

A young woman with long dark hair, wearing a bright yellow ribbed sweater, is sitting at a desk with a laptop. She has her eyes closed and a wide smile, with her fists clenched in a celebratory gesture. The background is a bright, modern office space with large windows and indoor plants.

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION IN AN EVOLVING WORKPLACE

INCORPORATING A DIGITAL-READY RECOGNITION STRATEGY AS ORGANISATIONS SHIFT TO A HYBRID WORKFORCE

The notion of 'work' and 'workspace' is firmly being considered hybrid today across most organisations, even as many had begun to take to the change before the global pandemic. A lot of employers who hadn't seriously considered remote working were forced to enable the WFH culture for their employees. In the given scenario, recognising employees for work done and their contributions has become a crucial issue that will need to be addressed differently by organisations. Many workers are demotivated, dealing with their own personal crises, or too anxious owing to the pandemic. At such a time, rewards and recognition prove to play a pivotal role in motivating them.

Pooja Lal, Director Product & Consulting, Engagement Solutions, BI WORLDWIDE along with **Paromita Roy, Head Total Rewards, Tata Steel** and **Deepak Dobriyal Sr. Vice President, Global Leader Talent Management and Corporate HR, BIRLASOFT** discuss the ever-evolving hybrid workforce and share their personal insights regarding rewards and recognition programs that boosted employee confidence within their respective organisations.

RECOGNISING EVERY EMPLOYEE SEGMENT TO DRIVE ENGAGEMENT

UNDERSTANDING THE HYBRID CULTURE AND THE EVOLVING RECOGNITION FRAMEWORK

By Pooja Lal, Director Product & Consulting, Engagement Solutions, BI WORLDWIDE

Recognition for the hybrid workforce

A hybrid workforce has many connotations which goes beyond talking to clients and work-ing with employees. It includes so many more people, encompassing gig workers, flexi-time employees, contractors, office goers, factory workers, retail workers, those who work on the go, Gen-Z, Baby Boomers, and more. To add to it there are different industries and every individual personality to deal with, owing to which one size no longer fits all. We need a new recognition strategy and recognition design.



Pooja Lal

Director Product & Consulting,
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Learnings from the hybrid culture

Today, 95% of the workforce is at home and the current business model allows companies to tap into a larger talent pool. I also heard of a company that is hiring interns from anywhere in the world, which was something unheard of eight months ago. All of this has completely changed the definition of 'employee' and 'workforce'.

Goals and culture: The first aspect of change is how organisations address their goals and culture.

ORGANISATIONS ARE MOVING AWAY FROM THE PERFORMANCE DRIVEN CULTURE INTO INNOVATION AND COLLABORATION, WHICH IS MORE RELATIONSHIP FOCUSED.

Companies now have to think about how to stay relevant in these times, compared to what they were a year ago. At BI WORLDWIDE we are passionate believers of the science of behavioural economics and the fact that 77% of any behaviour change or decision making is driven by emotion. In the last 8 months we have seen this truly amplified and get more emotional - emotions of caution, job insecurity and confusion.

Empathy: The second aspect is the real shift in expectations and the need for people leaders and employees, and the people skills they bring. Thought-leader Dr. Brad Shuck talks a lot about psychological safety and compassion, and how it plays a huge role in the recognition journey. We see that people managers, leaders, peers, employees, everyone needs to have a little more empathy and care for their peers and co-workers.

Human Connect: Another aspect is feedback and connect - we all miss the face-to-face feedback and the live interactions we enjoyed in an office space.

While recognition and rewards being implemented are great, the flip side to it is the over-recognising now, without the emotional connect, which employees sometimes find hollow.

WE MUST BE CAREFUL HOW PEOPLE LEADERS AND EMPLOYEES ARE RECOGNISING EACH OTHER AND MAKING AN EFFORT TO KEEP IT RELEVANT AND MEANINGFUL.

Digital Transition

Given the scenario, we see that organisations are exploring many digital options and trying to create engaging experiences for the employees, making sure they are celebrated right. Every platform of interaction is now accepted. The manager-employee relationship is now deeper with more empathy involved.

Traditional Recognition Framework

We need to make sure that every element of the recognition framework is well captured. It makes up the employee experience because the organisation begins to care for them, holistically.

As the framework evolves, we need to add in elements like Moments to make sure there is a personal touch to the recognition experience in every phase.

EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE

HYBRID	Generation	Remote/Office /Factory	Diversity	Flexi Time Gig/ Contractors	Personality/ Personal Situation
FREQUENCY	Annual	Quarterly	Monthly	Occasional	Frequent
TYPE	Formal	Semi formal	Informal	Personal	Instant
RESULT	Drives Achievement	Drives Focus	Drives Results	Drives Relationship	Reinforces core values
METHOD	Online	Mobile	Virtual	Face to Face	Personal
REACH	Peer 2 Peer	Cross Functional	Cross Hierarchy	Customers	Home/Family
MOMENTS	On-boarding Early recognition	Success, Sales Goals, Promotions	Support, Feedback	Personal Goals @ Work	Personal Milestones

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Work from anywhere, recognise anywhere

Make sure you cover the checklist below to improve manager-employee or employee-employee bonding.

