



RewardGateway
the employee engagement people

5 Secret Ingredients to Launch an Employee Engagement Platform

Crafting a recipe for success for the perfect platform launch



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Introduction

Hi there,

If improving employee engagement is a goal of yours this year, you're not alone. Employee engagement is more important than ever – due to the pandemic and the rise of hybrid working, there's a need to keep employees connected and motivated from any location, at any time.

Every day I talk to dozens of business leaders who want to improve the employee experience, connect their people to their mission, increase productivity and transform their culture with the help of technology. And each time I mention the most crucial part of any new platform's success – your people. **Making sure your engagement initiative lands successfully with your people is essential to proving**

ROI and reaching your business goals.

What does this mean for employers? Launching an employee engagement platform is definitely a step in the right direction, but ensuring it hits the mark with your people and continually evolves is the key to long-term success. Technology alone isn't going to close the engagement gap, but listening to your people, finding the right partner and using data to make informed decisions will.

A core part of my role is to help countless organizations reach their unique engagement goals by implementing tailored employee engagement platforms that bring their cultures to life, and I want to share some of those best practices with you.

In this eBook, we'll walk through:

- Common challenges organizations face and how to overcome them with an engagement strategy
- How to set realistic expectations and understand usage best practices
- Real-life examples for ensuring ongoing success by involving your people

I hope this eBook sets you up to not only tackle your engagement challenges, but to also go forth knowing you're not in it alone. Your goals to reach and connect with your people are closer than you think.

Let's sift through the details together,

Emily Burke

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Eyes on the Pies: Forming a True Partnership and Setting Realistic Goals



First things first, leave the “cookie-cutter” provider behind

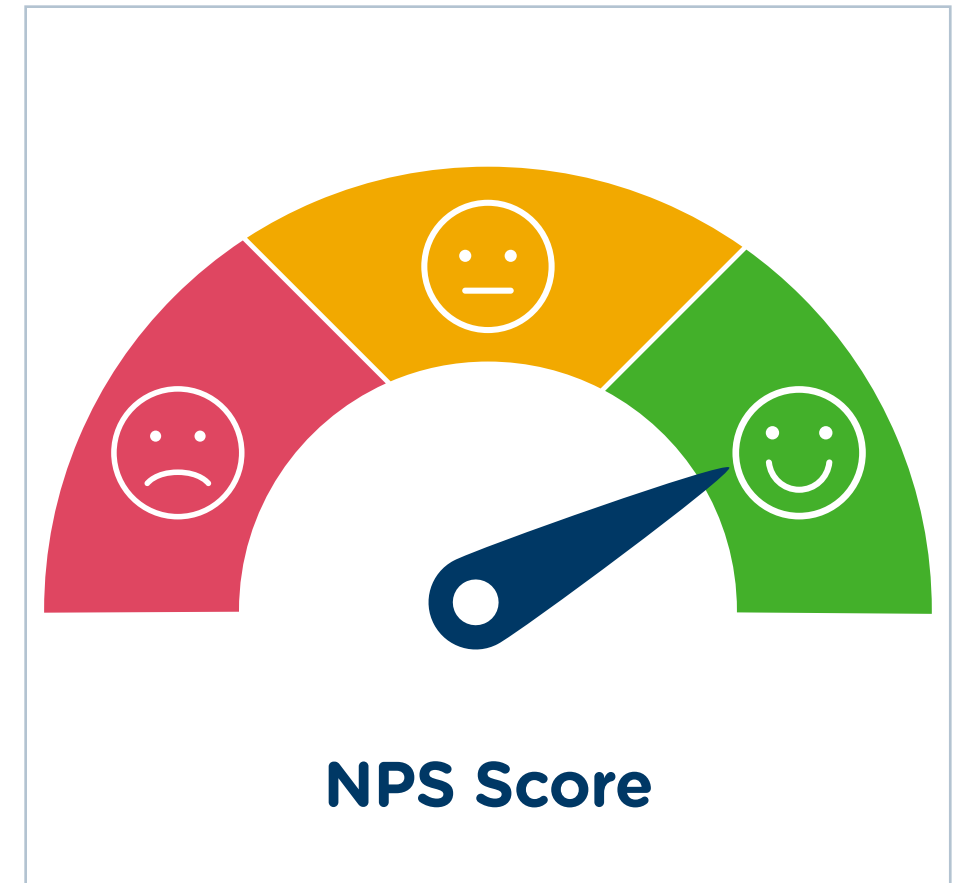
After working with over 2,000 clients worldwide, there are some common themes that we see across all organizations of all sizes and I want to share them with you.



Before you implement any employee engagement platform, it's key to find a partner who understands your challenges because it's vital to your technological success.

When you're ready to implement, knowing you have a true partner who listens to your feedback and demonstrates that their business is customer-focused will set you up for success in the long-term. This is where a Net Promoter Score can come into play because it measures customers' overall satisfaction and willingness to recommend a product.









According to Retently, on a scale from -100 to 100, the average NPS score for SaaS companies is 26. I'm really proud that our **U.S. Implementation Team has an NPS score of 96**, which shows our dedication to maintaining this high standard for ourselves and our clients through practicing open and honest communications and being transparent with our clients. We form stronger relationships that are built on trust and deep understanding.



Having a partner who asks the right questions to get to the heart of your “why” for putting a platform in place for your people will help you and your team make informed decisions and know what to look for on your engagement journey.

