



# Recognize now:

## Why a timely **thank you** is the currency of smart business

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Think about the last time you led a successful presentation. Your research was revealing, your solution was solid and your close was captivating. On the way out of the room, your coworker pulled you aside and said, "They loved that. Great job."

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"Yeah, that was a great job," you think. Come to think of it, that deck was defectless, the delivery dynamic and at the end, all jaws were ajar. When your coworker pulled you aside, it initiated the dopamine effect in your brain and elevated your recognition of a job well-done.

Now, imagine your coworker didn't say anything on the way out of the room but the next morning, you received an email from her: **Hey, great job yesterday!**

Your coworker said the same thing in both instances so why didn't the second one feel quite as good as the first?

In behavioral economics there is a principle called the **immediacy effect** or **hyperbolic discounting**—given two similar rewards, humans show a preference for one that arrives sooner rather than later. In fact, our brains discount a small reward **exponentially** with even a few hours of delayed gratification.

To maximize the impact of employee recognition, we need to be immediate. Here are three tips to recognize your team in the moment:

### 1. Have an **infrastructure** in place.

According to our most recent New Rules of Engagement® survey data, those who received recognition in writing were twice as likely to feel inspired – but only 23% of employees received written recognition in the past month.

Make sure your recognition is easy to deploy at a moment's notice or it will slide through the cracks. An email is nice but to elevate your recognition, use your company's recognition platform or bookmark [appreciate.biworldwide.com](https://appreciate.biworldwide.com). Adding a visual makes it a more vivid, memorable communication piece. And if you can tie the behavior you're recognizing to your company's values, it's even better.

### 2. Take notes.

Part of successful recognition is proactively setting yourself up to give praise. Leave a section in your meeting notes to jot down team wins on the spot. Not only is specific, immediate feedback better for the person receiving it, you'll also become a better coach.



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### 3. Send that message **right after you close the video call.**

When you hang up that Zoom call, before you stand up to refill your coffee, take two minutes to fire off your recognition. In an environment where we can't always pull someone aside on the way out of a conference room, getting an inbox notification while the events of the last 50 minutes are still fresh in our mind triggers similar chemical processes.

Over our years of research and client work, we have found that even the simplest types of recognition are beneficial and there is not a single example of meaningful recognition being given too often. We also know recognition is received best when it is delivered in writing, accompanied by a reward and explains how the recipient made a difference. Individuals who received recognition in this way showed the greatest intent to stay and work hard for their organizations.



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