# Instructors Guide

On the following pages is a sample module from our Instructor Guide. It provides the instructor with a copy of the material and a Lesson Plans box.

The key benefit for the trainer is the Lesson Plan box. It provides a standardized set of tools to assist the instructor for each lesson. The Lesson Plan box gives an estimated time to complete the lesson, any materials that are needed for the lesson, recommended activities, and additional points to assist in delivering the lessons such as Stories to Share and Delivery Tips.
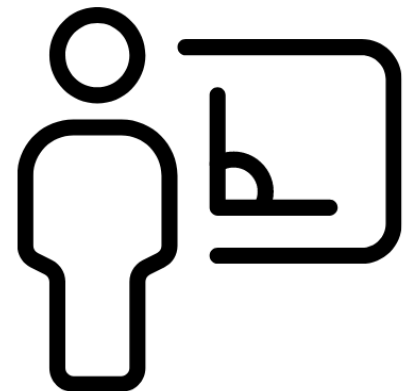
Module Two: Recognition Basics

Recognition isn't just about rewarding top performers; it's about acknowledging the value of every contribution and making employees feel appreciated and important to the organization's success. Employee recognition pertains to the validation of a person's or team's actions, hard work, or results that promote the organization's objectives and core values. Recognition comes in many forms; it can be a simple 'thank you' note, a formal company-wide announcement, a monetary bonus, or even an extra day off. Regardless of the method, the essential component is that it is sincere, timely, and aligns with the company's culture and values.

A Recognition Culture

A recognition culture refers to an organizational environment in which acknowledging and appreciating employees' efforts and achievements is embedded in everyday operations. In a workplace with a strong recognition culture, praise and acknowledgement are not sporadic events, but rather frequent occurrences that happen in real time. This could range from team leads publicly applauding their members during team meetings for their contributions, to peer-to-peer recognition where coworkers highlight each other's helpfulness or teamwork. It may also include regular shout-outs in company newsletters, or on social media platforms. Managers in such a culture are not the only ones who recognize good work; employees at all levels actively participate, creating a reciprocal and uplifting atmosphere. This culture of recognition often results in employees feeling seen, valued, and engaged, fostering a positive work environment. When feedback is given with transparency and authenticity, it makes the recognition more impactful.

To create a recognition culture requires effort, time, and consistency. Leaders can set the tone by regularly recognizing employees' efforts, and implementing systems and practices that enable recognition to be a part of the daily work life. Essentially, everyone in the organization should be included in building this culture, regardless of their position, department, or role. Such inclusivity will strengthen the company culture, and result in higher levels of employee engagement throughout the organization.

Estimated Time	7 minutes
Topic Objective	To identify the key elements and benefits of a recognition culture within an organization.
Topic Summary	A recognition culture refers to an organizational environment in which acknowledging and appreciating employees' efforts and achievements is embedded in everyday operations.
Materials Required	Flipchart/board, markers
Planning Checklist	None
Recommended Activity	Have participants brainstorm positive words or phrases that they associate with a recognition culture. Consider how recognition feels, the impact on teams, and the attributes of a supportive work environment. Write these responses on the flipchart/board.
Stories to Share	Share any personal, relevant stories.
Delivery Tips	Encourage everyone to participate.
Review Questions	What is a recognition culture?

Appreciation vs. Recognition

We all crave recognition and appreciation, as they serve as powerful affirmations of our value and contributions, fueling our drive to thrive and excel. Appreciation and recognition, while interconnected, play distinct roles in the workplace. Recognition refers to the act of acknowledging the efforts, achievements, and contributions of employees. It's an approach to reinforcing the behaviors and values that align with an organization's strategic objectives. Recognition is often performance-based, tied to specific milestones or exceptional contributions to the team or company. It can take various forms, such as public acknowledgement, awards, or promotions, and serves to validate the hard work and dedication of employees, thus motivating them to continue to perform at their best.

