



## Case Study: How One Healthcare Company Lowered Hospital Readmission Rates with a Great Workplace Culture



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Ohio Living

The healthcare industry is tough. Between the long hours, sick patients, and life or death situations, it's no surprise that organizational culture sometimes takes a backseat. However, Ohio Living has found a solution to overcome these industry obstacles by creating an employee-first culture through world-class employee recognition. The result? Some of the best reviews in the industry, and most importantly, healthier patients and happy employees.

Dana Ullom-Vucelich, Chief Human Resources & Ethics Officer at Ohio Living, helped revolutionize her workplace culture by implementing an employee recognition solution from O.C. Tanner. The program has fostered a great workplace culture where day-to-day employee accomplishments and major career contributions are celebrated. Ohio Living's return on investment was extraordinary.

### **Q** How did having a great culture directly influence lower patient readmission rates?

**A** Our people made it happen. We focus on 4 main pillars: expansion of services, strengthening the business, proactively exploring new partnerships, and improving profitability/margin performance. We can't make any one of those pillars come to life without our people, and it's my job to highlight this as an internal priority. The number one way we do this is through our recognition program. People work here because they want to. They want to make a difference in the lives of the seniors and other customers we serve. So it's up to us as leadership to connect their intrinsic motivation with Ohio Living's mission and purpose. That effort begins and ends with appreciation, accountability, and recognition. When recognition is done right, it makes work more fun and meaningful, and it helps success come more easily, which leads to more confident and fulfilled employees and increases the satisfaction of the people we serve.

Thanks to this we currently have the highest quality outcomes in the history of our organization. Ohio Living has more 5-star

ratings than ever before. We're seeing fewer infections and we have one of the lowest readmission rates in the state.

### **Q** How did you get employees to buy into the culture?

**A** Foremost our aim is to attract great people. Once onboard, we offer our orientation "Lead Ohio Living" of which one full day is committed to our culture, which includes how we collectively respect, value, and appreciate one another. For managers, this happens at headquarters and for our forward-facing employees, it happens at their assigned locations. I can't tell you how many times people have told me that we didn't just talk about having a recognition culture, we showed them what one feels like. We hire people for their instinctive talent, but they succeed at their jobs by using the skills and tools we offer, and we feel one of the most compelling tools our leaders have is how to recognize and appreciate great performance.

### **Q** Did this change make Ohio Living a more attractive place to work?

**A** Yes. Our workplace culture is definitely one of our biggest

differentiators. People work here because they believe in our mission and culture. It's up to us to ensure that culture is sustainable. By having effective recognition solutions in place, we are able to encourage people to align with our mission while demonstrating their own unique work ethic and passion.

### **Q** What advice would you give other CHROs looking to create a great workplace culture?

**A** Never short change your commitment and resources in the area of employee investment. Period. You must train. You must educate. You must recognize and invest in your people. Unfortunately, this is usually the first area companies chose to cut costs. Based on the research I've done, the companies that invest in their employees are the ones that end up growing financially and succeeding. Every time we have invested in our employee workforce, we see results. When we build upon and invest in talent it serves our mission and each of our business outcomes improve - and in the meantime, we retain great people sustaining this great culture.



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