



Your Guide to Powerful Employee Engagement Communications

Six ways to use HR technology to align, motivate and engage your people



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Introduction

Hi,

As the Head of Global Engagement and Internal Communications at Reward Gateway, I always set out with a clear-cut agenda each year. As you can imagine, in a fast-paced, growing company, those priorities tend to shift (especially with a company that works in such an agile way). It's important that we stay aligned on our goals, and it's doubly critical that I have the support of my 400+ Reward Gateway employees across the globe.

And I don't think I'm alone in this either – I've found the same is true for our clients as well. Depending on your HR or business initiatives for the quarter, or year, you're likely looking for ways to communicate with your employees that's as versatile and unique as your goals so everyone is on the same page.

Having a technological edge, with a platform that puts employee communications

at the core is essential to make sure information is easily accessible, relevant and engaging for your workforce.

In this eBook, we'll walk you through:

- How to navigate the new relationship between employee and employer.
- How to align, motivate and engage all demographics in the workplace with targeted, diverse communications.
- Specific examples of how technology can amplify your initiatives or support common scenarios, whether that's uniting employees post-merger and acquisition, welcoming new people onboard or rallying employees around recognition, for instance.

With the right tools in place, you can use technology to boost the impact and engagement with various initiatives (including recognition, surveys, and much more), and use it to connect your employees to one another, alongside your company purpose, mission and values, to keep everyone marching towards the right goals.

I hope this eBook sets you on the path to creating more efficient and engaging employee communications to align, motivate and engage your diverse workforce.

To better engagement,

Catrin Lewis

Head of Global Engagement and Internal Communications
catrin.lewis@rewardgateway.com

Exploring the New Relationship between Employee and Employer



In the past few years, there's been a drastic shift in the way people communicate. It's not surprising that employees respond to information in different ways, but on top of that, social media platforms, emojis and continuous developments in technology have impacted it as well.

We know that the traditional ways of communicating – with pen and paper – are still useful and even bring a sense of nostalgia, but it's not the most effective way to communicate in today's crowded landscape, filled with thousands of messages and information overload.

According to [Pew Research](#), about 95% of Americans own a cell phone of some kind, demonstrating how a shift to digital is key. When you look around, do you notice how many people are on their cell phones? Mobile is where it's at. Last

year, the “New York Times” reported that Americans on average check their phone **80 times a day, every 12 minutes.**



Our workforces are communicating on their cell phones, during their commutes, or even waiting in line at the grocery store. And while some employees prefer to read company updates at their desk or first thing before their 8:30 a.m. meeting, that's not the case for everyone.

So, how do you make an impact?

The answer is to not only diversify your message, but diversify *how you communicate your message.*

As an employer, it's key to change up the wording of your message, announce it multiple times (and in the right time zone), and share it in various ways. And remember, think of it as a constant feed of communications, so that employees are able to catch up if they miss a day (or even a few hours).

We live in a world where employees crave real-time communication – they're digitally social, attached to their phones and desire information on-the-go, accessible when and where they want it.

So, instead of focusing on work-life balance, where employees are encouraged to work their 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. shift and then go home and shut off, companies should shift to “work-life integration.”

This creates an environment where employers trust employees to make their own schedules to work efficiently and effectively during the hours that work best for them, because we’re not all morning people, right?

The same goes for communications and allowing employees to access it on their schedule. Especially when employers use communications to broadcast messages about company goals, important initiatives or other must-know information, it’s critical to keep communications frequent and flexible.

Reaching your employees when and where they *want* to interact, whether that’s on their cell phone standing in line at the grocery store, desktop computer at lunch or in between meetings on the road, can help bridge the gap between what your employees know, and what you want them to know. And the more employees understand what’s going on in the business, the more inclined they’ll be to contribute to the organization’s overall purpose.

It starts with diversifying your message to meet today’s communication standards. Let’s dive into how you can do just that, and take steps to reach the different demographics at your organization.



The many faces of communications

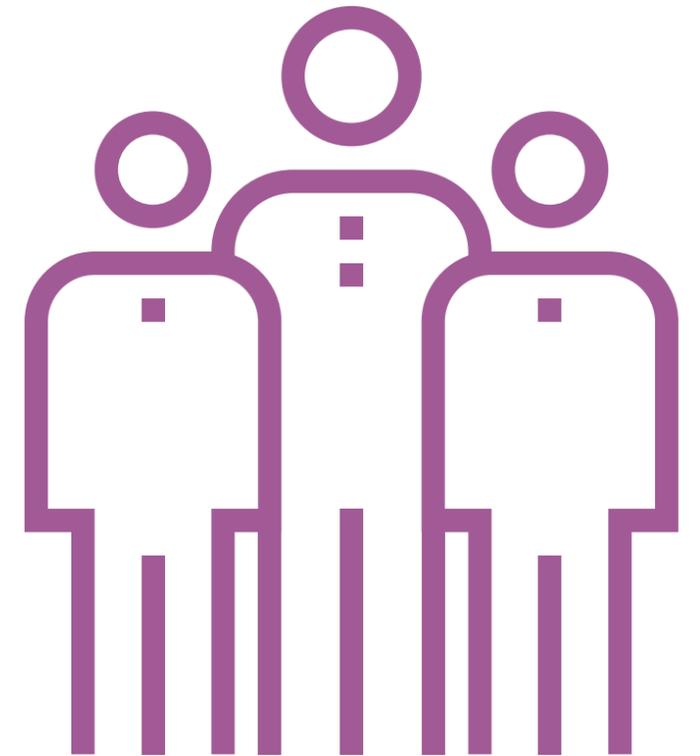
What works for one person might not work for everyone. To ensure all the different learning types in your organization truly absorb your communications, try using:

- Videos
- Blog posts
- Posters around the office
- Social media
- Polls/surveys
- TV screen updates

An integration that posts these updates automatically to a variety of channels, like my team and I do by using the Reward Gateway employee engagement platform, can be a huge time saver in getting your messages across, quickly and easily.