On the other hand, appreciation extends beyond performance and job requirements to the individual's value as a person. It is a human-centered approach that acknowledges an employee's inherent worth and their unique contributions to the workplace. Appreciation focuses on the individual's character, their approach to work, or even their positive attitude during challenging times. It can be expressed through simple gestures, such as a personalized note or words of encouragement.

Both recognition and appreciation are essential to fostering a powerful workplace culture. Recognition provides a direct link to the organization's strategic objectives, and rewards the specific behaviors that contribute to its success. Appreciation, meanwhile, helps build a respectful work environment that values each employee as a unique individual, not just for their professional contributions. Together, these actions will not only motivate employees, but will also enhance their overall job satisfaction and positive connection to the organization.

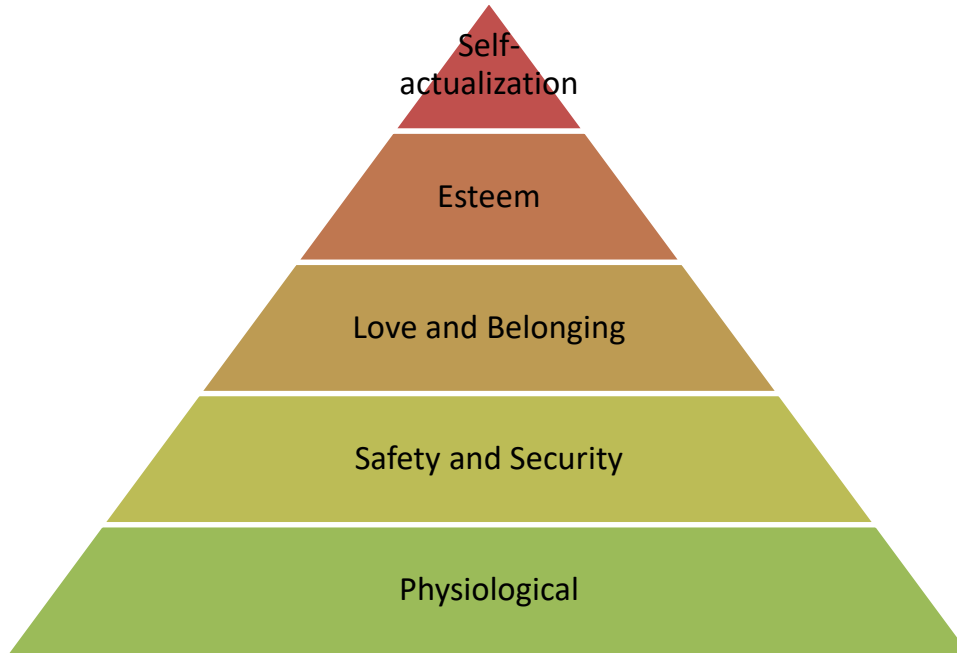| Estimated Time	10 minutes
Topic Objective	To differentiate between appreciation and recognition in the workplace and understand their respective roles in employee motivation.
Topic Summary	Recognition refers to the act of acknowledging the efforts, achievements, and contributions of employees. On the other hand, appreciation extends beyond performance and job requirements to the individual's value as a person.
Materials Required	Index cards, tape
Planning Checklist	Provide enough index cards for each participant.
Recommended Activity	Instruct participants that they will be creating an Appreciation Wall. Provide each participant with an index card and ask them to write down a small note of gratitude for someone in their life who they appreciate. Once completed,

	place each card on the board or wall so that they are visible. Discuss responses.
Stories to Share	Share any personal, relevant stories.
Delivery Tips	Encourage everyone to participate.
Review Questions	What is the difference between appreciation and recognition?

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Employee recognition is a powerful tool that directly correlates with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs - a prominent psychological theory that can help us better understand the motivational drivers of people. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, from bottom to top, includes physiological needs, safety needs, love and belonging needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs. Where employee recognition becomes most relevant is in the fourth level of the pyramid: esteem needs. Esteem needs encompass feelings of accomplishment, respect from others, and recognition of competence and mastery. When employees are recognized for their efforts and achievements, it boosts their self-esteem and acknowledges their skill and capability. This recognition serves to satisfy the human need for respect and acknowledgement.

