



Retaining top talent is your #1 priority.

How to improve employee retention through meaningful recognition programs as we navigate the shift to hybrid work.

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Retaining top talent is your #1 priority.

As we begin to emerge from the pandemic, it's clear that a lot has changed. Most noticeably, employees have spent the last year rethinking what they want from their careers, who they want to work for, and how they spend their time.

A significant portion of the workforce realized that they're not getting what they need from their current jobs. This has ushered in what's called "[The Great Resignation](#)," where [41% of employees¹](#) are considering leaving their current employer in 2021—[compared to 15% voluntary turnover rates pre-pandemic²](#)—and 46% of workers are planning to make a major pivot or career transition.

This opportunistic attitude is only fueled by the uptick in remote and hybrid roles, which open up new doors for employees who didn't previously have these options.

While this is a scary prospect for organizations, it also signals a promising change. Companies now recognize the importance of retaining their best talent by addressing their personal and professional needs, prioritizing their wellbeing, and providing them with flexible options. Employers who fail to do so in a post-pandemic world will risk losing their top-performing employees to competitors.

41%

Of employees are considering leaving their current employer.

46%

Of workers are planning to make a major pivot or career transition.

Why does employee turnover matter?

Put simply, employee retention is the most underappreciated cost of the post-pandemic economy. A [CAP Study¹](#) estimates it can cost up to nine months of an employee's salary to replace them. Consider the time and company resources it takes to recruit, interview, hire, and ramp up a replacement. It can be challenging to quantify these "soft costs" of hiring and training a replacement, but they can significantly impact a business's bottom line.

[Employee departures can also have a negative ripple effect on the company culture.](#) Your remaining employees may experience a dip in engagement as they wonder why a coworker left and consider leaving themselves. Your employees are also [more likely to experience burnout](#) as they take on increased workloads until the open role is filled. This is the last thing you want when [54% of employees already feel overworked²](#) during the pandemic. Exhausted, disengaged employees can cost U.S. companies up to [\\$550 billion a year³](#) in lost productivity.

[Employee turnover is especially prevalent among younger workers,](#) who the pandemic may have disproportionately impacted from an economic and social perspective. In fact, a survey found that [61% of Gen Z employees²](#) are struggling at work. This is a demographic that businesses can't afford to ignore, given that, by 2025, Gen Z workers will make up [27% of the workforce⁴](#). Organizations need to start thinking about how they're going to meet the needs of their Gen Z employees in the new hybrid world if they want to retain the fresh perspectives and valuable contributions of this generation.

This may lead you to ask yourself: [What programs should I prioritize to reduce employee turnover?](#)

¹Center for American Progress, 2012 "There Are Significant Business Costs to Replacing Employees"; ²Microsoft WorkLab, 2021 "The Next Great Disruption Is Hybrid Work—Are We Ready?"; ³Gallup, 2013 "How to Tackle U.S. Employees' Stagnating Engagement"; ⁴McCrindle, "Gen Z and Gen Alpha Infographic Update."

Meaningful and effective recognition is the answer.

69% of employees¹ would be more likely to stay at a company if they received more recognition. This is great news for employers because recognition is low-hanging fruit. You can share verbal recognition in a matter of seconds. You've also likely already set aside a budget for recognition, which means it's simply a matter of re-funneling existing funds rather than making a business case for an entirely new program. Lastly, recognition is based on observable behaviors, making it that much easier to champion internally.

Recognition strengthens how peers feel about each other, but its effect is even more meaningful for the manager-direct report relationship. We've all heard the common refrain that people don't leave jobs; they leave managers. That's why **57% of employees²** have left at least one company because of their boss.

57%

Of employees have left at least one company because of their boss.

69%

Of employees are more likely to stay at a company if they received more recognition.

But the other side is just as true: **People stay when they have a good manager.** When managers get recognition right, they promote positive feelings in their direct reports. **Research from SHRM** shows that favorable treatment from a manager is synonymous with support from the organization. So when employees feel that they're appreciated by their company, their motivation to continue receiving recognition and their level of job performance increase accordingly.

Remember that recognition has to be done well to be effective—it won't make up for serious problems with company culture or management. Recognition programs need to be intentional and structured to create these feelings of goodwill and boost retention. **The key is to implement a recognition program that reflects and strengthens your existing company culture.**

Shareable experiential recognition programs increase employee retention.

