

Daily Watering: Designing Recognition Programs People Actually Use

Why recognition programs fail, and how to build ones employees actually engage with.



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Culture Works Like a Garden

The Core Idea

Culture doesn't grow from occasional attention. It grows from **daily watering**. Recognition should not be a once-a-year event, it should be a **daily reinforcement of values and behaviors**.



Culture Works Like a Garden

What It Means

This does not mean leaders must personally recognize someone every single day. It means building a program with enough **reach and flexibility** so that every employee, at every level, can participate meaningfully and consistently.



The Problem With Most Recognition Programs

**Annual
Awards**

**Manager-Only
Programs**

**Disconnected
HR Portals**

**Complex
Nominations**

**Low
Visibility**

The Problem With Most Recognition Programs

Annual Awards only

“We see companies invest heavily in annual awards...
But if you ask employees what got recognized last week—they can’t tell you.”

The Problem With Most Recognition Programs

Manager-Only Programs

“If recognition only comes from managers, you’ve limited recognition to ~10% of your workforce.”

The Problem With Most Recognition Programs

Disconnected HR Portals

“If your program requires a login people don’t already use—you’ve already lost most of your engagement.”

The Problem With Most Recognition Programs

Complex Nominations

“The longer it takes to recognize someone, the less likely it happens.”

The Problem With Most Recognition Programs

Low Visibility

“If recognition isn’t visible, it doesn’t reinforce anything—it just disappears.”

The bottom line:

If recognition requires too much effort or extra steps, most employees simply won't do it.





The Workplace Reality

Today's workforce looks very different, and recognition programs must work for **everyone**. A one-size-fits-all approach rarely succeeds across such varied environments.



Healthcare Teams

Balancing demanding clinical responsibilities alongside operational and administrative roles.



Remote & Global Teams

Working across multiple time zones, locations, and cultures with limited face-to-face interaction.



Frontline Workers

Without regular access to computers or email, making digital-first programs largely invisible.



Shift-Based Environments

Employees experiencing work on completely different schedules, rarely overlapping with headquarters.





Example:

Healthcare Environments

Effective recognition programs for healthcare are built on four pillars:



Mobile First

Accessible on any device, anytime.



Immediate

Recognition in the moment it happens.



Accessibility is Key

No extra logins or complicated access.



Simple

Takes seconds, not minutes.



Example:

Fully Remote Global Teams

Effective recognition programs for remote global teams are built on four pillars:



Social & Engaging

Drives connection through likes, comments, and shared recognition moments.



Global Rewards

Deliver meaningful rewards anywhere in the world, across all regions.



Integrated Everywhere

Embedded into tools teams already use—Slack, Teams, email, and more.



Live Insights → Action

Real-time data and reporting to drive immediate, informed decisions.

Recognition Must Enter Through the Front Door

Recognition must live **where employees already work**. If it isn't part of the natural flow of work, it won't become a habit, no matter how well-designed the program is.

✓ Front Door (Where employees live)

- Microsoft Teams & Slack integrations
- Mobile apps accessible anywhere
- Daily workflows and task tools
- Digital displays in physical spaces
- Company intranet and social feeds

🚪 Back Door (Where programs lose traction)

- Standalone HR portals
- Annual award ceremonies only
- Complex platforms employees rarely visit
- Systems requiring separate credentials

The Daily Watering Framework

Recognition programs people *actually use* are built on four interconnected principles. When all four are present, participation increases dramatically and culture begins to shift.

Easy

Takes only seconds to recognize someone. Zero friction, zero complexity.



Frequent

Happens weekly or even daily — not just at annual milestones.



Social

Peers recognize each other, creating a culture of mutual appreciation.



In the Flow of Work

Recognition happens inside the tools employees already use every day.



Culture grows through daily watering.

The Key Takeaway

Recognition should not be an event. It should be a **habit**. If your program isn't easy, frequent, and embedded in the flow of work, employees simply won't use it.



Your Recognition Checklist

- ☒ Is recognition accessible where employees already work?
- ☒ Can any employee, not just managers, participate?
- ☒ Does it take seconds, not minutes?
- ☒ Is great work visible to the whole team?
- ☒ Does it happen daily, not just annually?



Thank you!