A consistent culture of recognition can also contribute to the peak of the pyramid, self-actualization. Recognition can empower employees to see their potential, encouraging them to take on new challenges and aspire for growth and development. Thus, they may be motivated to realize their full potential, aligning with Maslow's concept of self-actualization.

A pyramid diagram of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. From top to bottom: Self-actualization, Esteem, Love and Belonging, Safety and Security, Physiological.

Estimated Time	10 minutes
Topic Objective	To determine the relevance of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory in understanding employee motivation and how it can be applied to enhance employee recognition programs.
Topic Summary	When employees are recognized for their efforts and achievements, it boosts their self-esteem and acknowledges their skill and capability. This recognition serves to satisfy the human need for respect and acknowledgement.
Materials Required	Worksheet 1: Recognition and Needs Quest
Planning Checklist	Provide enough worksheet printouts for all participants.
Recommended Activity	Have participants complete Worksheet 1: Recognition and Needs Quest. Allow time to discuss worksheet responses.
Stories to Share	Share any personal, relevant stories.
Delivery Tips	This activity is personal- participants may not wish to share their experiences.
Review Questions	What are the components of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs?

The Benefits

Through the simple act of employee recognition, workplaces can experience a meaningful shift, leading to a better and more positive workspace. When we experience recognition in the workplace, it fuels our motivation and drives us to contribute more effectively and enthusiastically. Employee recognition reinforces the behaviors and efforts that contribute to business success. It boosts employee engagement, fostering a stronger connection between individuals and their work, which in turn can reduce turnover and enhance employee retention. Acknowledgment goes beyond the individual and spreads throughout the entire work environment, effectively transforming the organizational culture. Recognition can also foster a culture of continuous learning and improvement, by highlighting the specific actions and strategies that lead to success.

The following are some additional benefits that stem from employee recognition:

- Increased loyalty: Employees who feel recognized are more likely to be loyal to the organization, reducing the costs associated with hiring and training new staff.

- Enhanced creativity: A recognition-rich environment encourages risk-taking and innovation, as employees feel valued and supported in their efforts.

- Health and well-being: Recognition can lead to lower stress levels and improved well-being, contributing to less absenteeism, and creating healthier teams.

- Attracting talent: A strong recognition culture can make the organization more attractive to potential hires, enhancing the company's talent pool.

- Customer satisfaction: Happy and engaged employees often lead to better customer interactions and increased customer satisfaction.

Estimated Time	7 minutes
Topic Objective	To explore the various benefits of implementing employee recognition within an organization.
Topic Summary	When we experience recognition in the workplace, it fuels our motivation and drives us to contribute more effectively and enthusiastically.
Materials Required	Flipchart/board, markers

Planning Checklist	None
Recommended Activity	Have participants discuss and list additional benefits of employee recognition. Write these responses on the flipchart/board.
Stories to Share	Share any personal, relevant stories.
Delivery Tips	Encourage everyone to participate.
Review Questions	What are some benefits of employee recognition?

The Psychology of Recognition

Understanding the psychology behind recognition is crucial to amplifying its effectiveness in the workplace. The psychology behind employee recognition revolves around our brain's need for validation. Recognition satisfies an intrinsic human need for validation and a sense of belonging. When someone is recognized for their efforts, it produces a sense of achievement and reinforces the behavior that led to the outcome, prompting them to repeat and build upon it. One of the key mechanisms behind the need for recognition is the release of dopamine, a neurotransmitter associated with pleasure and reward. When an employee is recognized for their accomplishments, the brain's reward system is activated, leading to the release of dopamine. This release creates a sense of pleasure, pride, and fulfillment, reinforcing the behavior that led to the recognition.

The duration of dopamine release varies depending on the individual and the specific context. In general, the initial surge of dopamine lasts for a relatively short period. However, the positive effects of recognition can extend beyond the immediate release of dopamine. It's worth noting that sustained recognition is essential for long-term positive effects. When recognition becomes a consistent practice, it can have a cumulative effect, continuously reinforcing desirable behaviors and contributing to an employees' sense of value and belonging within the organization.

