Recognition in Real Time Leads to Participation and Engagement
BACKGROUND

When a leading global accounting and professional services firm wanted to improve an already high standard of employee engagement, satisfaction and retention, they turned to Hallmark Business Connections for a recognition solution that could meet their rapidly growing needs.

Having been named one of Fortune magazine “100 Best Companies to Work For” ten years in a row, they clearly understood the role recognition played in attracting, developing and retaining top-tier talent. But being a complex, matrix organization of 40,000 with a large millennial workforce and many employees working in remote locations, they realized they had outgrown their existing recognition program.

• Because their system required submitting a formal request to an administrator, the organization required a recognition platform that would allow leaders and managers to recognize employees directly with monetary awards.

• To maximize reinforcement of the right behaviors, they looked for a tight turnaround in award delivery. Their old system could take weeks, and by that point the moment lost the desired impact.

• In their fast-paced, client-focused, project-driven environment, they needed a recognition program that would be close at hand in order to keep it top of mind.

• Their current employee recognition solution relied on American Express® paper checks, which they found were not particularly memorable or emotionally satisfying.
It was easy to see that the client’s existing recognition program lacked administrative ease, urgency and employee appeal. It also suffered from inconsistent use by managers across the client’s four major lines of business. In short, their program failed to create an exciting and memorable experience.

Tasked with that challenge, Hallmark Business Connections provided strategic consulting and the technology to deliver recognition in a real time solution that was both easy to use and easy to access.

The HBC solution resulted in:

- Managers given individual budgets, streamlining the process since approvals were no longer needed.
- A fully branded recognition experience that reinforces the company’s values at every step.
- An easy-to-use mobile solution for personalizing, presenting and redeeming awards.
- Increased flexibility and tracking for improved reporting and analytics.
- Greater measurement, security and control.
- Faster delivery of awards for more impact and memorability.
- An easy-to-personalize award that lets the recognizer celebrate the recipient and send a message that ties to corporate objectives.
- A printable award certificate option for in-person presentations.
- A wide award selection with choices that appeal to all employees.
- Peer-to-peer nonmonetary recognition (one of the most popular features).
- Centralized reporting that clearly communicates where and how recognition was being used across the organization.
- Quarterly reviews to evaluate performance along with insights for improving participation and benefits.
RESULTS

Within the first year of usage, participation was measured at 70% of employees receiving and sending awards, equating to 70,000 recognition connections.

Because Hallmark’s recognition platform is built on the ability to add personalized messages to the award certificate, staff felt more connected to each other, making for improved teamwork and collaboration. Award messages like these tell the story:

"Thank you for the extraordinary support you provided in the short time you were with us! You clearly set the bar for effective project management, and we truly appreciate the support you have provided me and the HR team—great job! Thanks!"

"Thanks for covering for a team member who was recently out on vacation. You did a great job being available at all hours of the day to participate in daily activities as well as after-hours deployments. Your efforts are valued."

"Just a token to recognize the great work on our project. It was complex and unusual and required agility and intelligence—both of which you demonstrated and handled with great ease. Thank you."
Less than six months later, an engagement survey showed an uptick in the answers to both of these questions:

- “I am recognized in a way that motivates me.”
- “The people I work for recognize and celebrate performance.”

This positive trend was all good news when the company considered talent management and staff retention. In fact, the company has found this program so integral to their culture, it’s a touted benefit in the recruitment of new employees.

The program was introduced and promoted internally via videos, intranet and meetings. At the end of the first year, the client experienced increases in employee reach, recognition participation, recipient award frequency, monetary award budget usage and more.

WHY IT WORKS

Employee recognition requires emotional impact. That’s true not only for recipients but senders as well. Because recognizers can personalize the award with specific details and in their own words, the praise goes far beyond any plaque or payroll deposit. Personalized award certificates give people the chance to be people, to sound real, to be authentic, genuine and sincere... something that carries more meaning in the millennial mind. When the award is given by a manager, employees feel great that their work got noticed and appreciated. When the award comes from a peer, employees know it came from someone who sees their talents on a daily basis and understood how much effort the work took.

A great recognition program has functional ease for both users and administrators. Because employees had access to the program no matter where they were working (in the office, at a client’s location or at home) and the simple, intuitive interface was available on computers, tablets or smart phones, it kept the program top of mind and close at hand.

As for administrators, Hallmark Business Connections helped get the program off the ground and continue to keep employees excited about it and key stakeholders informed of the momentum being built across the organization. With reports, data and analytics now at managers’ fingertips, they are able to mark progress and track ROI.
When it comes to the right incentives, Hallmark’s recognition solution offers the power of choice. Our form of monetary awards aren’t just money that can go unnoticed and unappreciated in paychecks, our incentives create experiences—experiences that get remembered, especially by millennials who have shown a marked preference for gift cards.

While the recognizer gets to choose an amount from a set budget, the recipient gets to choose one or more gift cards from hundreds of major, national-brand retailers and restaurants, travel and entertainment providers.

Hallmark Business Connections ensures fast fulfillment. Orders placed for physical, printed gift cards received by 2 p.m. are sent out the same day. E-gift cards are sent within the hour. We believe that instant gratification reinforces and increases the connection between the gift card and the award itself.

Plus, the trophy value of the rewards is proudly displayed and recounted to others. All those good feelings get reflected back to the company and connect the value of employees’ efforts to increased engagement on the job.

Hallmark Business Connections created a successful enterprise-wide, employee recognition solution that enhanced efficiency and usage while increasing employee engagement and satisfaction. To date, the program is still in place and delivering outstanding results.

Contact Us

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Contact us at sales@hallmarkbusinessconnections.com or visit us at HallmarkBusinessConnections.com