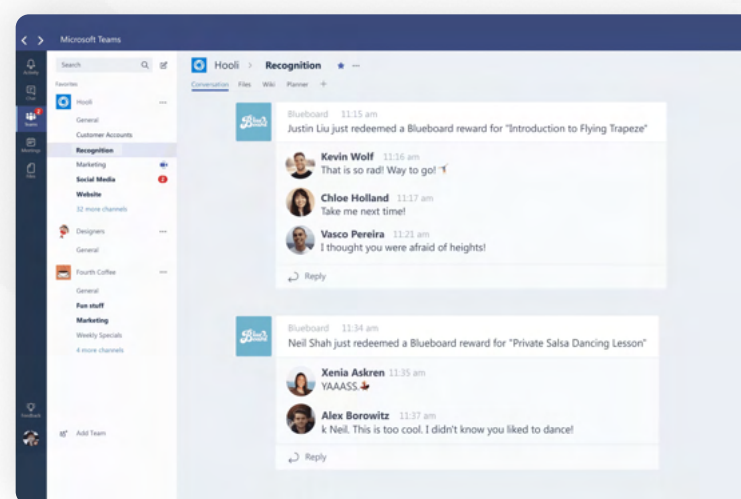
Blueboard experiences are memorable, exciting, and create stories that employees can't wait to share.

While monetary rewards might give employees a small burst of excitement, it can feel awkward bragging about a cash bonus in front of coworkers (no one wants to be that person).

But watching an epic sunrise on a hot air balloon ride or catching that first wave during a surf lesson are organic conversation starters. Even though many of us aren't working in the same office anymore, communication forums like [Slack](#) or [Microsoft Teams](#) make it easy to share photos and video memories. Blueboard integrates with both tools, offering automations that inspire organic conversation and bonding between remote or distributed teams.



Kathy K. at USI takes a sunrise hot air balloon ride.



Automatically push Blueboard reward notifications to MS Teams and Slack to generate organic buzz.

“Blueboard has empowered us to help our employees feel like they're living their best lives, that they're valuable members of a high-performance organization, while also getting the opportunities to take a break and enjoy the pleasures that LIFE has to offer.”



Tim Betry
VICE PRESIDENT OF PEOPLE AND PLACES





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With experiential rewards, employees are motivated to share their once-in-a-lifetime experiences with their peers. You can easily bring these stories to your entire company by sharing photos through internal social channels, announcing them at your company all-hands or newsletters, or turning Steve's skydiving adventure into an Instagram-friendly sizzle reel to illustrate how your company rewards top performers. Not only does this form of storytelling keep current employees motivated, but it also attracts new talent to your unique, authentic employer brand.

"It's the experience that keeps on giving! I'll be able to enjoy it for years to come."

Jessica C.
USI

The shareability of Blueboard rewards has two significant benefits: **It demonstrates that your company values retaining great talent and shows the world how you reward your top performers.** It also communicates that you care about your employees in a holistic way—which is one of the factors driving people into new roles during the "Great Resignation." You're not simply throwing money at employees: **You're enhancing their lives by offering meaningful experiences they wouldn't have had access to otherwise.**

By celebrating experiences, you show that your company truly cares about building a culture of recognition that makes employees want to stay.



Lydia M.



Julio M.



Elli G.



Helena A.



Cristiann L.



Belden S.



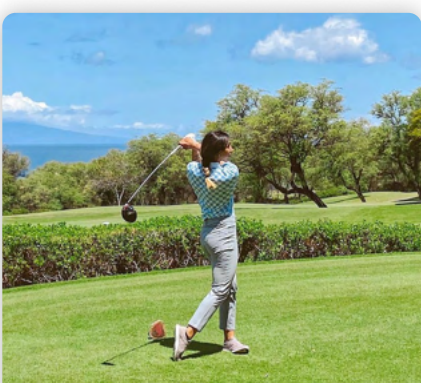
Adam S.



Giles H.



Jason C.



Chelsea S.



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Experiential recognition in practice: stories from our clients.

Thinking you'd like to build a culture of recognition at your company? Great idea! Here are a few best practices from current Blueboard clients using experiential rewards to improve retention.