Estimated Time	15 minutes
Topic Objective	To recognize the psychological principles underlying employee recognition.

Topic Summary	The psychology behind employee recognition revolves around our brain's need for validation. Recognition satisfies an intrinsic human need for validation and a sense of belonging.
Materials Required	Worksheet 2: Psychological Insights
Planning Checklist	Provide enough worksheet printouts for all participants.
Recommended Activity	Have participants complete Worksheet 2: Psychological Insights. Discuss worksheet responses.
Stories to Share	Share any personal, relevant stories.
Delivery Tips	Encourage everyone to participate.
Review Questions	What is dopamine?

Practical Illustration

Mrs. Johnson, a dedicated and passionate teacher, walked into her classroom with a warm smile, unaware of the surprise awaiting her. The school administration had decided to recognize her exceptional work and the positive impact she had on her students. As the announcement was made, the room erupted with applause and heartfelt words of appreciation. Mrs. Johnson's face lit up with a mix of joy and surprise. The recognition she received not only boosted her self-esteem, but also triggered a release of dopamine, filling her with a sense of accomplishment and fulfillment. This moment of appreciation reinforced her belief in the importance of her work and the difference she was making in the lives of her students.

The recognition culture within the school played a significant role in Mrs. Johnson's experience. It was a place where teachers' efforts and achievements were consistently acknowledged and celebrated. The positive work environment fostered a sense of belonging and encouragement, empowering teachers to excel. This culture of recognition not only enhanced job satisfaction, but also motivated teachers to go above and beyond, knowing that their hard work would be valued and appreciated. Mrs. Johnson's story became a powerful example of how recognition can transform her own experience, as well as inspire the entire teaching community.

Module Two: Review Questions

1) What is a recognition culture?

   a) A culture where only the top performers are recognized for their efforts
   b) A culture where employees are recognized only on an annual basis during performance reviews
   c) A culture in which acknowledging and appreciating employees' efforts and achievements is embedded in everyday operations
   d) A culture where employees only recognize the efforts of their managers

   A recognition culture refers to an organizational environment in which acknowledging and appreciating employees' efforts and achievements is embedded in everyday operations.

2) Which of the following is *not* a characteristic of a strong recognition culture in a workplace?

   a) Praise and acknowledgement are frequent occurrences that happen in real time
   b) Only managers recognize good work
   c) Regular shout-outs in company newsletters, or on social media platforms
   d) Employees at all levels actively participate, creating an uplifting atmosphere

   Managers in such a culture are not the only ones who recognize good work; employees at all levels actively participate, creating a reciprocal and uplifting atmosphere.

3) _____ extends beyond performance and job requirements to the individual's value as a person.

   a) Appreciation
   b) Recognition
   c) Rewards
   d) Constructive feedback

   Appreciation focuses on the individual's character, their approach to work, or even their positive attitude during challenging times.

4) What is the main difference between recognition and appreciation in the workplace?

   a) Recognition is performance-based, while appreciation focuses on personal traits
   b) Recognition is only given through awards, while appreciation is expressed through promotions
   c) Recognition acknowledges job requirements, while appreciation focuses on team achievements
   d) Recognition and appreciation are interchangeable terms in the workplace

   Recognition is often performance-based, tied to specific milestones or exceptional contributions to the team or company.

5) Which of the following is *not* included in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs?

   a) Safety needs
   b) Love and belonging
   c) Esteem needs
   d) Financial wealth

   Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, from bottom to top, includes physiological needs, safety needs, love and belonging needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs.

6) Which level of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs pyramid does employee recognition become most relevant?

   a) Safety needs
   b) Esteem needs
   c) Physiological needs
   d) Political needs

   Where employee recognition becomes most relevant is in the fourth level of the pyramid: esteem needs.

7) Which of the following is *not* a benefit of employee recognition?

   a) Enhanced creativity
   b) Increased loyalty
   c) Increased production costs
   d) Reduced employee turnover

   Increased production costs are not a benefit of employee recognition.