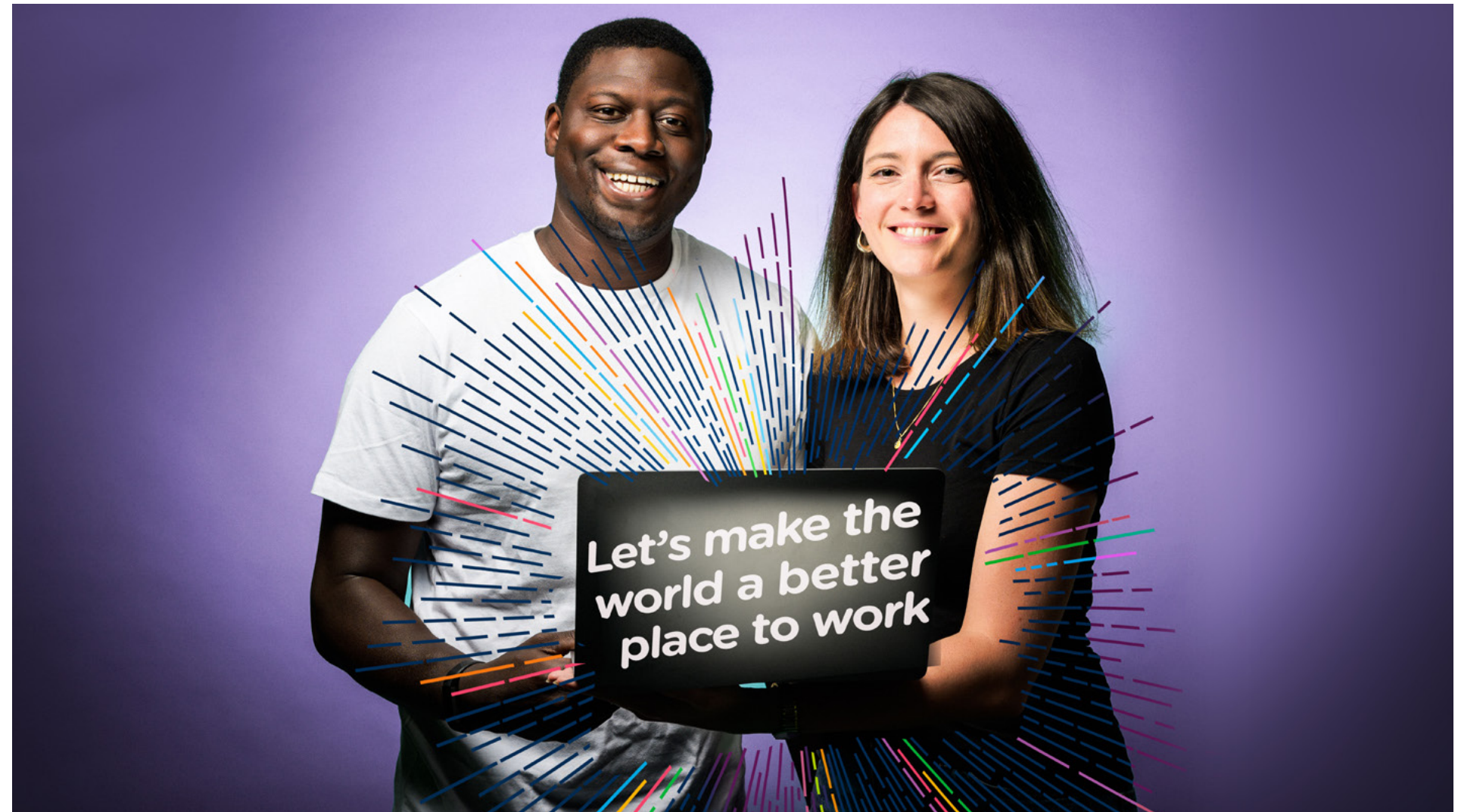
Here at Reward Gateway, our Client Success Managers (CSMs) are your ongoing, strategic partners. Initially, they work with you to outline your unique goals, and then come up with a game plan for reaching these goals.

Finding the right mix of goals for your unique strategy:

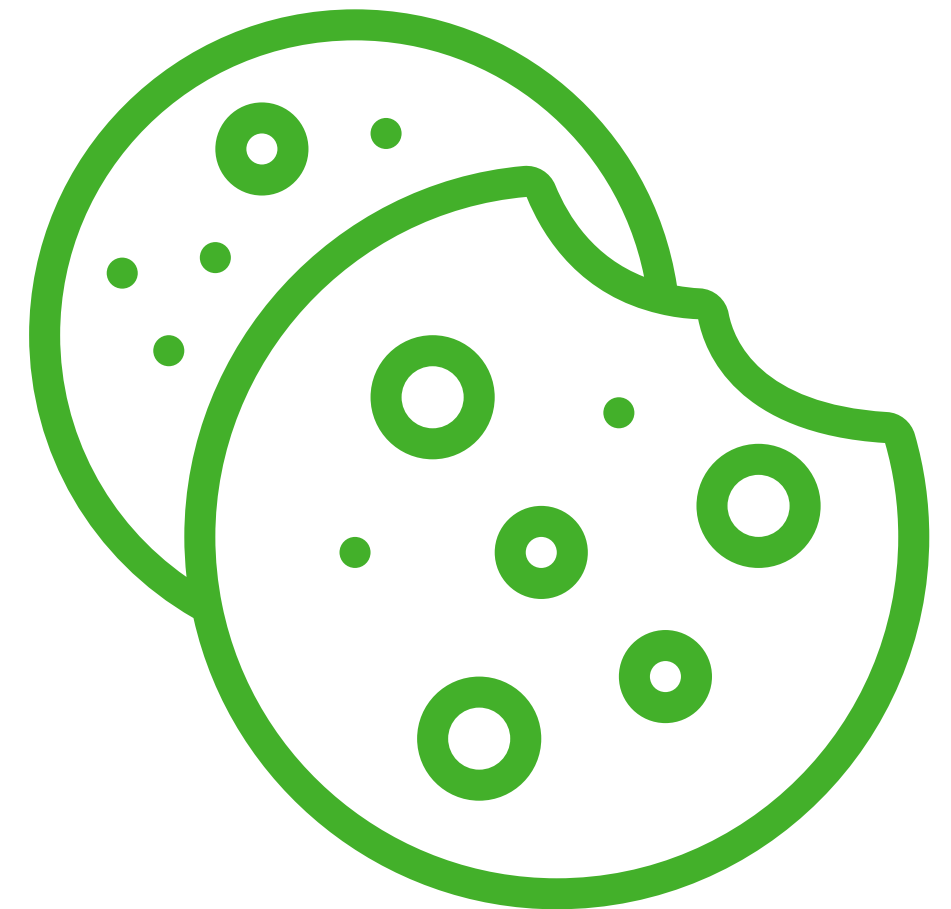
 <p>Improve Employee Value Proposition</p>	 <p>Keep all employees updated on company news</p>	 <p>Connect employees to mission and purpose</p>	 <p>Create a culture of continuous recognition and appreciation</p>	 <p>Showcase company culture and values</p>
 <p>Unite employees during times of high change</p>	 <p>Boost employee morale</p>	 <p>Reduce employee or customer churn</p>	 <p>Address employee feedback survey</p>	 <p>Consolidate HR Systems</p>
 <p>Connect remote, hybrid and frontline employees to business</p>				

Just like no two engagement journeys are the same, no two platforms should be the same. **With Reward Gateway, our clients' employee engagement platforms are fully customized to their employer brand - we bring your values, colors and mission to life in one centralized place.**

Early on in the process, our team gets to know you and your people so that we can help you not only successfully launch a new engagement platform and create excitement, also describe how you and your CSM can work together to ensure long-lasting success.