Learn more at rg.co/integrations

Reaching the Millennials, the Remote Workers, Gen-Z and Beyond



Not every workforce fits into one box. You may have a mostly-millennial workforce, or you could have a multi-generational workforce. Maybe your workforce is spread out across the globe, meaning you have a big portion of remote employees, or they're out in the field all day, with little to no access to a computer.

According to [The Radicati Group, Inc.](#), a technology market research firm, the average person is expected to receive on average 126 business emails per day in 2019. What's more, the total number of emails sent and received per day in 2019 is expected to be 246 billion emails per day. What does all of this mean?

Put simply, employees are likely to miss, ignore or not read all of the emails in their inboxes - including yours.

Ensuring your messages are well received on the other end is more important than ever, as employees are continuously receiving information and messages. Let's break down a couple of the most common types of employees and how to best communicate with them. Because what good is a nicely crafted message if there's no one on the other end to read it?

Communicating with millennials

Millennials: The ones who are used to having all of the information they could ever need right at their fingertips - whether it's through watching a 30-second YouTube video or staying up-to-date on the latest memes. When you're communicating with this group, it's key to use messaging that can be read in an instant, similar to how millennials scroll through a newsfeed or social media site.



In a world filled with information and messages, you need to make sure your message will grab their attention. How? Make it visually exciting – bright and beautiful enough to break through all the other noise out there. And make it clickable – meaning it has a call-to-action and a reason that it’s worth their time.

Communicating with Gen-Z

Gen-Z: The generation after millennials, but have similar desires and qualities as millennials – especially in the workplace. This is a generation that focuses on creating meaning through work and collaboration. This group will want and expect growth opportunities, managers who care about them and jobs that are well-suited for their particular talents or interests.

Remember, just because someone is 20 and considered part of Gen-Z, it doesn’t mean that they’ll fit into a specific category. These tips are meant to be a guideline to help you as you create your employee communications strategy.

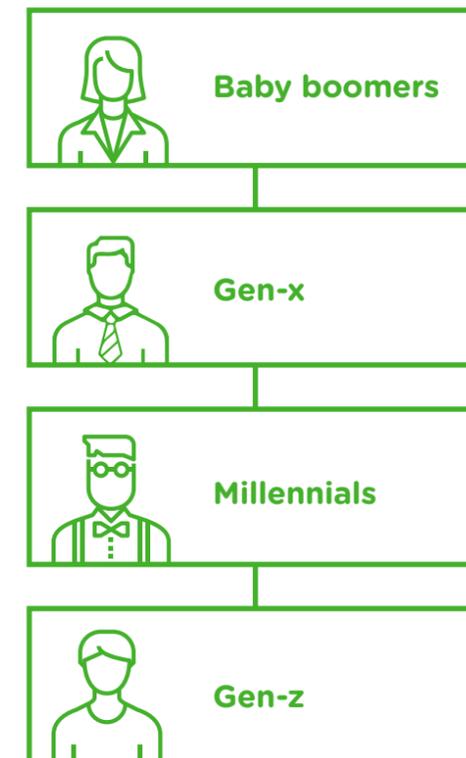
If you’re curious about how to best reach your people, an on-the-spot poll can help determine if your messages are resonating, or if you need to make some changes.

Frequent communication is key and face-to-face communication is powerful. According to [Robert Half](#), 53% of Gen-Z prefer in-person discussions over instant messaging and email, which goes to show how knowing your workforce’s communication preferences makes all the difference in how they digest your messages and updates. For example, you can make messages more personal with



A new workplace family

It’s important to note that in the upcoming years, we’ll have four generations – baby boomers, Gen-x, millennials and Gen-z – all working together at the same time. That’s why your employee communications need to be tailored to align with each generation’s communication preferences. Here’s where you can vary up your messaging (and style) to be inclusive of all demographics in the workplace.



team members by using a video message instead of a black and white email.



Communicating with remote or deskless workers

Remote workers: The ones who live far away, the field workers whose office is their car or truck, the new moms or dads on maternity or paternity leave, the ones who simply aren't in the office as much as others (think work-from-home employees). It's key to make sure that this group doesn't feel that they're missing out on all the action and instead feel kept in the loop and engaged.

Two years ago, [Forrester Research](#) said that over 63 million Americans will work virtually, compared to 2010 when there were 34 million flexible and virtual workers. Fast-forward to now and technology has come even further. Meaning, year-over-

year this trend will only continue to rapidly grow along with technology's speed.

And not every employee works in an office or sits at a desk. Communications should be accessible via apps or have mobile capabilities that reach workers who are on-the-go, on their phones.

Deskless workers should get the same communications as other employees whenever and wherever they want, while also being able to interact with fellow workers even if they aren't by their side.

It's your job as a communications or engagement manager to reassure this group that we know they're there, we know they're listening and we value them just as much as everyone else. Be sure to make a special effort to include these employees in your communications plan, and don't assume



Out of sight, but never out of mind

Communicating or recognizing remote employees will have a big impact on connecting your entire workforce. One way to do this is by asking remote or deskless employees to send in photos or stories and then display them around the office, or on your employee engagement platform. You could also share them on social media and use relevant hashtags so that everyone stays connected. This will help everyone feel connected, especially to those they may not talk to every day.

what they may or may not have been told before. If your communication was at a team briefing in the office, they'll be missing some key pieces of information. Your introductions and explanations via an accessible platform are key to keeping this group engaged.

Communicating with office workers

Office workers: The ones who are right in the center of the action every day. This group has the opportunity to socialize and communicate both online and face-to-face. Use this to your advantage when it comes to employee communications.

Posters or announcements around the office are effective here, or an employee engagement platform that helps bring all employee communication into one central place and gives an opportunity

for the office “buzz” when a new blog goes live. Try using digital signage around the office as well. We use an integration that connects our engagement platform, to TVs around the office to make communications even more visible.

Pro tip: An employee engagement platform benefits all employees – not only office workers, but also remote or deskless workers who aren't necessarily in the center of the action each day but can stay up-to-date with company news and updates.

The key is to use attention-grabbing and relatable content that gives the employees a takeaway – maybe it's about an upcoming event, an award the company won or an announcement relating to employee perks.



