

## WHAT YOUR SOCIAL STRATEGY MEANS FOR EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION

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For some people, Facebook is dead. It's easy to associate this sentiment with the curmudgeonly, the security conscious and the Internet wary. However, the most recent demographic to join the pack is also the most unlikely: Millennials.

Many companies want to stay current with technology trends. Some even want to push the bleeding edge of app and device usage. However, connecting the company's recognition programs to social media is a sinking ship. It's natural to be drawn to the concept since social media is popular among so many. There are billions of Facebook and Twitter users to testify to that.

### Social Media vs. Social Science

It's important to note that connecting to social media is different from taking advantage of well-applied social science. Connecting social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) to your recognition program should be avoided; however, applying social science to your recognition program can help boost engagement. In and of itself, social media isn't bad; it just doesn't enhance the effectiveness of your recognition program. On the other hand, a social component to recognition is proven to enhance results.

### Considerations

There are a couple of significant issues to consider when understanding why connecting your employee recognition program to social media is ill-advised. Be sure to ask:

1. Will connecting your recognition system to social media contribute to the program's success?
2. Once connected, will your people use it in a way that aligns with your corporate values?

Working with millions of Millennials, Gen-Xers, Boomers and Traditionalists in hundreds of programs across the globe, BI WORLDWIDE observes how people very carefully segment their personal lives from their work lives. Facebook is an individual's "personal brand" and something that is very different from the way people want to brand themselves at work.

While the popularity of such social media is very high overall, the integration of that social media with life at work is not. Beneath all of the fanfare celebrating social media, only 0.08% of all clients have chosen to allow their participants to share their recognitions (from work) with their social media accounts (their personal brand). Adding such a feature is unlikely to foster program success.

Sites like [www.glassdoor.com](http://www.glassdoor.com) are infamous for hosting the most intimate details of corporate life, often in a not-so-kind light. In a world that is becoming more and more comfortable with public complaint, linking a recognition site to the outside world can be risky. Concerns over appropriate use manifest quickly.

Will it contribute to the program's success?

Will its use align with your corporate values?

In the cold light of a security audit or a grumpy employee treating one of their well-intended acknowledgements with sarcasm, HR professionals are pulling up stakes before the tent has been pitched.

### Applying Social Science with Success

Social science ought not be abandoned and some of the things that our culture finds valuable have been learned from Facebook. The science behind social and behavioral psychology can be applied to your recognition system in ways that will enhance the overall effectiveness of the program.

The following are key social tools that, done responsibly, will engage the people in your program more successfully.

1. Recognition should be an enterprise-wide initiative.
2. Leadership must be active in social recognition.
3. Recognitions sent and received must be able to be filtered.
4. People should be able to "like" posts and add comments to existing posts.
5. It's important to foster a safe corporate environment for recognition.

Sharing recognitions broadly demonstrates to the entire corporation that everyone is part of the recognition system. It's inclusive. Also, recognitions sent become examples of exemplary behavior – the entire workforce learns from what is recognized.

Leadership plays an important role in setting the tone for recognition. As soon as leaders check out or indicate through their lack of involvement that the program isn't for them, it becomes clear that recognition is not important. Leaders who are actively involved can shape the conversation and help change the organization through the recognitions they send.

Filtering recognitions helps make the program relevant to participants. It allows individuals to see only the people they wish to follow, their immediate team or division, or to jump into the flow of the entire enterprise. It should also allow people to filter individual recognitions or not have any of the recognitions they receive be made public.

Liking and adding comments are common to communication tools because of sites like Facebook. When likes and comments are added within the boundaries of the corporate ecosystem, they are almost always in keeping with good corporate citizenship.

A safe environment for your IT security team is equally as important as the perceived safety by people in your organization who are using it. When the rank and file are suspicious of misuse, the idea of using recognition to reinforce the social fabric of the organization is, like Facebook, already dead.

### A Note on Recognition

People like to be liked. In general, people like to be recognized. It's part of the ancient social code of survival: if I show people in the tribe that I like them, there's a good chance they'll like me. If the tribe likes me, they will take care of me when I'm unable to gather food for myself.

Social science,  
when done  
responsibly,  
will engage the  
people in your  
program.

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People like to be liked



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In modern, global corporate ecosystems, hunting and gathering food are no longer daily concerns. And, to be fair, extroversion is not a requirement in today's world. Introverts and people who prefer keeping a low profile can thrive in the modern global corporation.

HR executives are tasked with accommodating the needs of the entire enterprise. With a recognition system that leverages social exchanges responsibly, the organization will be better equipped to deal with the dynamics of daily corporate life.

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**BI WORLDWIDE** is the global leader in employee recognition programs.

We use the latest technology and behavioral economics theories to create programs that drive and sustain engagement among our clients' employees, channel partners and customers.

To learn more about **BI WORLDWIDE**, visit: [BI WORLDWIDE.com](http://BIWORLDWIDE.com) or email [info@BI WORLDWIDE.com](mailto:info@BIWORLDWIDE.com).

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