Love at First Bite: Introducing Your People to Your New Program



Cake it easy: Program adoption takes time

After you find your partner and identify your unique goals, it's important to spend some time thinking about participation and usage.

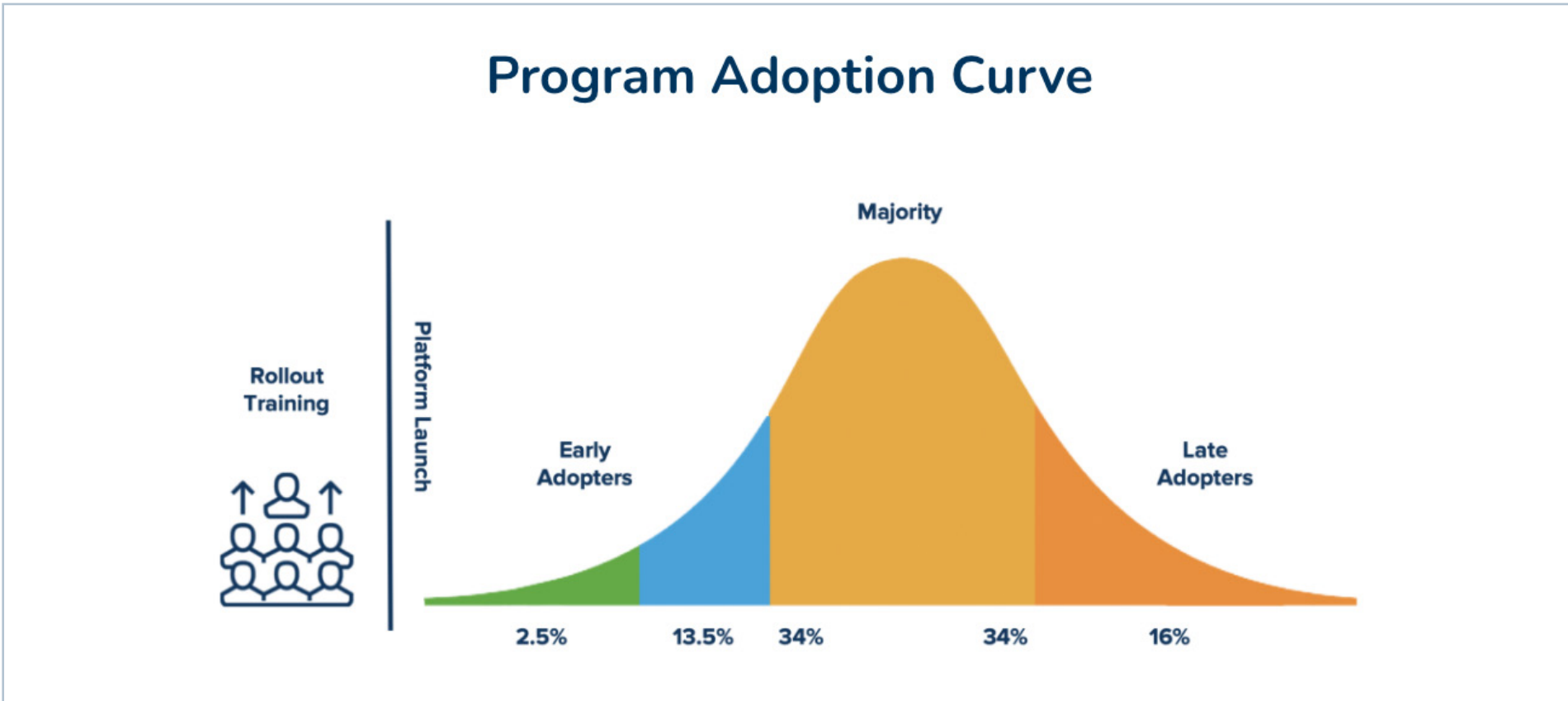


While we all want to see 100% participation, we know that embracing technology takes time, just like the perfect dessert.

There's no magic number and each organization is different. Program adoption varies by employee size, industry, employee demographics or location. Think about the different factors of your organization and set

realistic goals upfront. For example, if you have a hard-to-reach workforce, think realistically about how you can set goals for various milestones: What would you like to see during week one, three months out or six months out? Your team and your Client Success Manager can then help you with best practices and setting expectations so you can increase usage and participation as you go.

Grounding yourself in the technology adoption curve below can help identify the categories your people may fall into, so you can set realistic expectations:



There will always be early adopters of technology and these will likely be your program champions (more on that later!). In the middle, you have the majority and these are the people who may not be first to use the technology but will gradually become everyday users. Finally, you have the late adopters (sometimes known as the skeptics) who can be the hardest audience to reach.

It all comes down to working with a partner who will understand how to increase participation and usage, to help you get through even the toughest technology curve.

