What is Recognition?
Recognition is the acknowledgement of a contribution, effort, talent or skill in a way that someone experiences feelings of appreciation. It is a way of communicating to emphasize that not only what, but how employees do their work matters and contributes to a greater purpose.

Why Recognize?
Effective employee recognition can be your most important tool in creating a happier employee and a happier workplace. Research is consistently linking positivity and happiness in the workplace to employees who are working smarter, more productive and overall, more engaged in their organization’s success. Recognition is also directly linked to building a more trusting culture, improving communication and attracting and keeping the best employees.

What to Recognize?
- **Performance** - solving a problem; accepting a challenge; completing an assignment
- **Behavior** - motivating others; commitment to team; credo behaviors
- **Presence and Life Occasions** - being actively involved; birthdays; service anniversaries; what is important to that person

Who to Recognize?
Find the unique talent of every employee. Some may be acknowledged for their superstar performance but the workplace also needs those who are consistent, dependable, strong, flexible and always there when you need them. Everyone contributes to our success – watch for the many different ways that happens.

How to Recognize?
Recognition is best received when it is given with intent. The simple points below help create more meaningful outcomes. Think about how you want your recipient to feel.
- **Soon** - give praise as close to the time it occurred as possible, timing matters
- **Sincere** - acknowledge behavior because you are truly appreciative; mention what it means to you and the organization
- **Specific** - give actual details of the achievement, what happened and why it matters
- **Personal** - express your appreciation in person or in a handwritten note; ask what would be meaningful, such as private vs. public recognition
- **Positive** - give encouraging and appreciative feedback and don’t mix in criticism
- **Proactive** - notice and acknowledge good performance, don’t wait for perfection

Recognition Tips
[WWW.HR.VANDERBILT.EDU/RECOGNITION- CENTRAL]
Ways to Recognize?

• Create a departmental recognition team – allow the team to provide suggestions on what they want and what would be meaningful.

• Write a thank you note and send it to the home address; tell family members how much you appreciate this employee and how their contributions matter.

• Invite an employee into your office for no other reason than to say thank you.

• Create a thank you board and encourage peer to peer recognition.

• Open each team/staff meeting with specific and individual/team recognition.

• Invent special awards/treats - such as ice cream for “Keeping it Cool” for someone who maintained composure in a tough situation or “Hero Day” along with hero sandwiches when someone goes above and beyond. Make up your own that relate to your work.

• Make a “Get to Know You” page for new employees. Instead of taking it down after a month, put it in a book so the new employees can learn about those already on the team.

• Know the hire dates of your employees and specifically thank them on their anniversary.

• Celebrate important mile markers in meeting your department goals or initiatives.

• Create your own holiday and celebrate. Have a contest to name it and decide what special food goes with the day.

• Hold an awards ceremony – Academy Awards style.

• Create a “welcome aboard” award for new employees as they complete orientation.

• Invent fun activities such as, give each employee a sticky note pad with instructions to write and deliver one “thank you” note per day.

How to make Recognition part of your daily leadership?

• Add recognition as a to-do item on your calendar

• Create a personal performance goal around recognition

• Include recognition in regular rounding

• Track recognition on a spreadsheet

• Include as an agenda item on meetings with one up leader, manage up

• Encourage and empower teams to manage up each other by letting you know of times their co-workers should be recognized

• Keep it simple but meaningful - use sticky notes, voice mail, email

• Add the why...if you bring pizza or other treats for the team be clear about the reason – use opportunities every day to express a thank you

• Begin and/or end each day with a positive email or voice mail to express gratitude and to thank someone

The bottom line: all employees feel good about giving, receiving, and witnessing recognition for great work. Take the time, effort, and care to get it right and you’ll reap the rewards.