Find your office Champions

Your promoters help draw attention to your communications with easy word-of-mouth encouragement. You could also give your Champions early access to a campaign you're running through the engagement hub or have them do face-to-face meetings with employees in the office to walk through new communications initiatives in a casual way, or how to use the platform most effectively.



Communicating with engaged employees

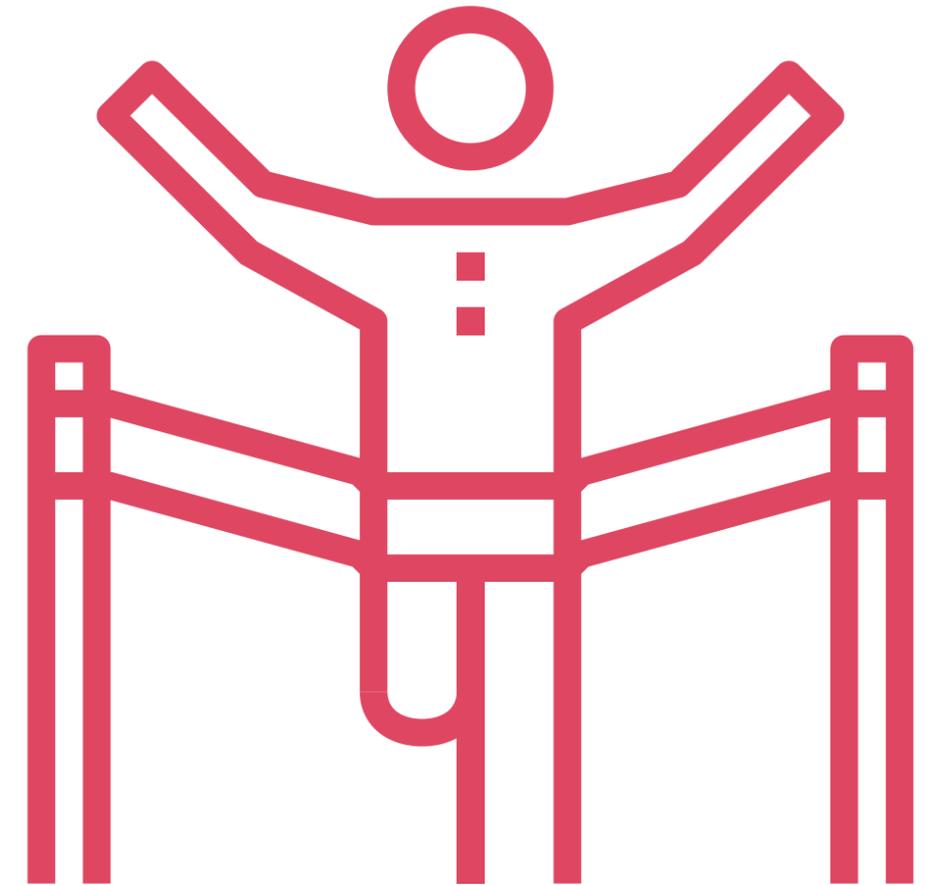
Engaged employees: The ones who understand what your company is doing and where it's headed, with a true connection to your organization's purpose, mission and values. These individuals make better decisions, are more productive and innovate more because they deeply want your organization to succeed.

These engaged employees are the shining stars in your organization — your biggest advocates for the engagement goals and initiatives your company is putting in place.

Frequent, open and honest communication works best with this group, as transparency helps strengthen their commitment to your organization. You may want to invite them to blog for you, or have frequent conversations about how they engage with your overall content.



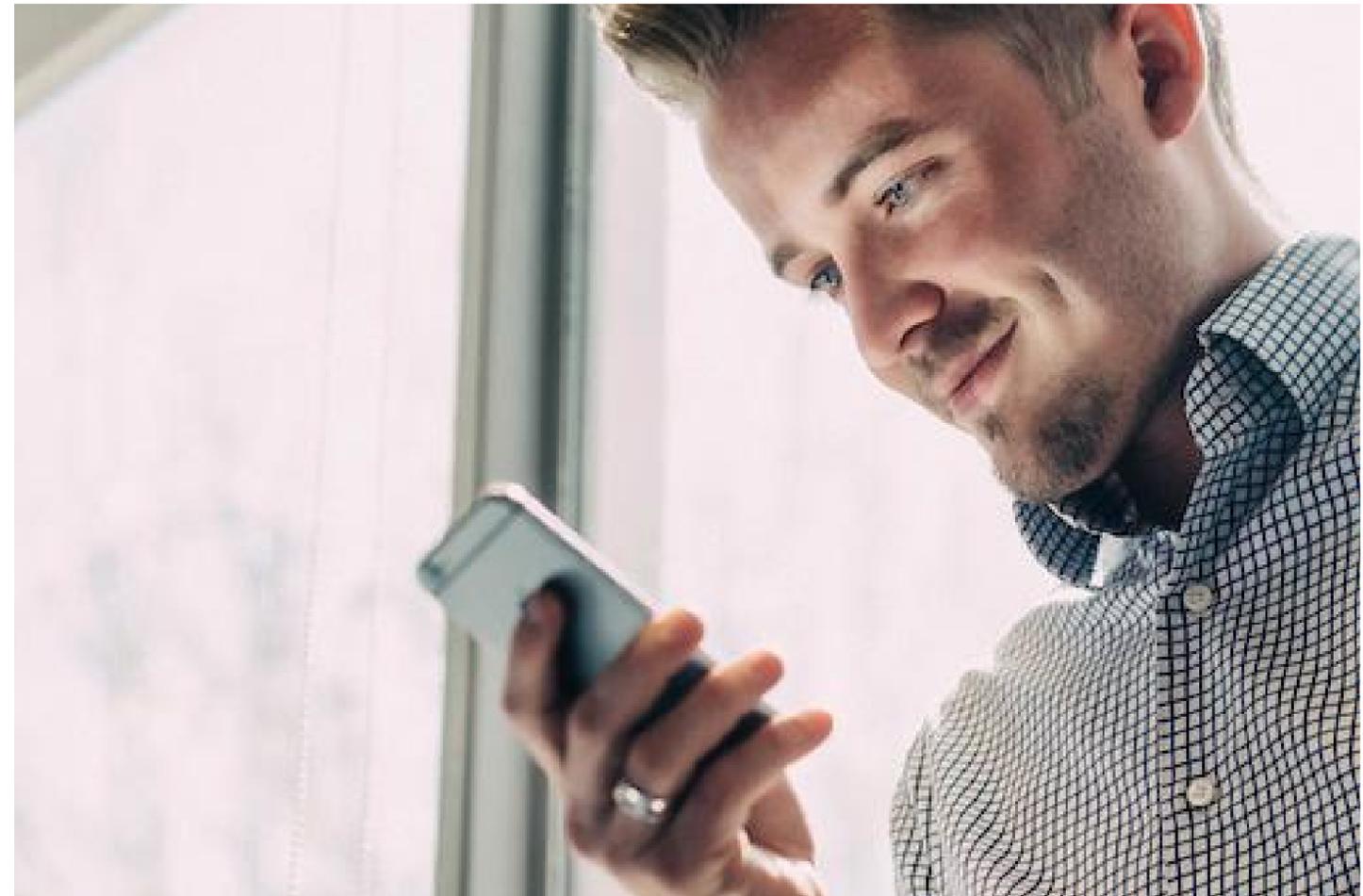
Six Ideas to Take Your Communications from Zero to Hero

