra hours is not taken for granted and that it's not a behavior that's necessary to get a promotion or bonus.

Change it up: Rethinking recognition

Recognitions can play a huge role in engaging the whole human in the workplace. Kudos and shoutouts given at work tends to be related to the job - but what if we rethought the idea of workplace recognitions and moved beyond solely focusing on work-related appreciation?

You can recognize a colleague for achieving a goal or a milestone in their personal lives, it could even be something as simple as thanking them for recommending a book or TV show to their colleagues. Whatever it is, the key is to create a space where people can see their team members for the whole humans that they are, and not just as someone who only exists at work.

After all, work is only one facet of our lives; bringing recognitions to a more personal level really helps people feel valued and accepted.



Rebecca John was recognized

Walka Walka! That's what you made time to do this week. You set a weekly personal goal of getting out each day for 15 min walk. Keep it up!



Aaron Tulson was recognized

I appreciate your depth of knowledge and passion for boardgames. Thank you for always - without fail - giving great recommendations from super vague parameters. PS - thanks for keeping an eye out for Azul and letting me know when it was on sale!



Maddie was recognized

A huge thank you to Maddie for sharing her good taste on powerful reading. A book that helped me build a stronger mindset: "Can't hurt me" by David Goggins. Proud to work with people that help us become the best versions of themselves!

Change it up: Rethink rewards

It can be challenging to retain talented employees; approximately 50% of employees are actively looking for a new role, and many are leaving their jobs without a new one lined up²⁶. Feeling unvalued and underappreciated is a frequently cited reason for leaving a job.

Rewards are a great tool that can show employees that they are appreciated, but employers should keep a few things in mind to be sure that their rewards are impactful and meaningful:

1. Understand what employees truly value when it comes to being rewarded - you can always ask!
2. Don't be afraid to think outside the box and away from cash rewards
3. Rewards don't always have to be large and expensive

There's a common misconception that you need to spend big in order for employee rewards to be effective. But in reality, there's no correlation between the size of the reward and the positive impact it has on your employees. Google, for example, found that compensation alone doesn't motivate staff. In fact, the company discovered that cash incentives actually made people less happy while rewards like personalized gifts or experiences were far more effective at motivating its people²⁷. With that said, it's the mere act of giving that's the primary factor in making people feel connected and engaged.

Low cost/no cost reward ideas

1. CEO brings you coffee for a

2. CEO calls your mom

3. Extra day off

4. VIP Parking
5. Pie your boss in the face

6. 4pm Fridays (or half day Fridays)

7. Lunch with C-Suite

8. Manager/colleague washes your car

The right rewards will not just make your company stand out among your competitors—it shows your employees that you are invested in their interests and well-being and that such an investment is an overall goal of your company.

Consider the power of experiential rewards

Experiential rewards are a great example of a memorable non-cash incentive that can acknowledge the whole human, especially if they're used to help employees achieve lifelong dreams and ambitions.

At Bucketlist Rewards, we offer every employee with an annual Bucketlist Benefit; \$500 towards knocking things off your own bucket list. One of our core values is to “Achieve Life Goals”, so this employee perk is a great way to reward the team while staying true to company values. Flexibility, personalization, and the ability to share experiences with loved ones makes this particular reward even more meaningful. Here are some ways people have used their Bucketlist Benefit:

Mike’s Bucketlist Item: Steam Train Ride with Dad

Mike organized a trip for his father out to Kelowna, BC, and surprised his dad with a ride on the Kettle Valley Steam train in Summerland BC.

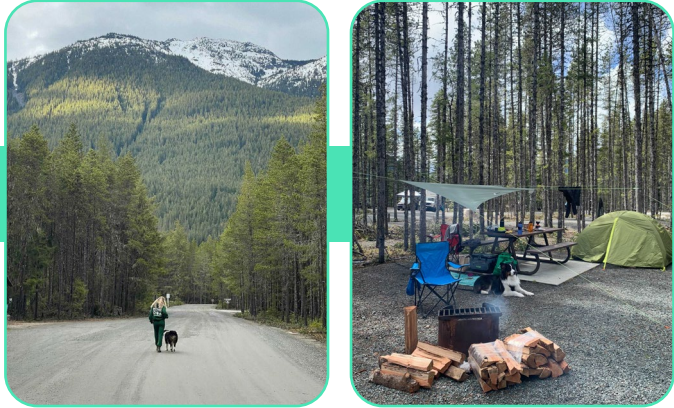


“When I first started with Bucketlist, I was inspired by the Bucketlist Benefit to make my personal bucket list and started dreaming about how I would achieve these goals. The obvious item for me to focus on was the one involving my father—he is not getting any younger! It was an emotional trip and so special that we were able to include the grandchildren and pass on my father’s passion for trains to another generation. I don’t think any of us will ever forget our shared experience!”
—Mike Rowling

Maddie’s Bucketlist Item: Camping in BC

Maddie is an avid outdoorist and one of her bucket list items was to check off as many camping spots around BC as possible, including overnight hiking. With that in mind, she knew she needed to upgrade some of her gear to ensure it was easily packable and lightweight for those long hikes! She used her Bucketlist Benefit to upgrade her camping gear.

