

7 Ways to Show Gratitude for Employee Engagement

HR Exchange Network | Francesca Di Meglio | November 22, 2022

In the United States, people celebrate Thanksgiving every November. It's an opportunity to take stock of the ways Human Resources leaders and employers can show their gratitude to workers.

Recently, HR Exchange Network posted a question on Terkel.io asking people to share the ways they have expressed their thanks to employees. Here is a roundup of the best responses:

Give Grocery Gift Cards

"Our employees will work overtime and will be very busy with our Black Friday sale. To show our gratitude, we give grocery store gift cards to all our employees. In the past, we would give out turkeys to all our employees but found out that some people didn't want the turkey...I like to give the gift cards out the week before Thanksgiving so everyone can plan their holiday purchases." -Evan McCarthy, President and CEO of SportingSmiles

Host Virtual Friendsgiving

"Over the holiday season, we host a Friendsgiving get-together and an End-of-the-Year Celebration. We had a huge turnout for these events last year. Everyone shared their favorite holiday traditions—regardless of the holiday—and played a raucous game of virtual charades. We also raffled off a few fantastic prizes, including gift cards, a MasterClass credit, a subscription to a wellness app of their choice, and, of course, boxes of swag." -Shaunak Amin, CEO and Co-Founder of SwagMagic

Encourage Their Passions

"I send my team a 'passion package' during Thanksgiving to show my gratitude for their hard work and contributions. These personalized packages contain materials and items to help them enjoy their current hobbies or start a new one. I asked them one by one in the months leading to Thanksgiving about their recent activities and passions to help me find the perfect gifts to include, and they were ecstatic about the idea.

For example, one team member has been dedicating breaks to shows on streaming services, so I am planning to include high-quality headphones and cover one month of subscription. It adds a more personal touch to the packages instead of giving everyone the same kind for Thanksgiving." -Nunzio Ross, Owner and Head Director of Majesty Coffee

An Offer of Thanksgiving

"Every year, we treat our staff to a Thanksgiving lunch at our favorite local restaurant. We book four tables and enjoy a traditional Thanksgiving meal of roast turkey and sweet potatoes, followed by pumpkin pie. There's a delicious stuffed butternut squash option for our vegetarian

employees. During lunch, we all take turns sharing who and what we are thankful for. We make sure that each employee receives his or her share of appreciation and that we leave no one out. The feedback from our employees after these lunches has been excellent, with many saying that it made them feel touched by receiving public praise and recognition from their colleagues.” -David Aylor, CEO & Lawyer of David Aylor Law Offices

Massage as Message

“I treat my employees with a gift card or a budget for a massage or spa treatment. We are a remote company, and our team spends a lot of their work hours in front of their computers. It can tire the eyes, neck, back, and shoulders. The team has received the gifts of a therapeutic massage or a relaxing spa treatment with great appreciation and smiles. They felt understood about their work environment's physical challenges and returned to their next workday refreshed.” -Kevin Huang, Founder and CEO of Ambient Home US

Dinner and a Movie

“Because we are a remote company, we treat our employees to a simple virtual celebration with a virtual movie night and dinner during Thanksgiving week. Employees agree on an inspiring, heartwarming movie to watch. They receive a budget in advance to buy a nice dinner. Team members enjoy talking about the movie over dinner afterward. This simple celebration helps build closer connections within the team, so important for remote employees to not feel isolated.” -Ruth Novales, Marketing Director of Fortis Medical Billing Professionals

Show Them the Money

“One way to show gratitude to employees is to give incentive-based bonuses around Thanksgiving time. Nothing says "gratitude" like a nice little bonus for all your hard work. Making sure our employees know we value them is one way we have significantly increased retention at our company. It ensured our employees knew we noticed their hard work and increased overall productivity by 17% in the latter half of the fourth quarter.” -Charles Tichenor IV, Founder of Disrupter School