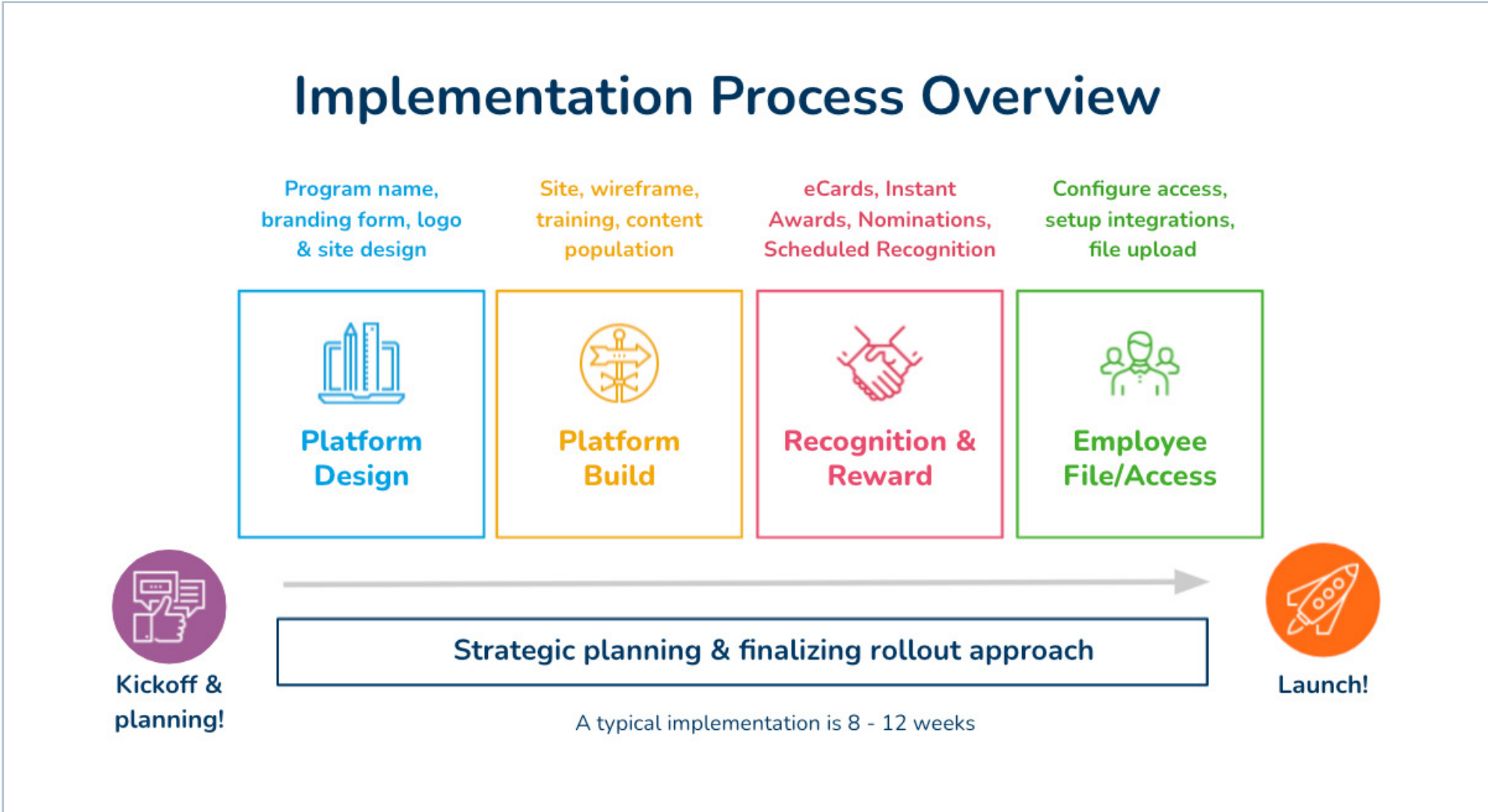


The main event: All you knead to know for your launch date

Timelines and planning are important each step of the way, and this is especially true for determining your launch date. Here are some questions to consider for making the biggest splash at your organization:

- **When will this have the biggest impact?**
- **What feedback have we received from our people?**
- **Is there an important holiday or event we can plan this around?**
- **Can we tie this to something internal (new branding, new values)?**

The average launch timeline is between 8-12 weeks depending on the mix of engagement tools you're putting in place - we use the input from the questions to recommend what we think will work best given our experience. The type of engagement platform you're launching will also influence your timing and "internal hooks" for employees to generate excitement - and usage - from the get go.