8) One of the key mechanisms behind the need for recognition is the release of _____.

   a) Insulin
   b) Adrenaline
   c) Dopamine
   d) Melatonin

   One of the key mechanisms behind the need for recognition is the release of dopamine, a neurotransmitter associated with pleasure and reward.

9) What is the significance of dopamine in the context of employee recognition?

   a) It leads to decreased motivation and productivity
   b) It is associated with the pleasure and reward system, reinforcing behaviors leading to recognition
   c) It results in heightened stress levels and dissatisfaction
   d) It inhibits an employee's sense of value and belonging within the organization

   When an employee is recognized for their accomplishments, the brain's reward system is activated, leading to the release of dopamine. This release creates a sense of pleasure, pride, and fulfillment, reinforcing the behavior that led to the recognition.

10) How does the act of recognition influence an employee's behavior?

   a) It discourages them from repeating behaviors that led to the recognition
   b) It fosters a sense of failure and dissatisfaction
   c) It reduces their sense of value and belonging within the organization
   d) It prompts them to repeat and build upon behaviors that led to the recognition

   When recognition becomes a consistent practice, it can have a cumulative effect, continuously reinforcing desirable behaviors and contributing to employees' sense of value and belonging within the organization.

PowerPoint Slides

Below you will find the PowerPoint sample. The slides are based on and created from the Instructor Guide. PowerPoint slides are a great tool to use during the facilitation of the material; they help to focus on the important points of information presented during the training.
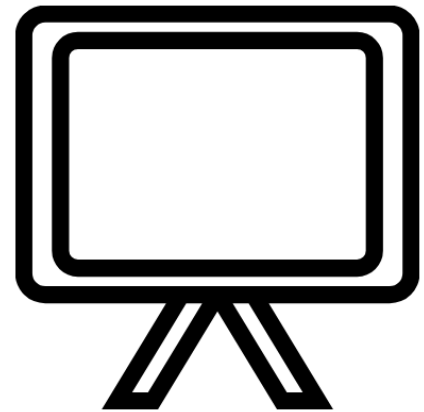
I think you need to love giving compliments as much as you love receiving them.

Yami Gautam

Recognition Basics

Recognition comes in many forms; it can be a simple 'thank you' note, a formal company-wide announcement, a monetary bonus, or even an extra day off.

A Recognition Culture

This culture of recognition often results in employees feeling seen, valued, and engaged, fostering a positive work environment.

Appreciation vs. Recognition

Appreciation and recognition, while interconnected, play distinct roles in the workplace.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

- Self-actualization
- Esteem
- Love and Belonging
- Safety and Security
- Physiological

The Benefits

- Increased loyalty
- Enhanced creativity
- Health and well-being
- Customer satisfaction

The Psychology of Recognition

The psychology behind employee recognition revolves around our brain's need for validation.

Practical Illustration

- A Recognition Culture
- Appreciation vs. Recognition
- Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs
- The Benefits
- The Psychology of Recognition

Module Two: Review Questions

1. What is a recognition culture?

A. A culture where only the top performers are recognized for their efforts

B. A culture where employees are recognized only on an annual basis during performance reviews

C. A culture in which acknowledging and appreciating employees' efforts and achievements is embedded in everyday operations

D. A culture where employees only recognize the efforts of their managers

Quick Reference Sheets

Below is an example of our Quick Reference Sheets. They are used to provide the participants with a quick way to reference the material after the course has been completed. They can be customized by the trainer to provide the material deemed the most important. They are a way the participants can look back and reference the material at a later date. They are also very useful as a take-away from the workshop when branded. When a participant leaves with a Quick Reference Sheet it provides a great way to promote future business.

