How to Celebrate Employee Birthdays in the Workplace

Many people are eager to celebrate their birthdays. And if someone’s birthday falls on a weekday, they'll be spending a precious chunk of that day at work.

So the question isn’t, “Should companies celebrate their employees’ birthdays?” Rather, companies should be asking how they should celebrate those birthdays.

Benefits of recognizing employee birthdays

The simple act of recognizing an employee's birthday is first and foremost a nice thing to do, but also contributes to the employee experience in a number of ways.

- Reduced turnover
- Enhanced employee engagement
- Increase happiness and productivity

Why are birthdays epiphany moments?

Epiphany moments are dates or events that cause people to reexamine their life choices. What makes birthdays a natural time to reflect on our lives and career?

- Natural life milestone that encourages reflection
- Time to catch up with friends and family
- Point when we compare our accomplishments with others

8 ways to celebrate employee birthdays

#1 Decorate their workspace

Break out the balloons. 🎈🎊

A simple but sure-fire way to make an employee feel celebrated is by decorating their workspace. Streamers and confetti are always fun, but again—make sure the employee is alright with the attention and potential clean up! It's also a great idea to take the person's interests in mind. If someone really loves dogs, plastering their desks with pictures of puppies in birthday hats sounds like an excellent idea.

Give employee rewards

If your organization uses an employee reward system, you can automatically share rewards on their birthday and invite co-workers to do the same.
Many companies with flexible schedules offer to give employees time off on their birthdays. As much as we love our coworkers, allowing someone to spend their special day doing what they want is a big boon to creating a great employee experience.

#3 Write a note 📝
Nothing beats receiving a personal note on your birthday. This can be a fun greeting card, but can also be an email or kudos in an employee recognition program. Remember: make it personal and meaningful!

#4 Organize a team happy hour or birthday lunch
Schedule some time for fun on someone’s birthday! Eating together is a simple way to build build stronger teams, and being able to celebrate someone at the same time is the *literal* birthday candle on top.

#5 Share company swag
Birthdays are great times to give out company swag, such as T-shirts, hoodies, caps, and mugs.

#6 Give gift cards
Gift cards are always a good idea, especially if they're tailored to an employee’s wishlist or interests. A week before their birthday, ask them to make a few choices from a gift card list from retail stores, local restaurants, bookstores, or movie theaters. Then—this is important—make sure to tell them, “Treat yourself.”

#7 Donate to charity 🎯
Allow the employee to select the non-profit organization of their choice, and donate to it in their name for a meaningful and rewarding gift.

#8 Give them the day off
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Learn about how Bonusly can help your team celebrate birthdays and improve employee engagement by touring our platform and speaking with one of our experts.