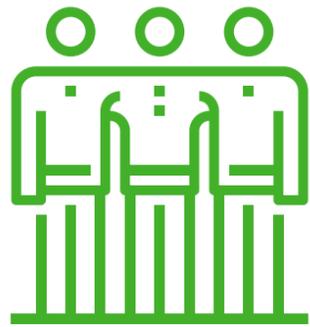


Keeping employee communications at the center of everything you do ensures that employees will feel a deeper connection to your purpose, mission and values — whether that's where your company is headed four years from now, or why you hired a new CFO to move the business forward. What's more, by practicing open and honest communication, you'll start to build trust and transparency with your workforce - helping you to improve processes, bring your workforce closer together and even improve the customer experience.

An employee engagement platform that gives you different ways to communicate with a multi-generational and diversified workforce can boost your messages to ensure they're understood.

Let's walk through six examples to give you ideas for improving communications at your organization.





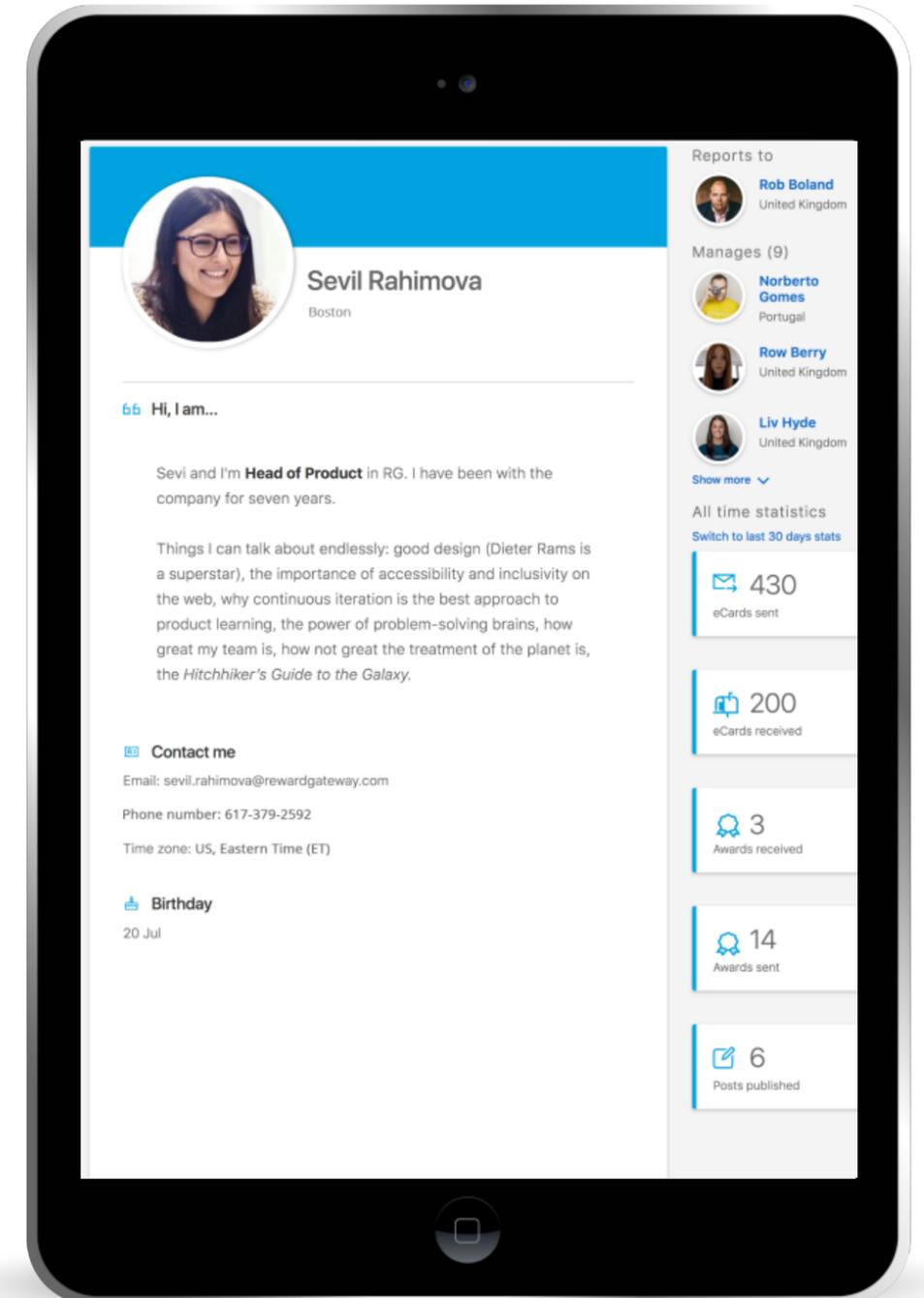
Improving company culture in a high-growth environment

In a fast-growing company, it's crucial to make sure all employees are on the same page, feel connected to the company and also feel connected to each other. In order to improve company culture in a

high-growth environment – especially in a global company – effective employee communications can be the force that pulls your people closer to the company mission.