Recognizing Employee Excellence
Quick Reference Sheet

A Recognition Culture

A recognition culture refers to an organizational environment in which acknowledging and appreciating employees' efforts and achievements is embedded in everyday operations. In a workplace with a strong recognition culture, praise and acknowledgement are not sporadic events, but rather frequent occurrences that happen in real time. This could range from team leads publicly applauding their members during team meetings for their contributions, to peer-to-peer recognition where coworkers highlight each other's helpfulness or teamwork. It may also include regular shout-outs in company newsletters, or on social media platforms.

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The Benefits

Through the simple act of employee recognition, workplaces can experience a meaningful shift, leading to a better and more positive workspace. When we experience recognition in the workplace, it fuels our motivation and drives us to contribute more effectively and enthusiastically. Employee recognition reinforces the behaviors and efforts that contribute to business success. It boosts employee engagement, fostering a stronger connection between individuals and their work, which in turn can reduce turnover and enhance employee retention. Acknowledgment goes beyond the individual and spreads throughout the entire work environment, effectively transforming the organizational culture. Recognition can also foster a culture of continuous learning and improvement, by highlighting the specific actions and strategies that lead to success.

The following are some additional benefits that stem from employee recognition:

- Increased loyalty
- Enhanced creativity
- Health and well-being
- Attracting talent
- Customer satisfaction

Formal Recognition Programs

Formal recognition goes beyond the occasional word of praise; it is a public and official recognition that validates an employee's efforts. These programs provide a structured and official means of acknowledging and rewarding employees' contributions and achievements. They are designed to create a consistent and fair system for recognizing outstanding performance. Examples of formal recognition may include annual or quarterly award ceremonies, employee of the month programs, peer-nominated accolades, or milestone celebrations. Understanding the framework and regularity of formal recognition programs can effectively sustain employees' interest and drive their pursuit of such acknowledgment.

Timeliness of Recognition

The timeliness of employee recognition is crucial for its effectiveness in the workplace. Recognizing and appreciating employees for their contributions not only enhances their job satisfaction, but also boosts their engagement and loyalty to the organization. However, if the recognition is delayed or not timely, it may lose its impact and relevance. When recognition is immediate or proximate to the accomplishment, it emphasizes the specific behaviors or actions that led to success. In turn, this will help to reinforce these behaviors and make them more likely to be repeated. Timely recognition creates a direct link between an individual's effort and their contribution to the organization's goals, thus making it more meaningful and impactful. Delayed recognition, on the other hand, may be viewed as an afterthought, and may fail to achieve the desired effects of motivation and reinforcement

To ensure recognition is given in a timely manner, there are certain factors to keep in mind:

- Immediacy

- Relevance

- Situational sensitivity

Making It Personal

Every employee is a unique blend of skills, talents, and motivations, enhancing the diversity of an organization. Unfortunately, many organizations make the mistake of implementing a one-size-fits-all approach to employee recognition, not taking into account these differences. By doing so, they fail to tap into the personal motivations and values of their employees, making their recognition efforts less impactful and meaningful. Generic recognition, such as standard bonuses or appreciation certificates, while appreciated, may not resonate deeply with every employee. This is because what motivates and matters to one individual may not hold the same value for another. For example, an introverted employee might feel uncomfortable with public recognition in a company-wide meeting, while extroverted employees might thrive on it. Similarly, a team that has been working late nights might appreciate extra time off more than a financial bonus. To avoid these pitfalls, organizations should strive to personalize their recognition efforts. One way to do this is to understand the individual preferences of employees, which could be gathered through direct conversations, surveys, or even observation.

Handouts

Each course is provided with a wide range of worksheets. Worksheets help check your participants' understanding. If a lesson calls for a worksheet, it will be listed in the Lesson Plan box under Materials Required. All worksheets are customizable and can be found in the Appendix of the Instructor Guide and the Training Manual.