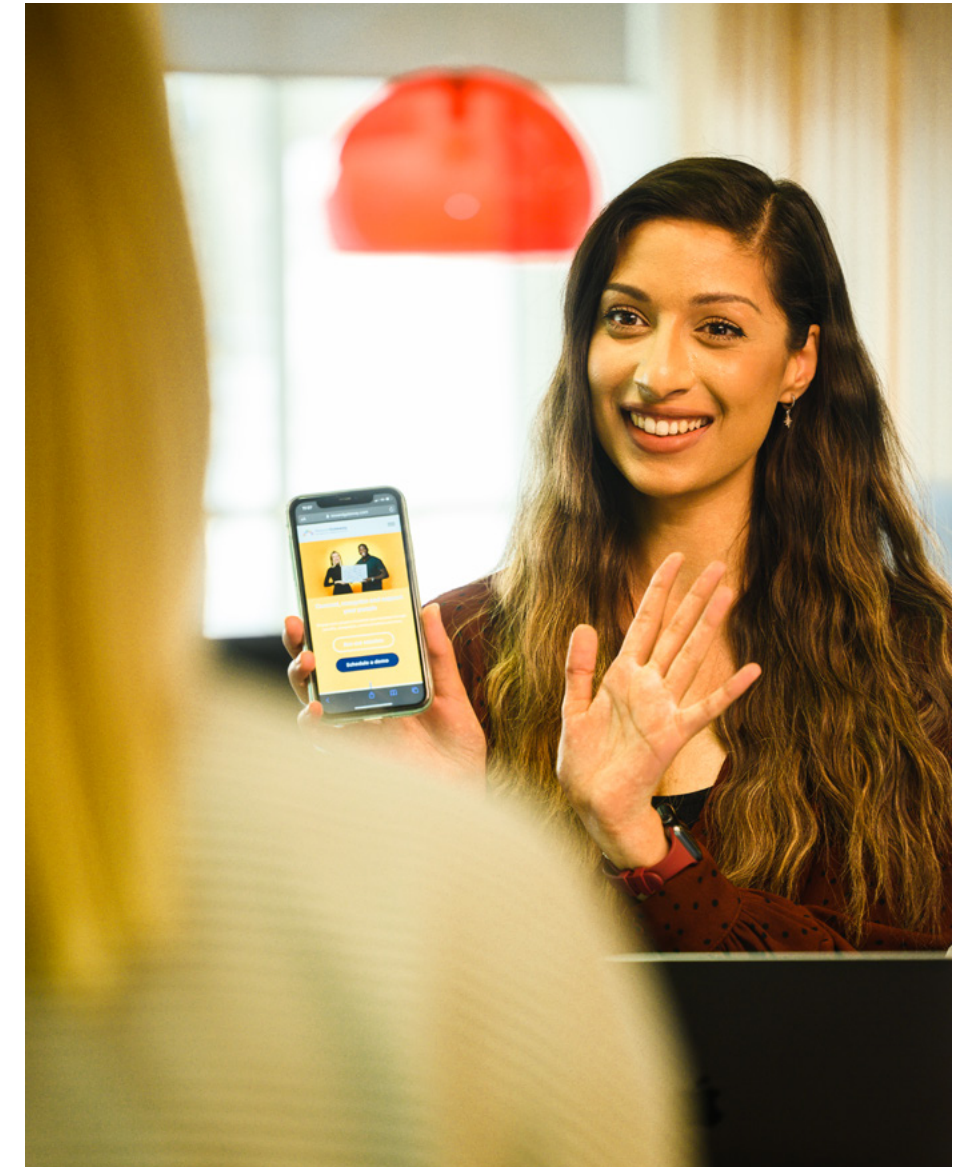


We've had clients launch right before the holidays to ensure their people get access to employee discounts that help their employees' paychecks go further. We've also seen clients launch their recognition program alongside new company values that are highlighted on the program's homepage and in values-based, peer-to-peer eCards. We've seen companies go through mergers or acquisitions and use the platform's communications capabilities to send company-wide updates and use it as an onboarding tool as well.











Depending on what type of program you're putting in place - whether it's recognition, communications, surveys or discounts, or a combination of all of these, your strategy will always look a little different.



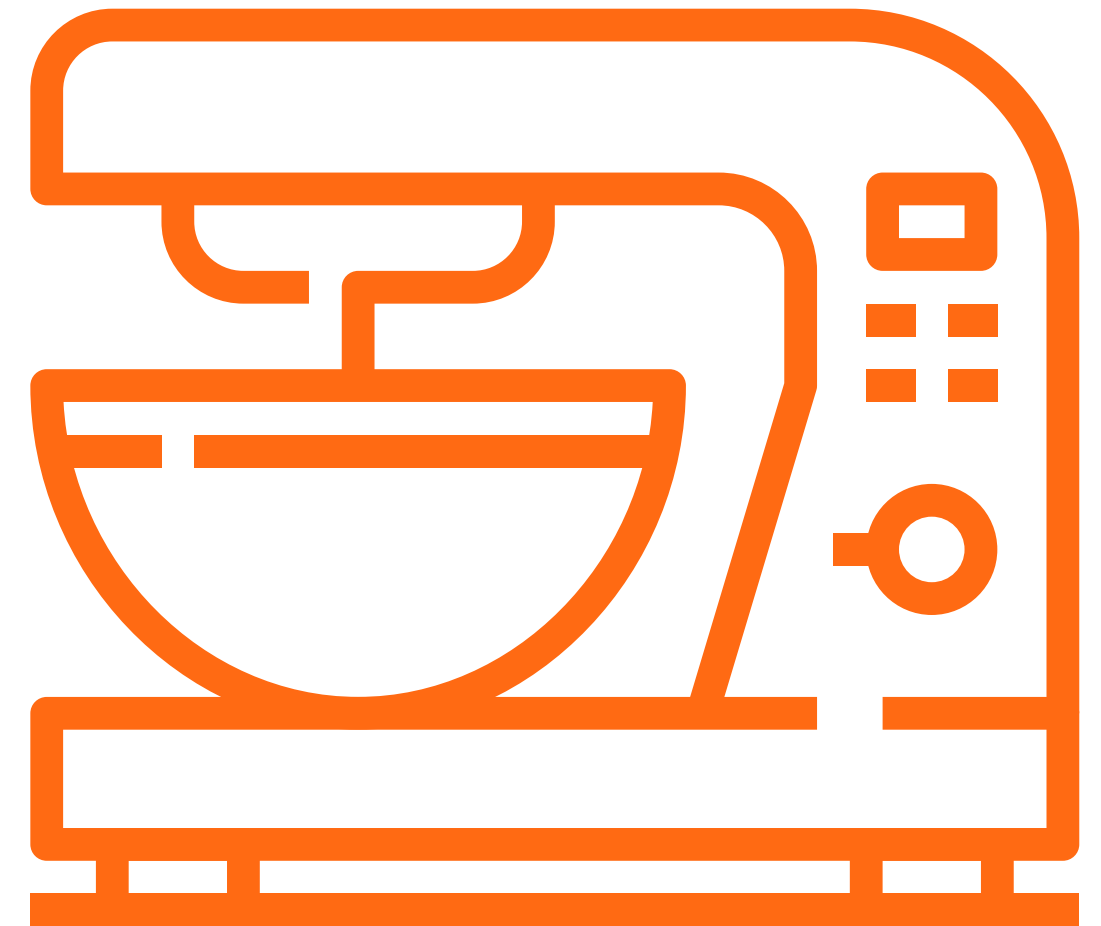
There's no one right way to launch your platform. But adding in a dash of your employer brand and a pinch of employee feedback will get your people excited and interested, no matter what.



In addition to keeping timelines in mind, it's key to try different methods to reach people in new ways. You could try:

 <p>Hosting a program launch party in the office(s) or online</p>	 <p>Starting a launch campaign with competitions</p>	 <p>Hosting informational drop-in sessions</p>	 <p>Assigning buddies to explore technology together</p>	 <p>Mailing people branded stickers/swag</p>
 <p>Sending all employees a direct mail flyer</p>	 <p>Preparing your managers with step-by-step guides</p>	 <p>Updating all employees' screensavers for a quick reminder</p>	 <p>Visiting different offices or locations to generate excitement</p>	 <p>Hosting a virtual scavenger hunt on the platform</p>

Time to Rise: The Ultimate Recipe for Ongoing Success





Make your leaders the icing on the cake of communications



There's no doubt about it – when leaders and managers buy into engagement initiatives, they're more visible and more likely to succeed.

It's key for leaders to not only keep a pulse on culture but to also be active players in driving usage of your new technology.

