

# Why companies **should focus on employee appreciation** right now



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Whether companies are experiencing a positive or negative impact due to the pandemic, one thing is certain: employees in both situations are working diligently.

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They are either trying to keep up with extra demand or pivoting to do what it takes for their company to stay in business. Both scenarios can lead to frustration and burnout, which is why it's important to maintain focus on your employees and recognize them for their efforts.

In BI WORLDWIDE®'s 2020 benchmark study on the **New Rules of Engagement®**, one important finding showed that employee recognition is key to driving commitment to the organization. This rule, known as **magnify their success**, explains that what a company recognizes gets repeated. This was the top predictor of the commitment level of salespeople. As they are primary revenue drivers for a business, it's critical they stay and help recover sales for organizations that may have experienced a slowdown through the pandemic.

This same rule, **magnify their success**, was also one of the top rules correlated to commitment and inspiration for low-wage earners (people who make two-thirds or less of the median US income). Many essential workers fall into this category. Again, they should be recognized for their efforts if their employer would like to see them continue to perform.

Employee recognition also has a significant impact on a person's willingness to work hard for their company. 51% of employees who agree they have a thankless job say they work hard, compared to 72% of those who disagree with that statement. Whether recovering from a business recession or working harder to manage increased volume during this time, employees who are appreciated show commitment and dedication in their workplace.

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How are companies recognizing and rewarding employees?  
Here are some examples.

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## Recognizing **essential workers**

Recently, a construction materials manufacturer wanted to express their thanks and appreciation to 6,000+ employees who worked tirelessly through the pandemic. These were front line, hourly workers in factories and warehouses who went to work every day despite the stay-at-home mandate. Each plant employee was given a Carhartt® gear bag that included an ID tag to help with both personalization and identification. The bag contents included items to enjoy outside of work – a picnic blanket,



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a waterproof Bluetooth speaker and insulated drinkware, all branded with the client's logo. Recognizing these essential workers with something meaningful and useful helped to relay the company's appreciation for doing the extra work that was needed.



## Recognizing remote workers

Many employees have experienced a drastic change in terms of where they spend their time, including the major shift towards working from home. Companies have started offering employee award items for home office spaces and leisure time at home. One food and beverage company with over 10,000 employees moved to a full work-from-home model. They created a new program where managers were able to recognize their employees for a variety of behaviors and reward them with a choice from a 'Home Life' gift collection. Employees used their points for home enhancements from coffee makers to office chairs to televisions.



## Recognizing incentive travel awards

Another shift came with the necessary cancellation of incentive travel programs. Top performers worked hard to achieve their sales goals, motivated by the opportunity to earn trips to places like Kauai, Paris and Australia. Companies needed a way to replace those once-in-a-lifetime experiences with something equally as meaningful.

One organization chose to send a series of communications elements to their achievers, starting with a special message from the company's top management. The communications were designed to create buzz and anticipation about what the trip replacement might be. Even though this was a last-minute pivot, it still needed a high recognition value.

The awards were announced and each winner received a custom-designed kit in a carefully-timed mailing that arrived on the same day as the announcement. The kit contained a crystal award (that would have been delivered at their live recognition event), packaged in a way that corresponded with their achievement level, and a letter from the CEO announcing they would receive points to use for extensive merchandise options and experiences. The recipients enjoyed choosing their reward from options like designer jewelry, a kitchen makeover or a personalized family vacation.



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## Employee appreciation ideas

Consider these impactful ways to show your appreciation:

### 1. Take advantage of technology but make it personal.

You can broadcast your thanks to everyone on a call but follow it up with a personal thank you. This could be in the form of a written note, email or phone call. Reach out in relevant ways.

### 2. Build brand loyalty by giving your employees a gift that is an extension of your company.

For example, if they are online all day on calls, ear buds with the company logo might be appreciated and used not only during the workday but also on a walk they take during a break.

### 3. Mix it up and offer your employees choices.

If you have a diverse employee base, a one-size-fits-all recognition option might backfire. Providing choices will be better received and feel more personal.

### 4. Think beyond one-time, one-scenario acts of appreciation.

You can never go wrong recognizing your employees too often.

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In stressful times, and anytime, showing employee appreciation goes a long way.

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