As a trainer, icebreakers give your participants the opportunity to get to know each other better or simply begin the training session on a positive note. Icebreakers promote collaboration, increase engagement, and make your training more light-hearted and fun. Below is an example from the Icebreakers folder.
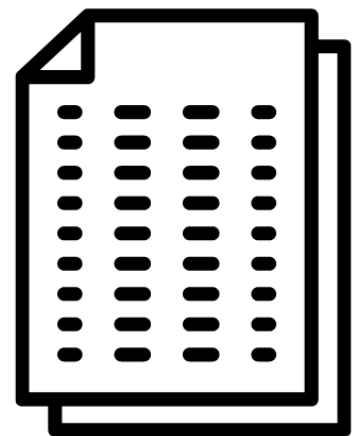
Sample Worksheet 1

Recognition and Needs Quest

Employee recognition is a powerful tool that directly correlates with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs - a prominent psychological theory that can help us better understand the motivational drivers of people. Use the chart below to reflect on your recent experiences at work, and instances where you have felt recognized or appreciated by colleagues. Consider the corresponding level of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and place these instances in the Personal Reflection's column.

Need Level	Recognition Actions/Behaviors	Personal Reflections
Physiological	Example: Ensuring employees have access to healthy snacks or drinks during work hours.	
Safety	Example: Recognizing employees for following safety protocols and ensuring a safe work environment.	
Belongingness	Example: Celebrating team achievements and fostering a sense of camaraderie.	
Esteem	Example: Acknowledging individual accomplishments publicly and praising their skills.	
Self-Actualization	Example: Offering opportunities for personal and professional growth and recognizing employees' progress.	

Icebreaker: Recognition Riddles

PURPOSE

To engage participants in an interactive activity that encourages creative thinking and problem-solving while exploring various recognition scenarios relevant to the workplace.

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- Pens/pencils

- Recognition Cards (prepared in advance, see scenarios below)

- Timer or stopwatch

PREPARATION

Review the pre-made list of recognition card ideas, each containing a different recognition scenario or situation. These cards can be printed on index cards, sticky notes, or even small pieces of paper.

Scenarios may include:

1. A team member has a brilliant idea that improves a product. How do you ensure that they get recognition without overshadowing the team's collaborative effort?
2. An employee quietly supports others, but their contributions go unnoticed. How can you show appreciation for their vital role?
3. During a major change, some employees demonstrate resilience and support. How can you recognize their positive attitude?
4. Two departments collaborate, resulting in success. How can you recognize both teams for their contributions and teamwork?
5. An individual mentors a colleague's growth. How can you show appreciation for their dedication to development?
6. A team member helps a colleague facing personal challenges. How can you recognize this act of kindness and encourage empathy.

ACTIVITY

Divide participants into small groups and provide each group with a set of recognition cards. Explain that each recognition card contains a scenario related to employee recognition. The task is for the groups to discuss and brainstorm the best approaches to recognize the employee(s) in the given situation. Instruct the groups to read the scenario on the first card and set a time limit (e.g., 5 minutes) for the discussion. After the allotted time, gather the groups together and have them present their recognition ideas for each scenario. Encourage the other groups to provide feedback and share their thoughts. Repeat the process for the remaining recognition cards, allowing each group to tackle different scenarios. One completed, discuss how recognition strategies can be adapted to different workplace contexts.

NOTE

To adapt this icebreaker for virtual training, randomly assign participants to breakout rooms. Share the recognition scenarios on-screen or through a presentation, and have participants discuss their ideas in virtual breakout groups. Then, bring everyone back together to share their insights and foster a collaborative online learning experience.

Certificate of Completion

Every course comes with a Certificate of Completion where the participants can be recognized for completing the course. It provides a record of their attendance and to be recognized for their participation in the workshop.
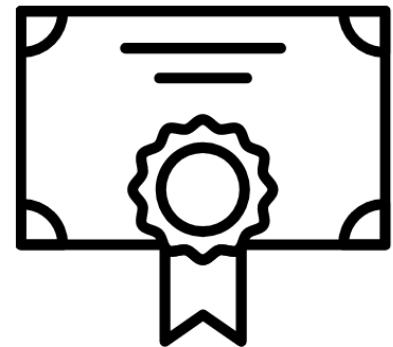
CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION

[Name]

Has mastered the course

Recognizing Employee Excellence

Awarded this _____ day of _____ e _____, 20 _____

_____

Presenter Name and Title