



# It's Time to Rethink Managing Recognition Programs Internally

*By Ben Levenbaum, CEO Xceleration*

As the days of working from home have transitioned to weeks and now months, the effectiveness of our business processes is being scrutinized more than ever. While the management of certain programs transition seamlessly, others where technology and automation have not been optimized have started to stand out for their inefficiencies. Employees are learning which aspects of their job can survive, which can thrive, and others that fall into the category of “when we get back to the office, we need to fix this.”

In their Industry Outlook for 2020, the Incentive Research Foundation estimated more than 60% of companies were managing some portion of their Employee Recognition program in-house.

If you are one of the thousands of companies supporting employee recognition through a fragmented system of spreadsheets, discretionary gift card purchases, and unappealing gift catalogs – it may be time to focus on the effectiveness of your program and options to improve it.

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*Among the many impacts of COVID-19 will be a renewed focus on updating and automating manual business processes. Central to this discussion will be a review of what your teams are managing in house, asking the question “is there a better way to do this?”*

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## Should Employee Recognition be a “DIY” Project?

Home Depot is crowded every weekend for a reason; we all have a list of Do-it-Yourself projects to tackle. **But there is always a point, or at least there should be, when you make the decision that the effort, cost or expected result requires professional assistance.** When it comes to the engagement of your employees, the lifeline of your company, many HR executives are realizing that time is now.



Driven by the impact of COVID-19, many executives are now placing a greater value on the need to maintain an agile employee engagement strategy that can seamlessly adapt to changing work environments. Making the decision to develop a single corporate recognition philosophy sends the message to your employees that you are one team. Investing in outsourcing employee recognition to a provider with the experience and tools to automate your program, sends the message that you are serious about fostering a Culture of Recognition™ to positively impact engagement.

## To Efficiently Manage Employee Recognition, your Program Should Include:

1. **An automated system** to communicate, manage and integrate multiple recognition programs across your enterprise.
2. **A unique recognition experience for each employee**, based on their office location (domestic or global), job function, title, and specific role in driving a Culture of Recognition™ at your company.
3. A reward solution unique to your employee demographic, with a variety of options across digital rewards, merchandise, travel, experiences, and charitable donations to **ensure you can motivate each and every member of your multi-generational workforce.**
4. **Reporting with real-time data that you can analyze to understand how employees are treating recognition**, and quickly identify opportunities to optimize engagement.

A solution that can produce each of the items above will provide you with access to turn the right dials to adjust your strategy. The cherry on top is finding a valued recognition partner that can help you implement, manage, and tweak your strategy based on their experience.

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## Finding the Right Partner

When considering outsourcing your employee recognition program, you will be surprised at how the industry has evolved. There are dozens of companies now focused on SMB if you want to dip your toe in the water and focus on one type of recognition. If you're looking for an enterprise solution that aligns manager and peer recognition, team awards, service anniversaries, workplace safety, call center incentives (the list goes on...) you will discover significant advancements in technology and the overall value proposition partners can deliver.

Most importantly, there has been an industry-wide shift to ensuring that clients are getting more than SaaS technology. Agencies are now partnering with clients to provide valuable expertise to help shape and continually adapt recognition strategies to align with their business challenges. To best optimize your recognition and engagement strategy, look for a recognition agency that best fits your culture. Someone, first of all, who checks the boxes above, but almost equally important, someone who you make a connection with. Consider:

- ② *Who is going to become an extension of your team?*
- ② *Who wants to sit at the table with you and understand your culture, help evolve your strategy, and be there to continually tweak it?*
- ② *Who wants to be your partner, not just a vendor?*

## Now is the Time for Consistent, Equitable, and Visible Recognition!

Getting back into the office is going to be significantly more difficult than it was to leave it. If you're finding that managing your employee recognition program is inefficient and ripe for an overhaul, now is the perfect time to take a look at your options. There is simply no reason you should be struggling to do this on your own. I am sure there are plenty of other DIY projects you can tackle.



**Ben Levenbaum is CEO of Xceleration**, an industry-leading provider of global reward solutions that create a Culture of Recognition™ and Engagement across diverse employee populations.