W&A Engineering recently launched its company communications and employee engagement platform called “W&A Gateway.” In order to introduce the new tool to his employees, W&A President and CEO Jon Williams recorded a video addressing the entire firm of nearly 100 employees

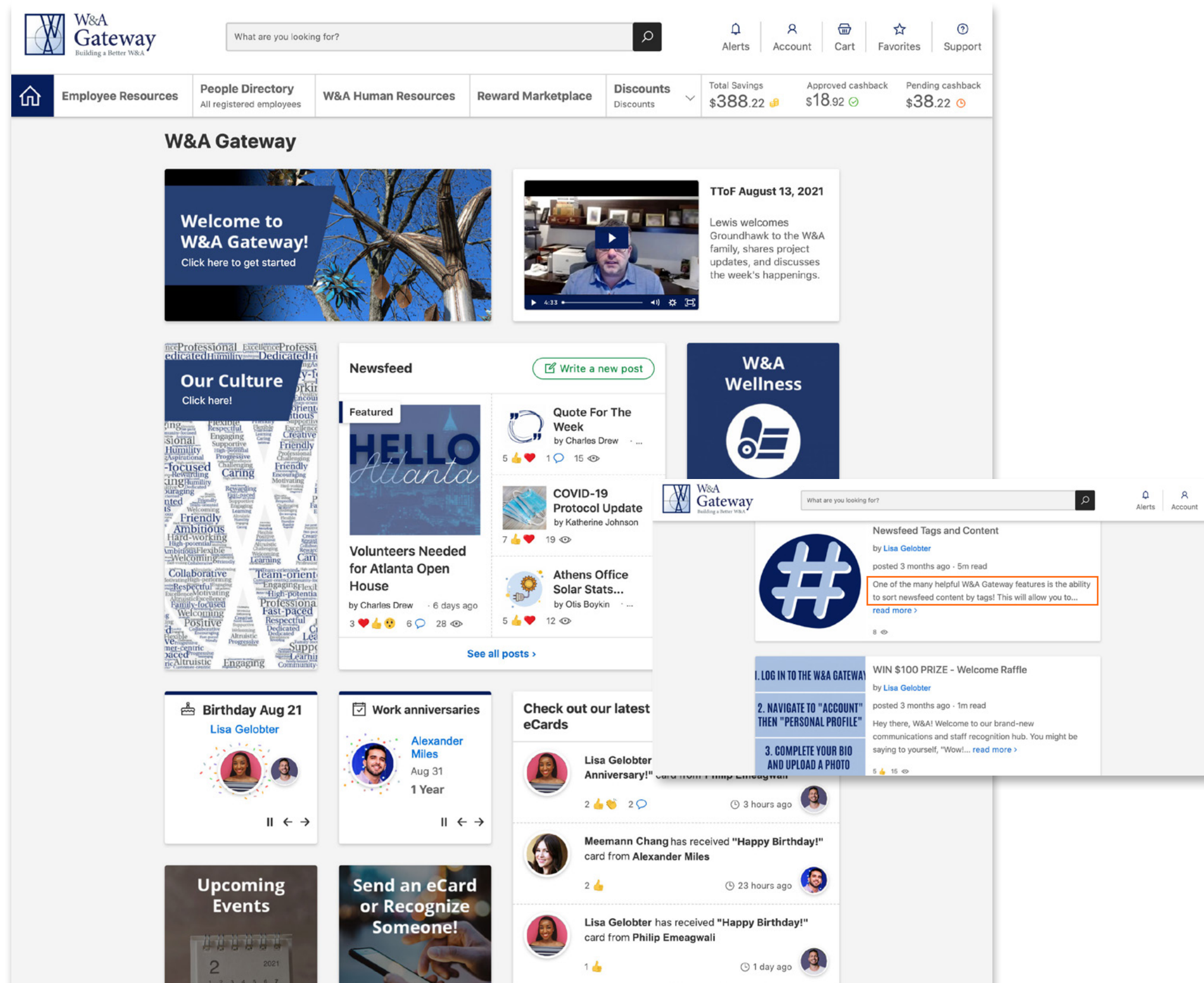
to express his excitement about the improvements W&A Gateway would bring to streamlining communications, celebrating corporate culture, and rewarding staff for their daily hard work and motivation to fulfill the firm's mission. This video was awarded a place of honor on the homepage for the first few weeks following launch and welcomed team members when they logged in!

In keeping with W&A tradition, Jon posts a new video every Friday to discuss weekly wins, share announcements, and give personnel shoutouts to keep things fresh and ensure that employees are kept in the loop, even if they're working remotely.

In addition to the leadership video, the team also held a “welcome raffle” for all employees, encouraging them to log in, set up their profiles, and peruse the site. This was all shared with employees via blog posts and inner-office emails for everyone to see.

Tips for CEOs to reach their people:

- Embrace new tools and methods to reach people where they are, on their own time.
- Recognize employees in the moment who are going above and beyond at your organization.
- Give the video a permanent spot on the homepage of your platform to increase visibility.
- Keep a regular cadence and give your people something to look forward to each week.





Mix up your communications methods to reach people where they are

Hybrid working is here to stay. According to PwC, over half of 1,200 employees surveyed (55%) would prefer to be remote at least three days a week once pandemic concerns recede.

It's essential for companies to offer work from home or remote opportunities because the way people work has changed. Employees may not always feel connected – or even be physically present – in your business, highlighting the need to communicate the “why” behind decisions and initiatives.

Innovative approaches to communication will help you reach the people who aren't in the office on a regular basis or who may spend most of their day traveling or on their feet.

Here are some inclusive ways to involve your remote or offline workforce in your launch strategy:

- Give your employees a chance to name your program
- Show your own people on your platform (eCards, in blog posts, etc.)
- Leverage the power of video with a short introductory video
- Get ready for a countdown that gets people curious and excited
- Spread the good news and don't just say it once
- Use mobile-friendly technology that employees can access anywhere at any time – Reward Gateway clients can use our Connect+ app

When you involve your people from the get-go, they're more likely to be engaged in the long-term because they feel heard and appreciated – even from miles away.



Heating up a recognition launch

Prior to Monde Nissin rolling out its employee engagement platform, “Cheers for Peers” to employees, the team created branded, digital posters to get people excited about what was coming. Not only did these posters let employees know what new tools were available to them, but also they prepared them with how-to information, like how to activate their account or how to nominate someone for a CEO award in a longer user guide so they were more likely to use the tools available to them.



