



## Leveraging Recognition and Feedback to Boost Employee Engagement



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Employee engagement is an ongoing issue. What can we do to effectively engage employees? Start with recognition and feedback. According to Aptitude Research Partners, companies identified recognition as having the greatest impact on engagement. And it doesn't stop at recognition. Go the extra mile with employee feedback, pulse data and personalized actions in real-time to immediately address any disengagement. Dr. Natalie Baumgartner, Chief Workforce Scientist for Achievers, shares how to effectively leverage recognition and feedback to boost engagement across your organization.

**Q: Why is employee feedback software a need-to-have, and not a nice-to-have?**

**A:** Employee feedback software is a need-to-have because it's the best way for us to keep our finger on the pulse of engagement. Historically, we have thought of engagement as a survey exercise, but in this new era of engagement it has become clear that we need to focus on asking for and receiving feedback - and, most importantly, responding to it. Each of us as employees are exceptionally unique, which is why it is so critical that we offer employees different ways to provide feedback. Using a combination of modalities allows us to gather continuous feedback and valuable data that can be collected and then translated into actions that truly support employees.

**Q: Why should organizations offer recognition and rewards?**

**A:** Key analysts, including Josh Bersin, have long advocated recognition as a powerful engagement tool. Our research highlighting recognition as a massive driver of business performance supports the critical role that recognition plays within organizations. Research has demonstrated that engagement measurement can not just happen twice a year - and neither can recognition. Recognition needs to be a fluid, frequent activity that

is built into the flow of work for every employee. In order for that to happen, we need to make it easy and engaging for employees to regularly recognize another, whether it's manager to employee or peer to peer. Recognition is an indispensable tool that can effectively improve not only engagement specifically but also culture, more broadly. Impacting culture can be a challenging process but using a program that ties recognitions to company values makes it easier to effectively strengthen culture alignment.

**Q: How can organizations leverage data to improve the employee experience?**

**A:** Data is the most powerful tool you have to make informed decisions that improve the employee experience. Historically, organizations have typically gathered engagement data using traditional tools such as annual surveys that include numerous questions. We now know that engagement is exceptionally fluid and that moving the engagement needle requires real-time action. When it comes to impacting engagement, you need right-sized data in real-time. It is important to shift from launching long annual surveys to pulse and always-on measurement systems that gather engagement feedback on a more frequent basis - from every quarter to every week. Gathering feedback on a regular basis ensures that

leadership has in-the-moment data they can act on.

**Q: Where is the future of employee engagement heading?**

**A:** If you are an HR professional, you are most likely the one responsible for impacting engagement. Yet, who's more motivated to impact engagement than the employees themselves? I believe that, in the future, engagement will no longer be owned by leadership - but, rather, it will be owned by the employee. Typically when engagement survey data is gathered it either never makes it to the employee or, if it does, it's in the form of rich but complex action plans. In fact, even the more modern engagement technologies that provide libraries of solutions don't offer the necessary real-time actions that actually move the needle on engagement. Research tells us that most engagement issues are on the smaller scale, whether it's a lack of professional development or the office atmosphere. These are the type of issues that technology can help with by delivering bite-sized, personalized actions to employees that they can use to own the solution to the challenges they're encountering, resulting in faster outcomes.