100%

Of Precision BioSciences employees agree Blueboard is an excellent tool for improving retention.

Medidata: Celebrating great work at a global scale.

As a fast-growing company, Medidata recognized the importance of keeping their top talent and decided to revamp their recognition program as a key retention strategy. They worked with Blueboard to create a three-part spot recognition program that gives employees the flexibility to choose the reward that's most meaningful to them. **Today, 4.8 out of 5 Medidata employees believe Blueboard rewards are effective at retaining top talent.** [Read their full story here.](#)

"When managers can give the employee their choice of an experience, it creates a memory. And that memory is always tied to your company. Giving them a spot bonus will probably pay for a bill, and they're not going to remember that in a year, versus an experience that will last for their lifetime."

medidata | Carrie Theisen
VP OF GLOBAL TOTAL REWARDS

Precision BioSciences: Retaining top talent in a competitive market.

To compete for top talent in biotech, Precision BioSciences decided to partner with Blueboard to build an exceptional anniversary awards program that celebrates key milestones with experiential rewards. The result? **100% of employees unanimously agree that Blueboard is an excellent tool for improving retention rates.** [Read their full story here.](#)

"On a scale of 1 to 10, how likely am I to recommend Blueboard? It's a solid 15 or 20. Seriously, I would encourage any HR team to look into what Blueboard can do for them."

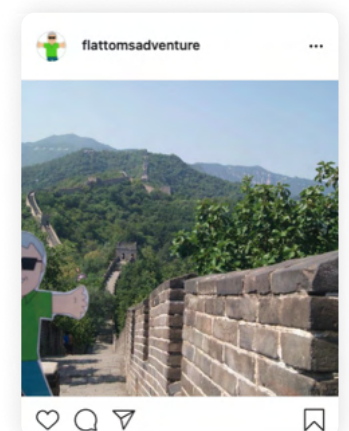
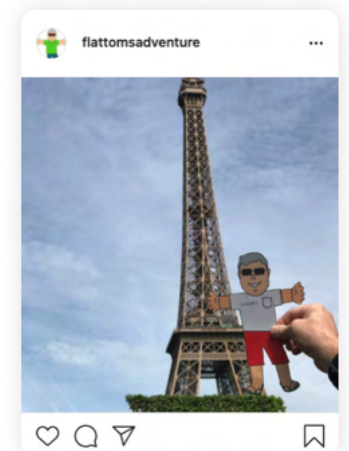
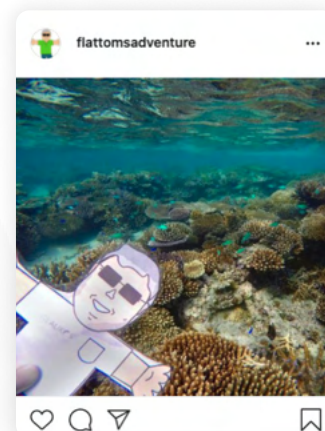
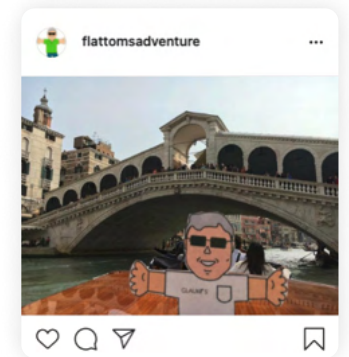
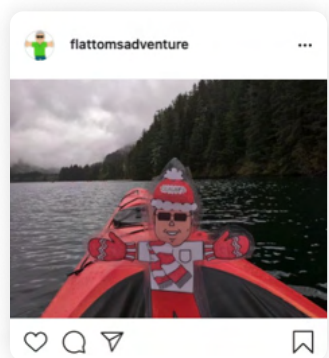
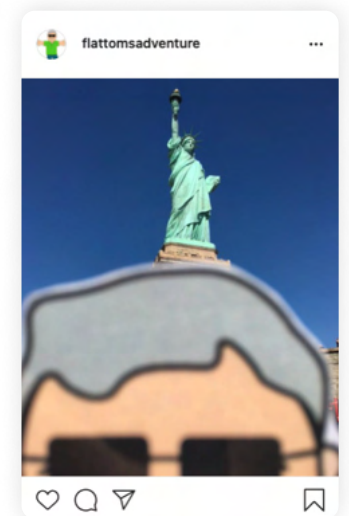
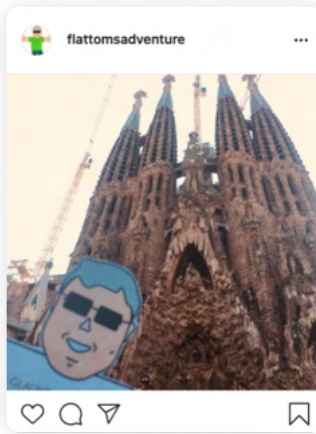
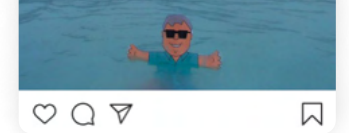
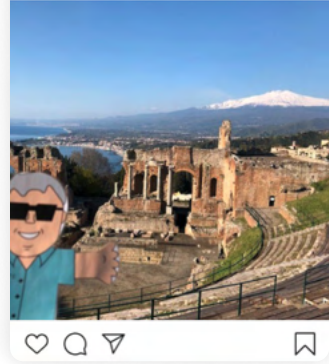
PRECISION BIOSCIENCES | Christine Wilson
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES



Glaukos: Anniversary experiences that employees can't wait to share.

Glaukos celebrates employees reaching their 5-, 10- and 15-year anniversaries with Blueboard rewards, encouraging employees to bring along a paper cutout of their CEO Tom Burns, dubbed "Flat Tom," on their adventures.

Photos are posted internally on a community photo wall and on Instagram at @FlatTomsAdventure. Promoting these Blueboard reward stories motivates Glaukos employees to reach their anniversary milestones through increased tenure and cheer along with their peers as they reach theirs—building a healthy culture centered around tenure recognition. [Read their full story here.](#)





Recognition programs that inspire long-term retention.

Let's chat through a few types of recognition programs that build a more positive company culture and, as a result, motivate great talent to stay longer.

"Some organizations have eliminated recognition for service anniversaries – we're investing in it for the future. Blueboard enables us to deliver meaningful recognition at scale."



Company-wide spot recognition.

A [spot recognition](#) program can be manager- or peer-led and recognize anything from hard work to a solid demonstration of core company values. This type of recognition program [reinforces the values or behaviors you want to see in employees](#). When people feel like they're truly contributing to the bottom line, they achieve a stronger sense of purpose and are more likely to stay.

Here's a bonus for companies that choose to partner with Blueboard: Experiential spot bonuses are highly shareable. As employees post photos and videos from their rewards, they create a ripple effect that motivates other employees to qualify for their own Blueboard rewards.



Vina Leite
CHIEF PEOPLE OFFICER

 theTradeDesk



Memorable anniversary awards.

Celebrating employee milestones through [anniversary awards](#) supports company culture and retention. Why? Because [recognizing employee tenure with unique and exciting rewards creates a fulfilling and positive work environment](#). Some employees aren't shy about saying they won't look for another job until they've hit a particular milestone—they're holding out for that coveted award!



Company values awards.

Certain milestones may be out of reach during the pandemic as companies continue to navigate unforeseen challenges, and many employees are struggling with feelings of isolation in a remote and hybrid world. This environment presents the perfect opportunity for organizations to root their recognition efforts in their company values.

Company value awards are powerful for a few reasons. First, they allow everyone—from the CEO to the new marketing intern—the opportunity to be recognized for their contributions. They also give employees the chance to demonstrate their value in ways that feel authentic to them, rather than just striving to hit external or quantitative performance metrics. This type of recognition is a great way to increase feelings of inclusion and belonging, remind everyone of your company values, and demonstrate that you appreciate all of your employees' contributions—not just the financially-driven ones.

“Blueboard made everything so easy. When I got there, they took complete care of me! Blueboard truly made my dream come true!”

James R.
TASKUS



Building a culture of recognition: tips & tricks.

1. Create feedback loops.

Measure the impact of your recognition program by looking at quantitative metrics like feedback scores, utilization rates, and program sentiment, as well as qualitative feedback from engagement surveys—which are all available within our [Admin Tools](#) reporting suite. This will help you report on your program's ongoing success, identify areas for improvement, and ultimately build a business case for continued or expanded program efforts.