The communication proof is in the “why”

There’s no such thing as over-communicating new engagement initiatives in the workplace because as we know, different messages reach different people at different times. But take it a step further than just saying what’s coming, tell people why you’re doing this.

When you communicate the why behind certain decisions and survey your people for feedback, you’re making decisions that are based on what your people want, not what you think they want.

Remember those program champions we mentioned earlier? Here’s where they come in. When you’re first rolling out your program, have your early adopters or champions hold training sessions to gain employee buy-in.

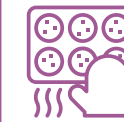


Pro tip: If possible, host training sessions in-person and record them so those who aren’t there can watch on their own time. Additionally, give your champions first-look access or (or let them be a part of the implementation process) so they can flag any user experience challenges to ensure a smooth rollout.

When employees hear directly from a peer, or even a manager, about the impact of your engagement initiatives, they’re more likely to listen. Your champions can even walk people through how to use the platform if they’re not as comfortable with technology. Be sure to equip them with materials that show the value and power of your program, like statistics on the power of recognition programs.

Show your people you value their input and take action on it by asking them for

feedback during these training sessions. Not only will you likely increase participation, but also you'll have the inside scoop on what's working and what's not so you can make informed, data-driven decisions.



Bake it 'till you make it with real-time analytics to help you understand your people

Adapting your internal communications plan to one that you feel confident your employees are engaging with doesn't have to be such a momentous burden. With the help of the communications analytics dashboard, you can use data to gain insights about the effectiveness of your communications tactics, such as:

- Top viewed posts
- Reaction activity (to see how people are feeling)
- Time of day for optimal readership
- Dips in readership
- Opportunities for ambassadors and inclusivity

Learn more about our communications dashboard at rg.co/commsdashboard.



Make it a place your people loaf

Make your employee engagement platform a place that employees call home and come back to day after day. When you bring your colors, logos and branding to life with a customized platform, your people will feel familiar with it and it becomes a go-to place for information that’s continuously updated.

Make your employees feel welcome with fresh and exclusive content that’ll help them feel more connected to your company’s purpose, mission and values to drive excitement and engagement in a familiar-looking space.

Tower Hamlet Homes (THH) brought its new brand to life by mixing together its corporate “THH” with “buzz” to create a new brand name for the employee engagement platform, called “THHbuzz.”

Before the launch of the new employee engagement platform, the THH team created a teaser campaign with branded emails and posters to all staff to enhance communication of the new offering. Then, “staff champions” were identified and were granted pre-access to the site to help colleagues post-launch.

A phased approach can be a great option for organizations looking to generate continuous excitement with one tool at a time.

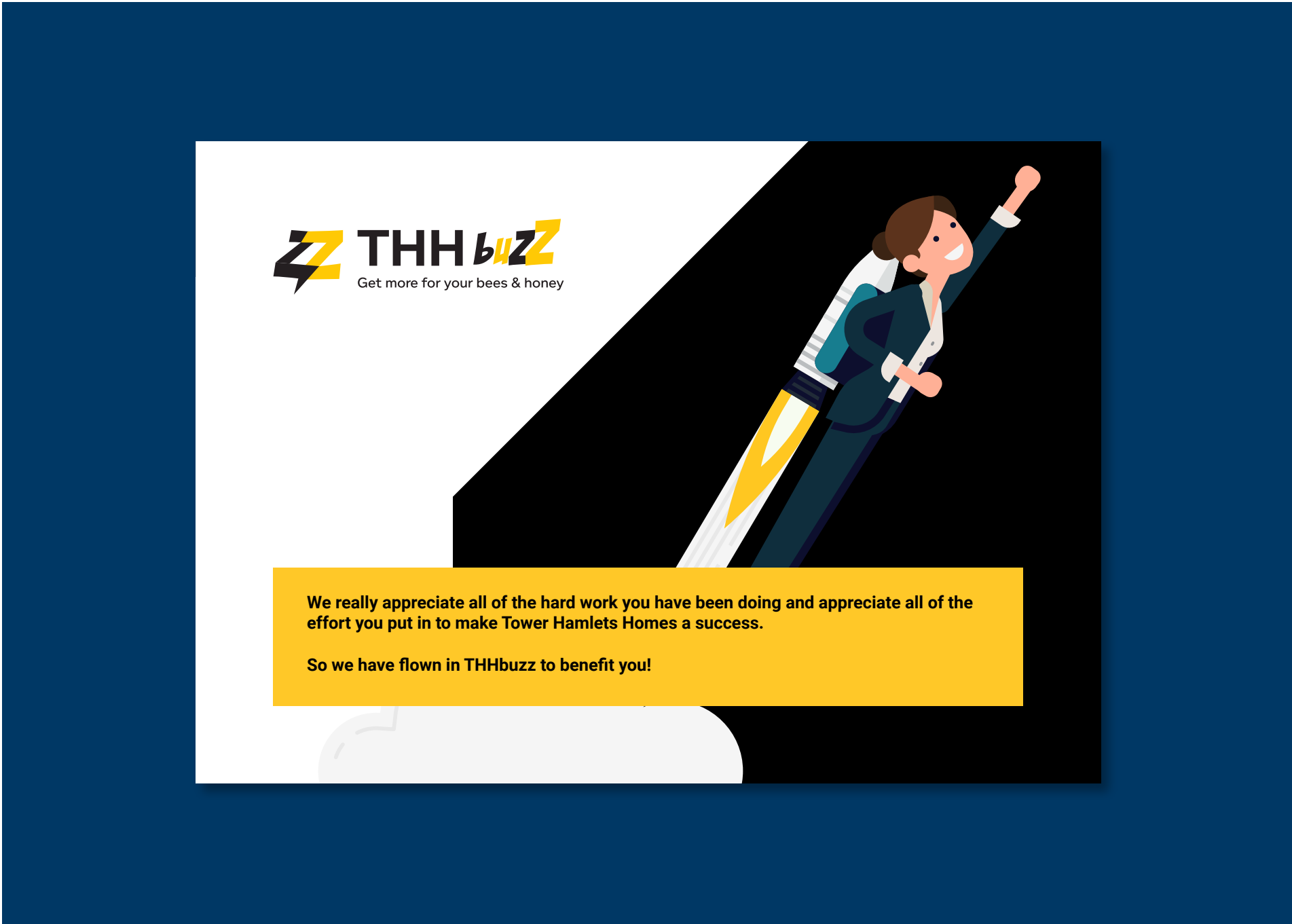
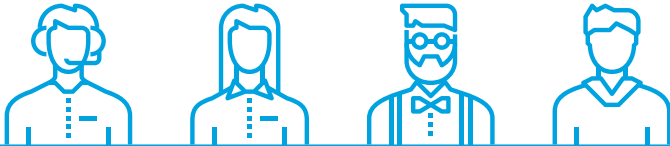
For THH, the team launched wellbeing and benefits in phase one, and recognition in phase two, helping tailor the right message at the right time. On the day of the launch, senior managers attended seminars which were led by “team THHbuzz” experts. Branded merchandise reflected the “honey” theme and were useful for both offline and online demographics.