It's important for employees to understand the organizational structure, as high-growth environments tend to change often. And employees need to put a face to the name to feel connected to the other people who might even be on their team but they've never met in person.

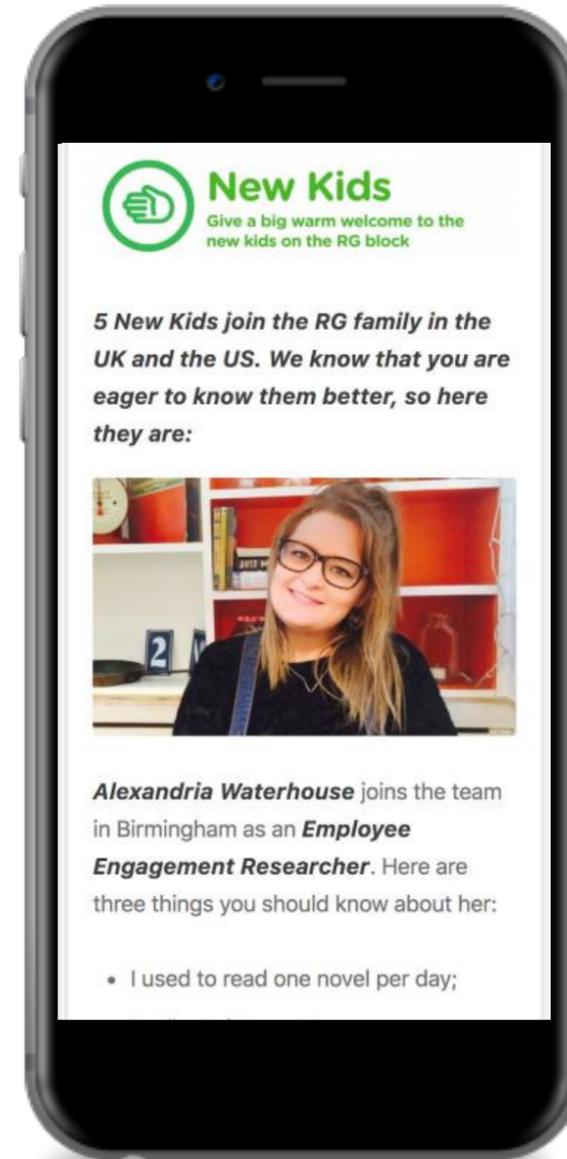
Here at Reward Gateway, we created employee profiles on our employee engagement platform, called boom!, which can be updated on the fly and is another way we help keep our employees in the loop. Employees can easily find information about what team their colleague works on,



who they report to and who they manage, along with some fun facts, their birthday, email address and phone number.

Plus, the user can see some high-level stats about how many peer-to-peer eCards the employee has sent or received, which allows for more visibility on recognition through communication as an added bonus.

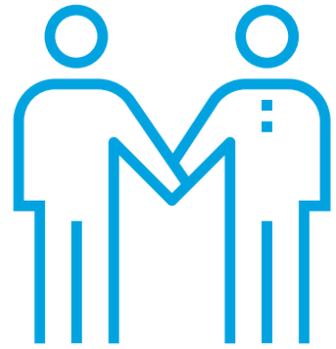
Ultimately these profiles allow our global workforce to feel more connected to one another and improve our company culture.



Using communications for updates on People News

Another way we keep our 400+ employees in the loop is through our weekly People News updates. Each week, RGeners can learn about new hires, leavers, anniversaries and who's in the spotlight for that week (which includes a fun fact or two). This update comes right to their inboxes as part of a newsfeed, and employees can always find it on our engagement platform, each week.

In high-growth companies, integrating People News into a weekly feed can help employees feel closer to one another, even if they're not in the same office and to help feel more comfortable with all the new faces.



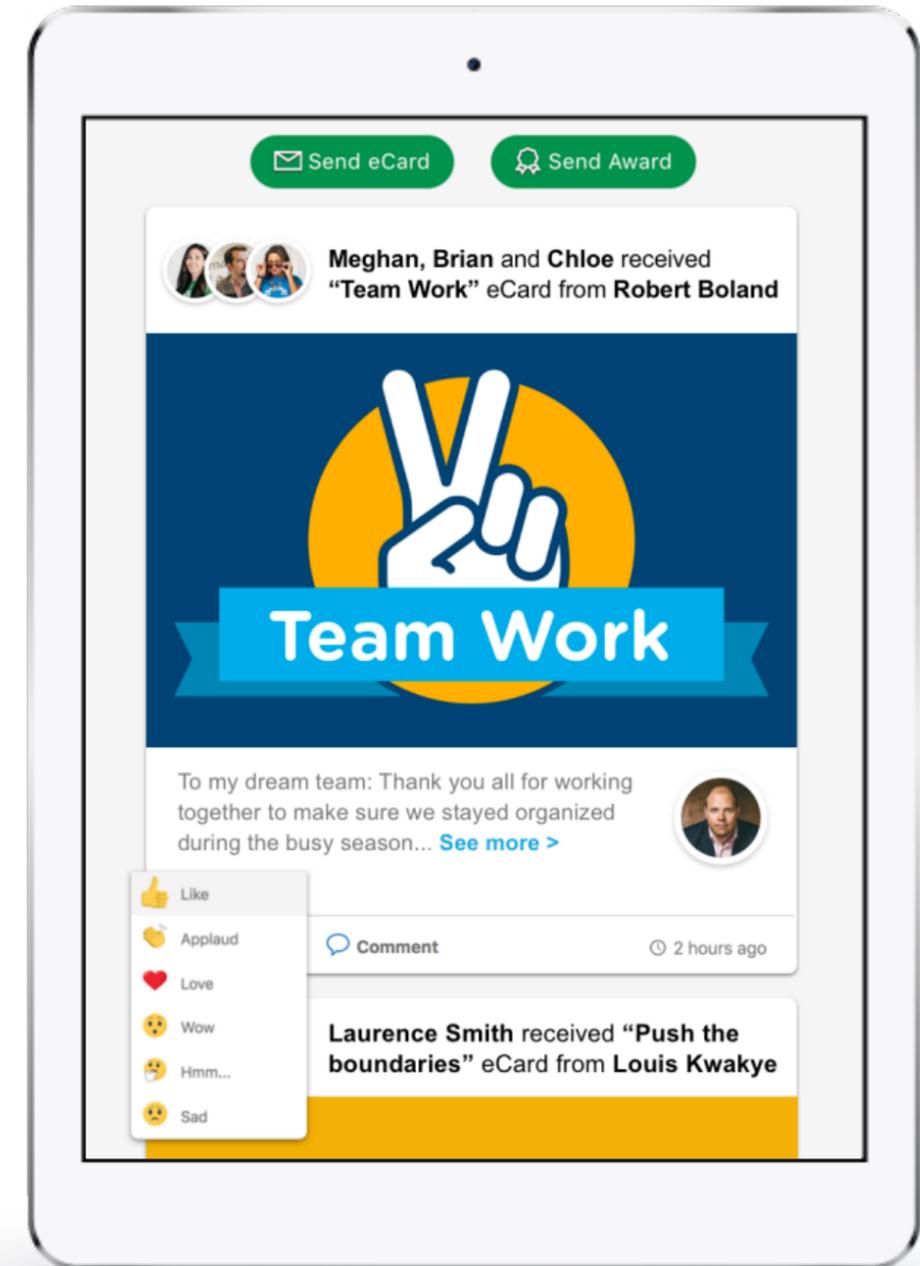
Using communication to shine a spotlight on recognition

