



WHITE PAPER

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF RECOGNITION:

ENGAGING YOUR TEAMS IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

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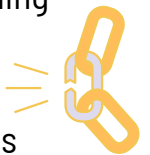
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Work isn't what it used to be.

Loud quitting, the anti-hustle movement—people aren't just disengaging, they're tuning out on purpose. These aren't just trends; they're signals that employees are actively redefining what work means to them.

According to Gallup, only **21% of employees globally feel engaged at work**. That means nearly **8 out of 10 people around the world are just going through the motions**.



Today, recognition, meaning, and purpose are the new levers of engagement and retention.

Resilience alone won't cut it anymore. Teams need recognition that does more than just keep them afloat—it needs to help them grow stronger through change.

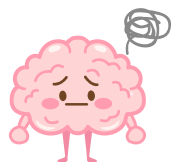
As hybrid work becomes hyper-personalized and skills need constant refreshing, recognition has to be timely, specific, and human.



This guide skips the theory and gets straight to rituals and strategies that actually boost engagement when the going gets tough.



WHY RECOGNITION MATTERS IN TIMES OF CHANGE



Burnout, disengagement, and employee turnover are nothing new—but today's workforce is reacting differently.

Employees are setting clearer boundaries ([intentional disconnect](#)), pulling back from toxic hustle culture, and leaving without a word (quiet quitting) or even with a bold statement via "[revenge quitting](#)". What's often missing? Consistent human connection. Yet, while [more than 80% of managers](#) think they provide recognition to their team for good work, only 40% of employees say they receive it authentically. We're talking about a 40-point gap. You don't need to be an analyst to know that's huge.

Recognition isn't just a feel good perk – it's a proven lever for stability and performance. In times of uncertainty, it becomes a tool for restoring trust, realigning purpose, and fueling team cohesion.

You don't need more resilience messaging.



You need **recognition systems that help teams grow stronger through change.**



In times of turbulence, people don't need more noise - they need to feel seen, grounded, and valued.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF RECOGNITION: WHAT REALLY DRIVES ENGAGEMENT

Forget the buzzwords—here's what really fuels engaged teams:

- **Trust and psychological safety:**

Employees who feel seen are more likely to speak up, innovate, and stay.

- **Peer connection:**

[Recognition among colleagues](#) is the foundation of a culture of appreciation.

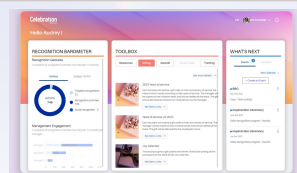
- **Clarity and belonging:**

When employees are recognized for what matters, they understand how they contribute - and where they're going. In fact, **employees who feel recognized are 5x more likely to feel connected to their team's purpose** (Gallup), making recognition one of the most effective tools for alignment.



**Helping you achieve real success in a competitive market
& stay ahead of the curve**

[Explore our solutions](#)



Think of recognition as a fast-acting engagement tool that reinforces the behaviors and mindset you want to see more of.

Recognition is also one of the easiest ways to combat trends like disengagement, intentional disconnect, and the anti-hustle movement—without overloading teams with more “to-dos.”



"Engagement isn't a checkbox—it's a byproduct of trust, safety, and the moments that make people feel like they matter."



By strengthening interpersonal connections and fostering deeply engaged teams, organizations can optimize their investment in leadership and translate it into lasting, high-impact outcomes.

↪ (That actually stick)

5 HIGH-IMPACT RECOGNITION HABITS



These aren't just ideas - they are scalable, repeatable, and built to help you support your team in today's hybrid reality.

EVERYDAY RECOGNITION RITUALS

1. The Weekly Win Ritual

End every week with 10 minutes of [shoutouts](#) in your team Slack or standup.
→ Outcome: Improved morale and stronger team identity.

2. First 30 Recognition Flow

New hire? Ask their manager and peers to recognize their first small wins within 30 days.
→ Outcome: Faster onboarding and sense of belonging.

3. Monthly Peer Picks

Let employees nominate a peer monthly for exemplifying a core value. Keep it light and fun.
→ Outcome: Culture reinforcement without top-down pressure.

4. Hybrid Celebration Nudges

Use AI or internal tools to remind managers of key dates or project milestones, even remotely.
→ Outcome: Recognition stays consistent in hybrid setups.

5. Personalized Appreciation Moments

Tie recognition to micro-milestones, not just promotions. Think "you led your first client call!"
→ Outcome: Encourages micro-reskilling and momentum.



"Habits don't stick because they're brilliant—they stick because they're easy, joyful, and deeply human."



(And how to improve)

QUICK RECOGNITION AUDIT

Use this 5-question audit to spot where your recognition culture might be falling short.



Element	Ask Yourself
Frequency	Do employees receive recognition weekly?
Inclusiveness	Is recognition coming from both peers and managers?
Pertinence	Are values clearly tied to recognition moments?
Meaningfulness	Do remote and in-person teams feel equally seen?
Peer Participation	Are we rewarding progress, not just results?

Download our [Recognition Practices Evaluation Guide](#) (+ get a framework to improve weak spots fast).



Next step: Pick one area to improve this month—whether it's launching a peer channel or training managers for timely shoutouts.

Want a deeper dive? Book a session with an Altrum recognition expert.



IT'S TIME TO RESET RECOGNITION

The workforce today wants realness, clarity, and room to grow.

Recognition isn't just handing out rewards: when recognition is authentic and executed effectively, it can [reduce voluntary turnover by up to 45%](#) over two years. More than that, it's a strategic tool that builds teams not only capable of surviving disruption but emerging stronger because of it.

With constant change and people checking out more often, your recognition game needs to evolve.



Recognition that works is simple: authentic, personalized, inclusive, embedded in the culture, and nurturing.



Ready to build a culture where people want to stick around, row, and thrive? Let's reset how we do recognition—[starting today](#).

ALTRUM'S

ALL-IN-ONE RECOGNITION PLATFORM

A simple, powerful solution to help you roll out your recognition strategy and boost employee engagement—without the hassle.

At Altrum, we help HR leaders build culture-first systems that scale, from everyday peer shoutouts to strategic awards.

Designed for hybrid teams, our platform integrates easily with your existing tools, and gives managers everything they need to recognize their teams with ease. Because recognition works best when it's intentional—and when it's easy to manage, it actually happens.

See how Altrum helps reduce turnover and increase connection—especially in uncertain times by clicking the sections below.