The team further boosted awareness by sending postcards home to all staff, which helped reach those not based in offices.

Due to the success of the launch campaign and a mix of targeted employee communications, the platform had a successful launch. By using the analytics tool through the THHbuzz platform, the team discovered that



of its 480 employees registered on the employee engagement platform within the first 12 days of the initial launch.





Getting the flavors of your platform right, for everyone

What good is an employee engagement platform if only 20% of your people can access it? Here at Reward Gateway, we build employee engagement platforms with three pillars in mind:

- **Accessibility:** Why it's important and how to make sure your layout is more accessible.
- **Responsiveness:** Build layouts that send the right message and look good both on desktop and mobile.
- **Self-sustainability:** Make it simple for layouts to be easily updated by anyone, regardless of design capabilities.

When developing our solutions, we always make sure they are accessible to the widest possible audience and help you prioritize your people.



Continuous feedback is essential to your program's success

Any way and every way you can keep engagement front of mind before, during and after you launch your program, the richer your culture will become, and the bigger an impact you'll make in motivating and engaging your people.







Ask employees how you can improve your one-stop-shop platform so it's a place they actually want to visit and it reflects the culture you're trying to create.

The Complete Checklist for Building a Technology Partnership



Many times, launching an engagement platform means making sure that HR, IT, legal and other areas of the business are speaking the same language. We want to ensure that you're equipped with the right information to help you build the business case with your stakeholders to ensure you're on your way to finding the right partner. Here are six tips to build a solid technology partnership:

Tips for a Technology Partnership

 Bring IT in early	 Start with a mutual goal (save time, smoother experience, etc.)	 Use precise language
 Understand “the why” with objections	 Stay connected	 Recognize

Alongside the six tips, the Reward Gateway team has also learned a thing or two about answering questions about our technology early on in the process after working with over 2,000 organizations. We've put together a complete checklist of questions that combines common questions from these pockets of stakeholders so you know what to consider ahead of time when launching a new engagement platform, and how your provider can work with you to ensure all parties are excited about the launch.

Security (IT):

- What is the company approach to security?
- What certifications does the company have, such as ISO 27001?
- How will my employees access the system?
- Is single-sign-on an option? Is there an additional fee?
- Does the company meet global data protection regulations, such as GDPR?

Integrations (IT, HR):

- Can your new platform talk to/share information with other HRIS or communication channels?
- What is the process for updating employee data?
- Does my team have clear direction on how to set up integrations?
- What systems do we want to make sure we integrate with?

Stakeholder Involvement (All):

- Who is the main decision maker?
- Are the CEO and other leadership aware of this initiative and how can we get them involved?
- Who will be your project lead / sponsor?
- The two critical project roles who manage the Implementation on the clients end.
- Who (internally) needs to be involved in this project and when will you bring them in? Who will be responsible for what?
- Who will be the administrator(s) for the platform?

Implementation (IT, HR, Marketing):

- What happens after you sign the contract?
- What is required from me to get the platform up and running?
- Does the partner have experience?
- What will you call this program?
- What obstacles may we encounter during implementation?

Benchmarking (Leadership):

- What metrics are you looking to track or move the needle on as a result of this project?
- What challenges are you hoping to solve with this platform?
- Is there any current survey data or analytics to compare to?
- Does the provider have a dedicated success team to help us reach our long-term goals?

Keep in mind, launching a new tool doesn't have to be overwhelming or complicated. The dedicated Implementation Team and Client Success Managers are here to help you every step of the way. Here's what one of our clients had to say about their implementation process:



The Implementation Team was terrific. Everything we wanted to accomplish we did. The team had a systematic process that enabled us to move smoothly toward launch day without anything slipping through the cracks. They have implementation and communications down to a science!”



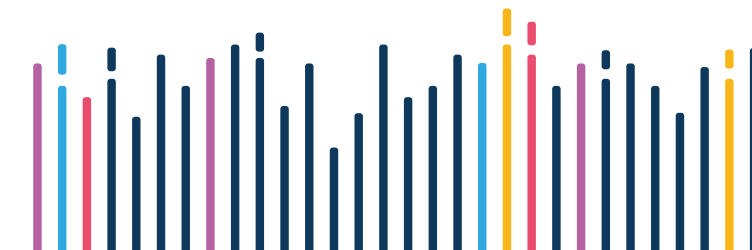
Marla Wiedmann,
Director of Human Resources at
Pepsi Bottling Ventures LLC



Reward Gateway's engagement products in employee recognition, communications, employee surveys and more are powered by a centralized hub tailored to your organization, giving your employees better access to the engagement tools of the future.

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

Get in touch:
E: engage-us@rewardgateway.com



Conclusion

Launching your employee engagement platform is the first step towards transforming your culture or reaching your goals. I hope this eBook has demonstrated not only the steps involved in launching an employee engagement program as part of your overall engagement strategy, but also how we can support you as a long-term partner to help you reach your business goals.

As global leaders in employee engagement technology, Reward Gateway can help you on your path to implementing your own customized solution by listening to your people, understanding your unique goals and using data to make informed decisions.

You'll receive a dedicated Implementation Team and a Client Success Manager to help

you with ongoing strategy and communication. Plus, you and your employees will benefit from 24/7/365 support on our helpdesk, from our Employee and Client Support Teams.

The team and I are always here to help you on your journey to reach your company goals and better connect, recognize and support your people. It's time to ditch the half-baked ideas of the past and invest in a recipe for success. Let's bake the world a better place to work, one engagement platform at a time!



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