No matter what industry you might be in, they all come with a set of unique challenges. For one financial services company, I want to tell you a story about communication and collaboration, and how a focus on recognition is helping the company on the

path to better engagement. With several offices across the country, the organization needed a way to bring employees closer together, make communications easier and increase visibility among teams.

To start improving employee engagement and collaboration, the organization implemented a new employee engagement platform. The company focused on putting its company culture front and center to enhance the employees' connection to the purpose, mission and values through tailored communications.

With the new platform, the organization worked to begin its engagement journey through recognition initiatives, including values-based, peer-to-peer and manager-led recognition eCards. These eCards are hosted on a social wall, allowing



An example of a branded peer-to-peer eCard.

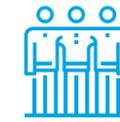
the organization to shine a spotlight on recognition moments and increase visibility.

Along with recognition, the company also incorporated ongoing company updates – using blog posts and videos – in its strategy to connect employees and created more engaging content within the platform, focusing on different categories like leadership, volunteering and anonymous feedback.

The company builds a culture of continuous recognition by amplifying those moments of recognition with effective employee communications. Plus, values-based recognition and communication help deepen employee’s connection to the company – and to one another – even more.

Since launching the program, 83% of employees have activated their account and started participating in recognition and communication initiatives.

What’s more, the company’s social wall has been very active, with employees regularly sending eCards to one another, demonstrating an improvement to collaboration and recognition.



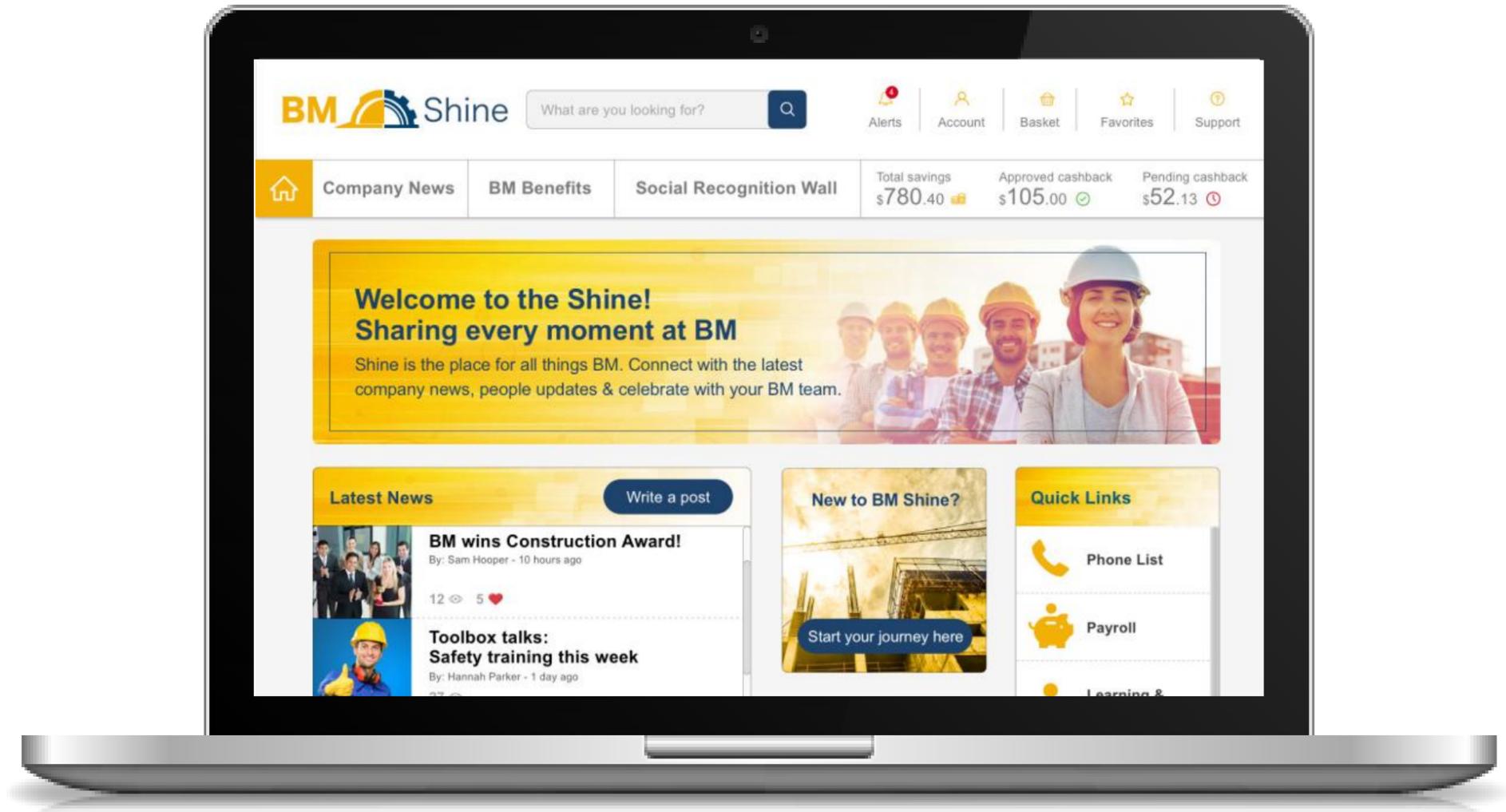
Bring employees closer together with continuous recognition