2. Invest in training and education.

To ensure managers reward employees consistently and fairly, you have to invest in continuous education. These efforts can include an onboarding webinar, one-pagers that address FAQs, or dedicated training sessions. At Blueboard, we also outfit our clients with informational landing pages to show off some of the exciting experiences available. Educating managers will increase employee adoption of your program, ensuring that your recognition efforts deliver their maximum potential. It'll also help them become better bosses and reduce those turnover rates, as we mentioned on page 2.

3. Have recognition stem from the top.

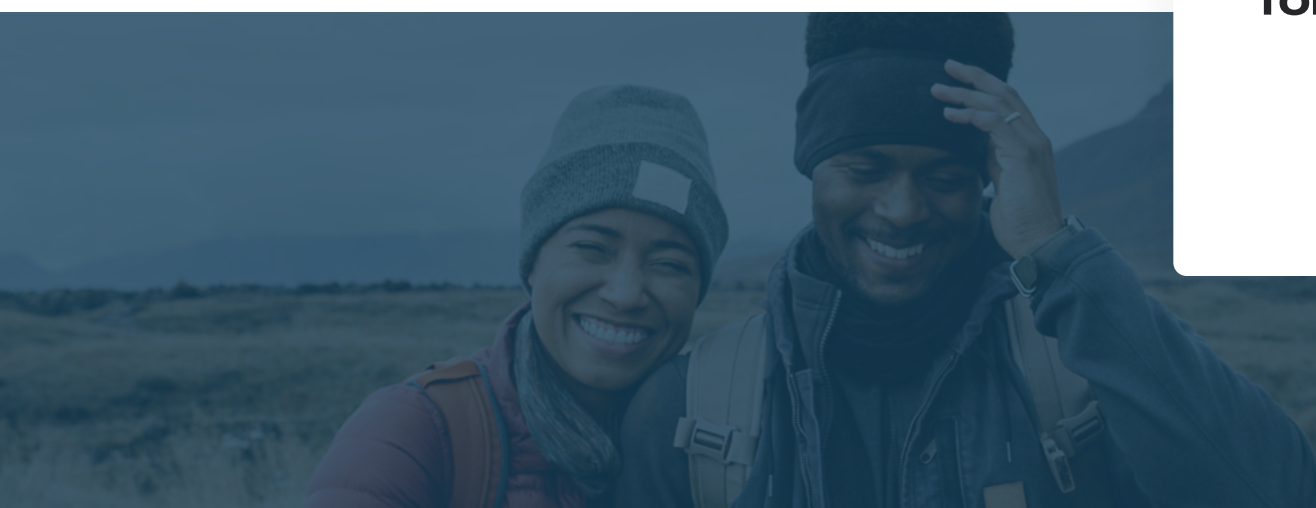
Executives can show their support and buy-in in many ways. They can start by sharing recognition stories during Town Hall meetings or sending out a supportive message through Slack or email if working in a hybrid setting.

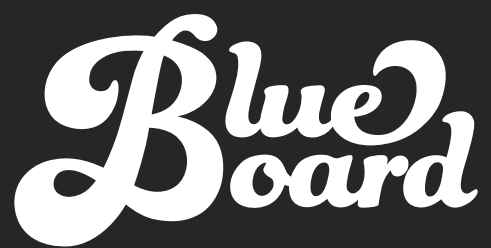
4. Socialize your recognition efforts.

In a hybrid setting, there are fewer opportunities for organic recognition moments. But by leveraging tools like Slack or Microsoft Teams, you can effectively socialize your recognition efforts, making sure everyone is aware of the hard work of your top performers and keeping your program top of mind for the entire organization. You can use Blueboard's integrations to automatically push out the recognition moments that matter to encourage natural conversation (and all the emojis).

"Thanks for everything! I have one more Blueboard reward left and I'm looking forward to redeeming it for a future excursion."

Laura A.
TRADESHIFT





**Want to learn how Blueboard
can help you build a culture of
recognition that boosts retention?**

Browse our sample [experience menu](#)
or [request a demo](#).

We look forward to connecting!