- ✓ Every interaction counts
- ✓ Make it personal
- ✓ Make it genuine and authentic
- ✓ Check-in on your employees
- ✓ Send a gift/flowers
- ✓ Initiate conversations
- ✓ Host virtual chats and events
- ✓ Engage in virtual games
- ✓ Be mindful of spectator recognition and impact
- ✓ Set personal milestones
- ✓ Instant recognition, everywhere

ALIGNING RECOGNITION PRACTICES WITH MULTI-GENERATIONS

DEFINING THE HYBRID WORKFORCE AND ITS PERSPECTIVE ACROSS EMPLOYEE SEGMENTS

By Deepak Dobriyal, Sr. Vice President, Global Leader Talent Management and Corporate HR, BIRLASOFT

The long and short of it

Belonging to the tech world, we have always had people across geographies, but working remotely has changed the whole dynamic. While some are at their location, others are working from client offices, or on the go; therefore, whatever we had designed earlier partially catered to the change. **In the near future, we will have to look not only at multi-location but multi-generations too, as Baby Boomers retire, millennials take over, and Gen-Z joins in.** Therefore, how we engage with them will be very different. Our work and recognition practices have to be aligned with theirs. COVID has put to rest the work from home possibility debate as multi-dimensional work culture has become a reality. Many companies have even declared a permanent work from home culture while managing collaborations with global team members.

TODAY, RECOGNITION ISN'T A TROPHY OR A CERTIFICATE BUT MORE INCLINED TOWARDS EMPATHY, CARE, DEMONSTRATING ACTIVELY AND NOT MECHANICALLY.

Embracing the change

Recognition for respective teams has proved to be a myth in recent times. Having a bureaucratic system wherein you need a lot of approvals on your recognition system takes away from its spirit. At BirlaSoft, we have simplified the process so that managers can recognise anyone in the company without any boundaries. We moved beyond it being only for work, thereby creating a holistic culture of appreciation. Organisations need to understand that recognition can't be measured, but engagement can, especially if you have an AI system in place that monitors it real-time. The role of managers isn't only to manage work, but to manage employees and



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engage them, which is why they need to go beyond managing, and develop tools to keep them engaged.

CULTURE CHANGE IS A JOURNEY

A culture shift needs to begin with leadership

Within our recognition program, we incorporated a campaign called the Power of Recognition to ensure leaders are duly appreciated. We need to have a system driven by leadership to keep employees motivated. Manager Capability Building Programs also need to be an important part of the toolkit. If managers help the team become successful, they become successful managers. It's time managers focused on inducting the team into a culture of appreciation, gamifying the whole experience and linking it to recognition for 360° success.

RISE UP TO THE RECOGNITION FRAMEWORK OF THE FUTURE

INCORPORATING TECHNOLOGY TO DRIVE EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

By Paromita Roy, Head Total Rewards, Tata Steel

“Being a manufacturing company, Tata Steel wasn't driven towards working from home but over the years we have begun to see a shift and the lockdown mandated it further. As 70% of our employees worked from home, we needed to make an overnight shift.

BEING A MULTI-GENERATION ORGANISATION, THE ACCEPTANCE OF ONLINE PORTALS WASN'T AS HIGH AS IT IS TODAY.

Now people have begun to realise the importance of validation and appreciation, especially in times like these, which is why we too incorporated a personalised e-reward system of nominating peers and recognising them. We made it more engaging with campaigns that captured special moments and office relationships. Owing to this personalised experience, we have seen a good spike in recognition.



Paromita Roy
Head Total Rewards, Tata Steel

Encouraging newcomers

Recognition needn't be limited only to older, existing employees. **70% of our team works from home in spite of being a manufacturing industry.** As the lockdown began, many of our new employees began working from home too. We customised Bags of Happiness with goodies and sent them across to welcome them. Moreover, to help them

understand our culture and values, better, each new member was assigned a mentor who was available through the day for any guidance needed. This added a personal touch, making them feel like a part of the organisation too.

Up to the challenge

While customising the recognition programs is essential, we shouldn't forget that the objectives and cultural values need to stay constant. Communication is key, so make sure your organisation uses it well, till it is a culture.

To see how well the appreciation program worked we customised one and integrated it with our business KPI. We launched it for our dumper operators and noticed that there was an immediate sense of healthy competition and the rewards and praise made them happier.

The bottom line being that your program should drive your business operations.

Going global with tech

Technology needs to be integrated into systems and programs, especially for a global firm like ours, to give us a sense of being a part of the same organisation. We also try our best to gamify the whole experience, like we did even through the lockdown with a curated adventure game for our sports team. While the program can be tweaked across sectors, we need to make sure that the overall framework remains the same.

While going digital is the need of the hour, companies need to think from the traditional as well as a modern perspective to define a complete recognition strategy and program. **Your rewards and recognition program should honour your employees, but on a one-to-one basis, even when across the globe.** It is evident that the culture of recognition has gone beyond trophies and certificates, while today, it is largely based on digitising the whole experience and striking an emotional chord with your employees. It's time for HR leaders to adapt to the ever-evolving hybrid network.