Team members who manage the employee engagement platform can tag individual employees (or teams) in blog posts to increase awareness and visibility, and amplify specific recognition moments. For example, the organization posts weekly company updates on the platform, allowing employees to stay up-to-date, feel kept in the loop and even send recognition to those involved (such as a peer-to-peer eCard) from right within the blog post – to help bring employees closer together and create a culture of continuous recognition.



Ensuring compliance and best practices company-wide

Here's a scenario: A leading global alloy manufacturer was hit hard in 2015 when oil prices took a hit, meaning the company unfortunately had to close four plants and layoff employees. Morale was low and the company needed to rethink its gameplan.



This is an example of an employee engagement platform focused around compliance and best practices across an organization with employee communications, and recognition.

In order to reconnect employees to the organization’s purpose, mission and values, a focus was put on employee communications to improve employee recognition and engagement. Alongside this, it was important for the company to continue focusing on best practices and ensuring compliance in a potentially hazardous environment.

Below are the steps that the organization took:

Step One:	The HR team outlined the goals for their engagement strategy, recognizing they needed to put employee communications at the core to improve compliance and institute best practice.
Step Two:	The team broadcast weekly blogs through the employee engagement platform to communicate several areas the employees needed to improve on in order to prevent confusion (and potential accidents) down the road.
Step Three:	The company then set up “recognition stations” throughout its various facilities – specific areas equipped with computers for employees to write recognition messages which were then displayed for all employees to see when they saw employees exhibiting the new compliance rules to reinforce best practice.

All-in-all, the organization improved its workplace culture and employee engagement — and successfully improved compliance. In June 2017, it reached 2 million man-hours worked without a lost-time incident at its largest division.



Improving the customer and employee experience

Improving employee engagement through effective communications and recognition improves both the customer and employee experience for companies in various industries. For an aging services provider, the engagement journey began with updating the company values and

uniting all of the organization's locations under one branded experience.

The President and CEO worked with the team to refine the company's existing values with specific and measurable behaviors to help employees understand, internalize and be accountable for performing the experience.

After defining its new company values, the organization implemented a strategic recognition platform as a tool for capturing, sharing, discussing and learning from successes and best practices across the organization - with an emphasis on managers recognizing front-line team members.

Along with recognition, the organization kicked off semi-annual employee surveys to measure the performance of values-

based behaviors and engagement and gain invaluable feedback to help fuel open and honest communication initiatives throughout the organization.



The organization increased its Net Promoter Score (NPS) by 13% from 2011 to 2016

Recognition became a natural part of the culture, with 94% of managers sending in moments of recognition, and 76% of non-managers either giving or receiving their own recognition.

The new focus on recognition and values delivered a huge benefit to the organization by lowering turnover and improving the resident experience. According to a 2018 National Health Care Retention & RN Staffing

Report survey, each percent change in RN turnover costs an additional \$337,500 per year. The organization was able to save significantly, by reducing total nursing turnover by 36% from 2014 to 2016.

Nursing Turnover





Uniting under a new brand after a merger or acquisition

Mergers and acquisitions are both an exciting and scary time for organizations. In order to help ease employees' concerns or to help them feel more connected, it's key to break down silos and improve engagement.

We've gone through this ourselves four or five times since I've been here! Some of my best tips for using an employee engagement platform during a merger or acquisition are to:

 <p>Ensure all communication is branded, straightforward and inclusive.</p>	 <p>Phase the new company logo into employee communications and company culture.</p>	 <p>Make sure all employees understand and connect with the new company values.</p>
 <p>Focus on making sure employees don't feel overwhelmed, but still feel like part of the bigger picture with tailored onboarding.</p>	 <p>Personalize communications to specific teams or individuals with relevant information and updates.</p>	 <p>Gather feedback from various teams or individuals and analyze the data.</p>
 <p>Give a tour of the office and introduce employees to everything they'll be gaining in the transition via a video call.</p>		

To unite a disparate workforce, gather feedback and analyze the data to help fuel your next communications initiatives. The trick is to use communications to encourage employees to take the survey by providing background information – including the benefits of participating. Keep in mind, some might not like their information to be shared publicly, so be sure to mention how you’ll be distributing the results. Then, communicate out the results, making sure that employees feel respected and valued throughout the survey process, but especially when the survey is complete – when action is taken on the feedback that’s been given.



Get the pulse of your people

Employee surveys are a great tool to see how your employees are *truly* feeling. And it’s important to communicate employee survey results even when the feedback is less than favorable because it’s an opportunity to let employees know about your ongoing commitment to engagement. Keeping your people well informed as you take each step forward on your journey is a key ingredient to improving engagement.

Learn more at rg.co/surveys



Connecting employees to the leadership team

Is your organization's leadership team visible via employee communications? Our Head of Product Success, Robert Boland, created a week-long, retail-themed blog series on our employee engagement platform, which highlighted work that the Retail Team was working on and gave detailed updates. In this series, Rob shines a spotlight on retail

success and developments – an area that can have low visibility in some organizations.

The communication throughout the series was open and honest about what to expect in the coming months, and readers followed along each day to learn more about an area of the business that they may not always have direct contact with while working on

various projects or teams. It's important for all employees to understand what the Retail Team works on to truly understand how these employees help fuel the business's success.