“It’s always been really important to me to find a company that values & encourages passions outside of work, so it’s super meaningful to me that Bucketlist not only encourages this but takes it one step further to help make these dreams come true”
—Madeline Wilson



Leveraging awards to incentivize desired behavior

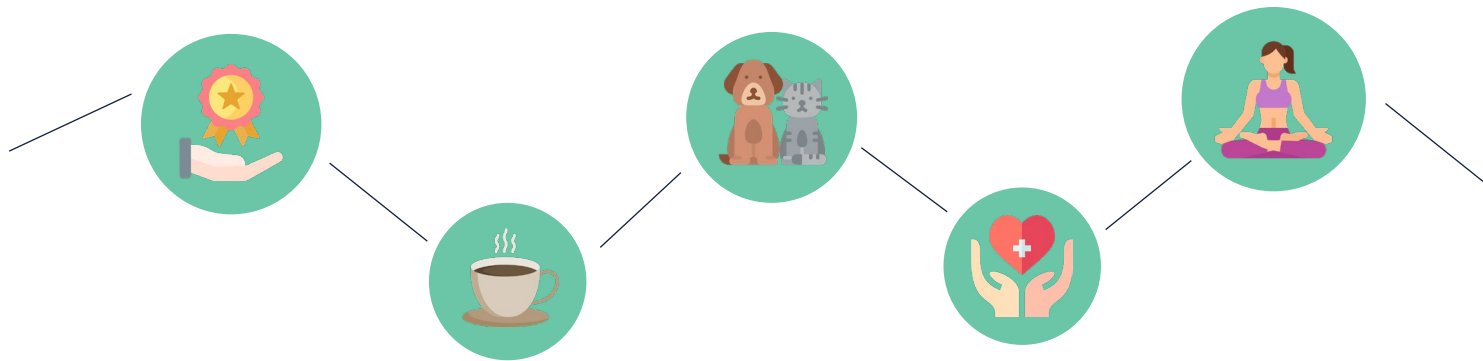
Performance-based awards can be a fun add-on to your recognition program as it rewards the behaviors that matter most to your organization and reinforce company culture.

- used her Bucketlist Benefit to upgrade her camping gear.
- Shift hero award
 - Safety award
 - Patient care award
 - Shooting star award: recognizing someone who has grown personally as a leader
 - Completing training modules
 - Demonstrating product knowledge
 - Obtaining referrals
 - Everyday hero: An employee who can always be counted on when help is needed

Along with the performance-based awards, you can also utilize culture-based awards to help reinforce a whole human-centric culture.

Examples:

- Most Peer Recognitions given
- Most Coffee Chats (if you use a platform like Donut, for example)
- Pet-of-the-month awards: Have different themes each quarter and employees send in their best pet photo based on the theme (who doesn't love including furry friends in work fun?)
- Wellness or Philanthropy awards: Recognizes employees for philanthropy competitions and wellness initiatives hosted by the company



Don't be afraid to get creative with these awards and cater them towards the special things that make your organization's culture so great. Promote the behaviors that you want to see more of!

What supporting the whole human means for the future of the employee experience

Whichever tactics you choose to employ, the key to building a workplace culture that supports the whole human is remembering that we are all so much more than just the work that we do. The future of employee experience will be heavily centered around care for all aspects of people's lives, engaging employees through higher trust, opportunities for human connections, a focus on work-life balance, and meaningful recognition.

Work is a large part of people's lives; employees generally spend around 8 hours each workday with their companies. That might be more time with colleagues than family members and friends. Compassion should extend past our teams' work lives; our workplace's impact on employees' personal lives should be considered when making business decisions. In fact, these considerations directly impact the bottom line; the overall business benefits of an engaged employee base are well documented, and include a 23% increase in profitability²⁸.

Four parting thoughts as you look for ways to support the whole human at your organization:

- To ensure that people feel safe and valued, we need to build company cultures that promote trust between both the employers and employees. Beyond trusting that the business is making good decisions and that the job will be done (respectively), a culture of trust should help build openness and transparency in ways that help the team thrive. Employees should be able to trust that in times of personal challenges, employers will show compassion and understanding. And employers should be able to trust that the employee will let them know when they are struggling and ask for support.
- It's important to build relationships based on shared interests outside of work and make sure that "work" isn't the only reason that people are forming connections. By fostering a human-centric culture that supports the whole human, leaders can help to create the kind of strong and genuine connections that people crave.
- Encouraging good work-life balance sends a crystal clear message to employees about what your company values: their whole selves. It allows employees to trust you when you say you're looking out for them, and it gives them the space to focus on actual productivity instead of availability.
- Be creative with the rewards and recognition (R&R) being offered to employees. Cater towards the special things that make your work culture so great! R&R can be reimaged as tools that can be used to not only engage your employees but to tap into their passions and help align employees with your company's goals, purpose, and values.

