

MAGNIFY SUCCESS:

The measurable impact of recognition

Mark Hirschfeld,
Vice President,
Consulting Services,
BI WORLDWIDE

and

Amy Stern,
Director,
Employee
Engagement
Research,
BI WORLDWIDE

When employees have confidence they will be recognized for their contributions, they are more likely to repeat them. We know this from our global research into the factors that motivate employees today. Rodd Wagner, bestselling author and VP of Employee Engagement Strategy at BI WORLDWIDE, puts it this way:

For the same reason that a fly fisherman will stay in an area of the river he's catching trout, employees keep "casting" where they get recognition. Those who anticipate recognition for their future successes feel a greater obligation to work hard, give a higher proportion of their full effort, look for ways to improve the way they do their work and deliver more of their best ideas to the company.¹

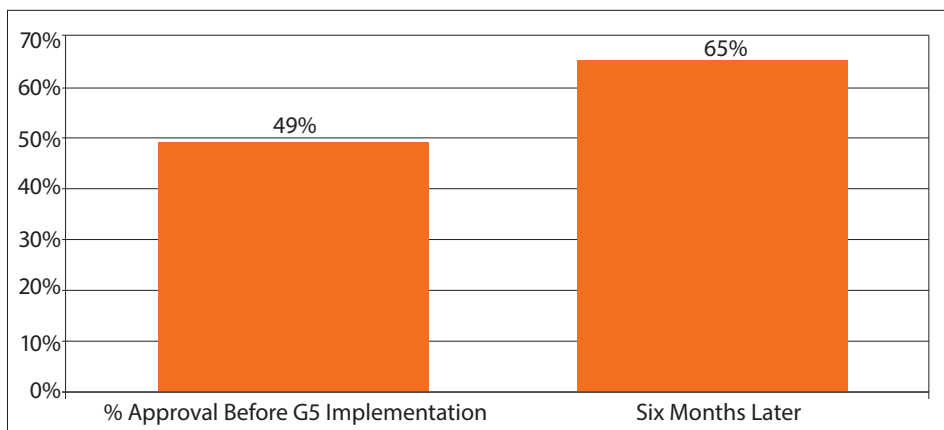
That's the theory but how do we put it into practice? What measurable impact, for example, does the implementation of a reward and recognition program have on employee engagement? To gain insights into this important question, we conducted a survey with a client that recently implemented our G5 recognition system.

The G5 platform has many features for employees and managers to recognize each other. They include:

- The tool is **responsive**—it can be accessed by computer, tablet or smart phone,
- It's **social**—users can "like" and comment on recognition messages, and
- It uses **badges and points**—which helps amplify critical behaviors.

The survey was administered to approximately 3,000 employees who have enrolled to participate in the recognition program. Below are the results of a survey item that was asked prior to implementation of the platform and the results for the same survey item six months later:

"I am confident that if I do good work it will be recognized."



MAGNIFY SUCCESS:

The measurable impact of recognition

Out of an employee population of 3,000, that's almost **500 more employees** who agree with the statement than did six months ago. That's 500 more people who have likely received recognition, of some kind, that made them say they're now "confident" they'll be recognized when they do good work. This improvement in results between survey administrations is statistically significant. The company did not make any other changes or implement any other programs that could explain the improvement in results.

Program activity from the G5 system provides additional insights into why engagement has increased:

In the first six months, a total of 10,900 recognitions were given by employees and managers, which were received by 79% of all employees.

That means the recognitions aren't being given to just a few people—almost **four in five employees** received some kind of recognition through the program. Having a significant number of employees receive recognition has likely contributed to the increased level of engagement.

To give you a sense of what employees and managers were saying, here are a few of the recognition messages (names have been redacted) that were sent. They provide a better sense of why the level of confidence as measured in the survey results has increased so markedly:

It was great to work with you yesterday. I appreciated your help and your desire to step up and ask questions. Your positive attitude and desire to be successful is a win for not only you but the other departments as well. Keep up the good work! Your good example is infectious and will spread to those around you. Thank you!

No matter what I have going on, ___ has always stopped what he was doing to either point me in the right direction or show me a better way. He is selfless when it comes to helping others. Also, there is no job too big or too small. He takes on all job tasks with the determination to complete his work the right way. I appreciate his example and his willingness to help out his co-workers. Thanks!

(The team) worked quickly when they identified a problem and brought it to our attention. They worked with us to analyze the problem and identify a solution. Excellent job.

Thank you for being such a supportive manager. You are always trying to make sure I am not over loaded and truly care about your employees. I love that you are always trying to clear the noise in our space and streamline processes. Appreciate everything you do for us here.

MAGNIFY SUCCESS:

The measurable impact of recognition

If you received one of these recognition messages, wouldn't you feel better about your efforts? Wouldn't getting one of these messages make your day? And, as Rodd Wagner stated, wouldn't you be more likely to repeat the behaviors that put you in a position to receive this recognition? The recognition messages show how genuine and sincere employees and managers can be if provided the right platform.

As the philosopher Cicero said: "We are all motivated by a keen desire for praise." The results of this study provide meaningful evidence that thoughtful implementation of BIW's G5 recognition system, where praise is genuinely given and received, can have a significant, positive impact on employee engagement.

To learn more about BI WORLDWIDE's recognition and reward solutions, visit biworldwide.com or email info@biworldwide.com.



¹ Wagner, R. (2015). *Widgets: The 12 New Rules for Managing Your Employees as if they're Real People*. McGraw-Hill.