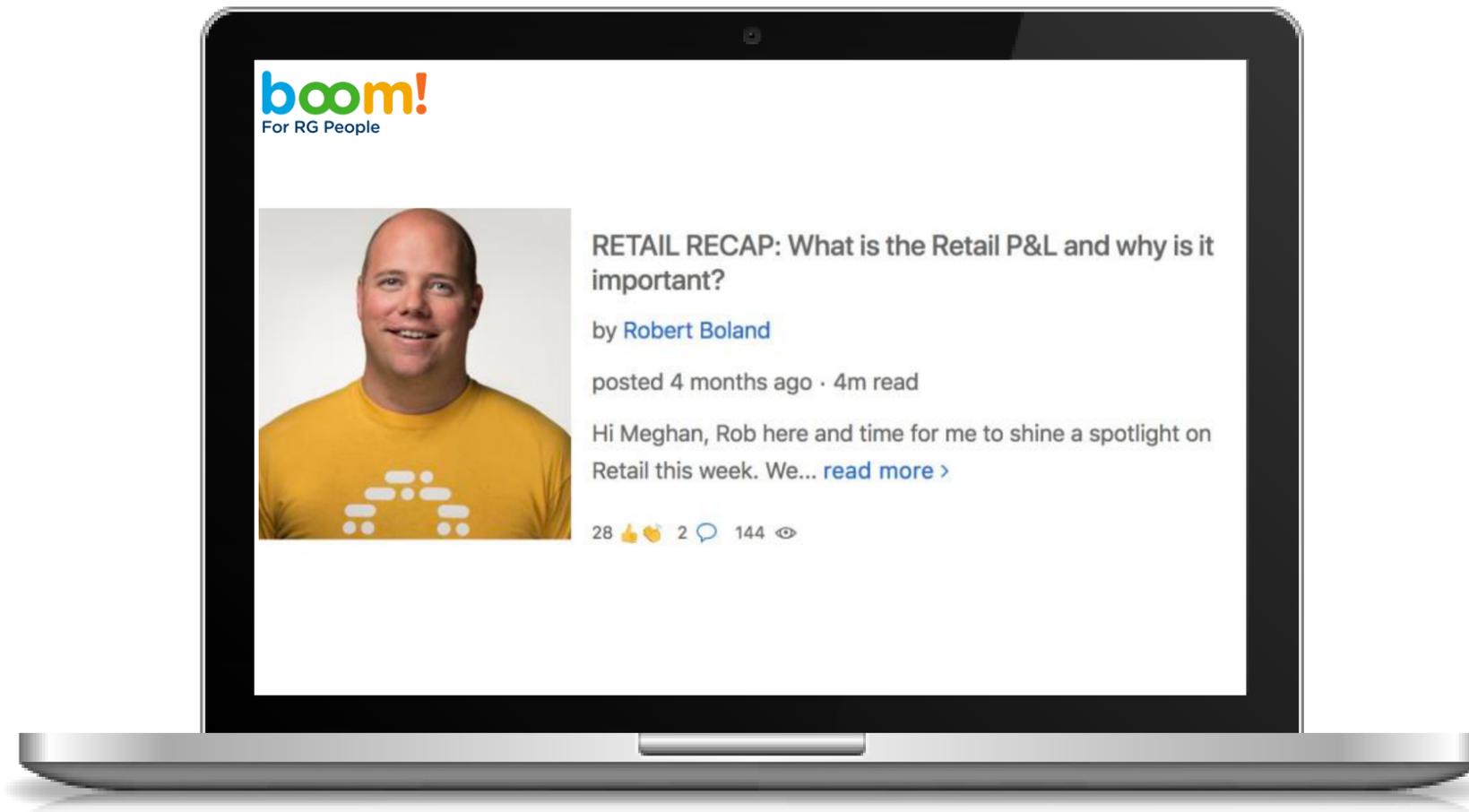
Rob made sure his blog series followed three steps to truly engage its audience.

Take a look below.

A three-step process for making team achievements more visible

1. Spotlight success	2. Communicate goals	3. Connect to the larger picture
A detailed report on the Retail Team's many successes throughout the year to help others in the business understand the impact.	What's coming next for the team – including goals and what this means for other teams as well to increase awareness.	How the Retail Team has helped RG's clients and continues to improve the user experience.

All-in-all, employees were able to feel more connected to a member of the leadership team (and retail team) due to this increased visibility and open and honest communications.



Here's an example of the first post in Robert Boland's retail series on our engagement platform. The reactions on the bottom row indicate that 28 people have reacted to the post, 2 have commented and 144 have read it.



Wear your heart on your sleeve with emojis

Emojis have changed the way we communicate - no longer do we have to use words to express how we're feeling about something. Employees can interact with company messages or updates on our employee engagement platform with defined emojis such as a thumbs up, clapping hands or a shocked face.



As part of our mission to Make the World a Better Place to Work, Reward Gateway offers the only employee engagement solution that gives employees what they crave at work. We do this by putting communications at the core to reinforce an organization's purpose, mission and values, as well as to amplify the impact of recognition, surveys and employee discounts.

If you're interested in learning more about any of Reward Gateway's engagement products to help align, motivate and engage your people, we'd love to help you get started.

Get in touch:

E: engage-us@rewardgateway.com

T: 617-379-2592



Conclusion

I hope this eBook has given you useful tips on using technology to align, motivate and engage your people. Companies of all sizes, no matter what industry, have one main thing in common: a need to connect to their workforce with open and honest communications to shine a light on what matters most to their business.

There's no one-size-fits-all approach when it comes to communicating effectively with your employees. It's about what will resonate the most with your workforce, and using technology to help you navigate the new relationship between employee and employer can give you the means to get your messages heard.

I hope these examples how to use an employee engagement platform to tailor employee communications have helped get your gears turning, and you're ready to strengthen your employee communications and improve employee engagement at your organization.

If you're interested in learning about more ways to engage your employees or how to put in place a platform which links your people to your company goals and important initiatives, get in touch with us.

To better engagement,



Catrin Lewis

Head of Global Engagement and Internal Communications

catrin.lewis@rewardgateway.com