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3 Ways to Automate Your Service Anniversary Awards Process

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Managing service anniversaries for employees throughout the year can be incredibly time-consuming, especially when you want to ensure that everyone has a memorable and personal experience.

If you want to get rid of your Excel spreadsheets, stop begging managers to participate and quit shopping for certificates, plaques and gift cards, here are three ways to automate the repetitive manual processes and free up your time for more interesting endeavours!

1. Start with a simple, consistent approach

The most challenging task with an effective service anniversary program is making sure every participant has the same, high-quality experience. Ideally, you'd like to have their managers involved in presenting the award and engaging the whole team. Unfortunately, not all managers are effective in creating the right experience.

PRO TIP: This process can also be used to recognise birthdays. Simply include the month and day of your employees' birthdates in the database.

Instead, get a recognition program that can automate manager notifications and employee recognitions. Start by including the employee hire date in your participant database. Your supplier team can then query all recipients who will celebrate a milestone in the following month and load that file into their recognition system. Once loaded, the managers receive an alert for the upcoming anniversaries and the recipients receive their congratulatory message on their actual celebration date.

PRO TIP: Change the eCard and include a new message of appreciation from the top leader(s) each year to keep it fresh for recipients.

The recipient message can include award points or an award selection, an eCard, a badge and a written message. This all happens through the recognition system behind the scenes. Once set up, the HR team can monitor recognitions sent and received via the system reports. No other resources are required!

2. Add a level of personalisation

Take the simple approach to the next level by including a 'Celebration' webpage. The notification process is like the approach above, however the recipient also has a personal celebration banner on the recognition website.

The 'Celebration' page consists of a series of banners that create a special experience for the recipient. These banners can display: eCards, badges, gift selection, gift preview, message from managers, "the year that was", company timeline and celebration video.

PRO TIP: A company timeline is a great way to make connections between your brand and the recipient's daily work. Help them relate to the overall success of your organisation and their impact on it.



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PRO TIP: Use this functionality to recognise retirees, annual top performers, safety milestones and patents. This is also a great tool for welcoming new hires.

When the recipient clicks on the Celebration banner on the main recognition program homepage, they are delighted by all the unique content on a page that's built just for them. Since the process is driven behind the scenes, the HR team does not need to devote any time to managing the recipient or manager experience.

3. Make it one-of-a-kind

In some organisations, the team leader will purchase a greeting card and have all the team members sign it. This is a great way to recognise a milestone, but it does have some drawbacks: the manager may forget, some of the team may not have a chance to sign and it excludes colleagues on other teams who would participate if they knew there was an opportunity.

You can take this process into the digital age. Your recognition system can create a social recognition experience that personalises the celebration by engaging friends, family and co-workers. It's called a personalised URL (PURL), and it's a website that's created specifically for the recipient.

The recipient's manager is notified several weeks before the anniversary date and given instructions to invite contributors to participate in the celebration. Each contributor gets a link to the webpage where they can upload photos, videos and write a message. They can also invite others to contribute. This process creates custom content that is built into a standard company-branded template that can include a gift selection, video from leadership, eCard, written messages and other banners. The PURL is then sent to the recipient on their anniversary date. After enjoying the content, recipients can print it as well as send a thank you message to all the contributors and there's even an option to post the PURL to the recipient's social networks.

The typical resource required for setting up PURL celebrations is creating any company-specific assets, such as the video from leadership or special eCards. Once these are finalised, the process is automated and the HR team can monitor engagement with the PURL via built-in reports. No one needs to alert the managers about the process, and there's even a work-around for those managers who are on leave or unavailable to participate.

Why celebrate service anniversaries

Effective employee recognition, and specifically service anniversary awards, play a significant role in creating an emotional connection with employees.

PRO TIP: Incorporate 1-year, 2-year and/or 3-year service anniversary recognition. Make sure employees feel connected to the company as early as possible because many may choose to leave before reaching the 5-year milestone.



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Savvy companies understand that average employee tenure is decreasing, however longevity is critical to success because:

1. Employee longevity is required for learning and high performance of complex tasks
2. Leadership development takes significant investment in time
3. Succession planning requires long-term employees
4. Employees want to work in organisations that value them
5. Employee turnover is costly and avoidable

Service anniversaries remain an important component of your overall recognition strategy. By integrating longevity award programs with other recognition efforts, you can ensure that your efforts are aligned to your employee value proposition. This broadened approach plays a key role in building the emotional connection that drives employee commitment to your brand, business objectives and customer experience.

To learn more about how BI WORLDWIDE can help you implement results-based recognition in your organisation, visit BIWORLDWIDE.com.au or email enquiries@au.biworldwide.com.