And of course, building a workplace culture that truly supports the Whole Human relies on listening to your team to understand what kind of processes, tools, and opportunities would support them best.

"Feedback is key! Understand how the team likes to be supported, which initiatives were a success and which were a bit off the mark, and why. It's not a one size fits all so we are constantly listening, evolving and adapting how we do things."
—Katie Wray, People and Culture Senior Manager, Bucketlist

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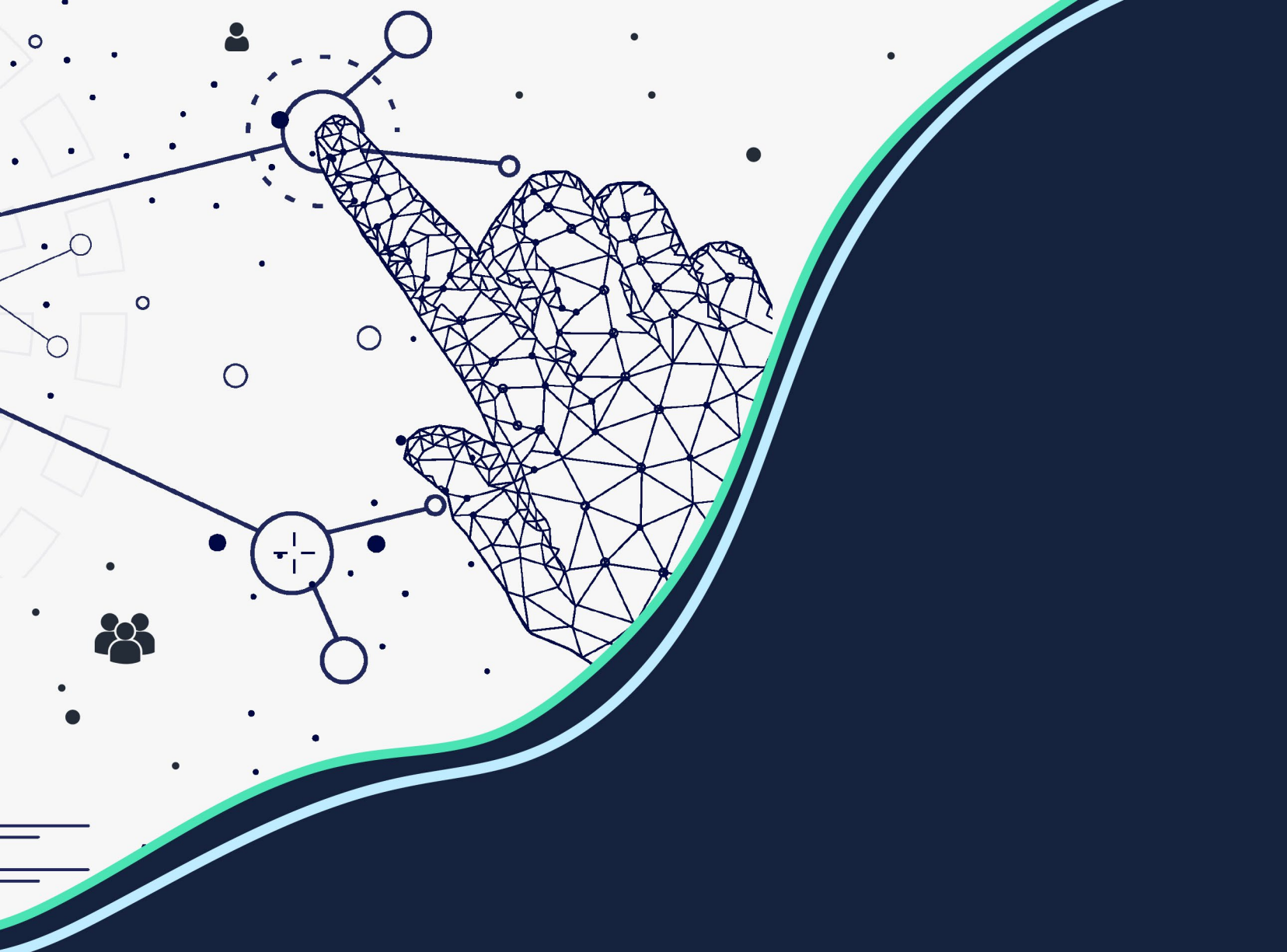
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Bucketlist Rewards is a platform that makes it easy and fun for employees and managers to recognize and reward each other for milestones, achievements, and a job well done and is customizable to suit the needs of any business.

Learn more



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