



VOGELMEIER CONSULTING, LLC  
DEVELOPING TEAMS & LEADERS TO CHANGE  
THE WORK & WORLD.

# SPECIAL REPORT



## The benefits of Recognizing, Rewarding, and Relationships

Most organizations are looking for ways to increase employee engagement to retain their talent. Here are ideas that can help!

Why should we recognize employees?

*Consider a time when someone recognized you for doing great work. Whether a colleague or a boss, when you hear the words “great job” or “good job on \_\_\_\_\_” we feel good. It makes us stand a little taller, smile, and releases endorphins that elevate our mood. It feels good for the sender **and** the receiver.*



- Being recognized feels like a reward.
- It increases employee engagement which in turn increases morale, productivity, and profitability.
- They will speak positively about the company.
- Recognized employees tend to stay longer.
- What gets recognized gets repeated.

## A most amazing reward story!

*Not everyone will be able to do something like this, but the story is too good not to share when talking about recognizing and rewarding employees.*

*At a holiday party in 2019, Edward St. John, the founder of St. John Properties, surprised 198 employees with \$10 million in bonuses! The company had a great year and had been successful for 48 years based on the outcomes of its' employees. They wanted to recognize everyone's efforts.*

*The bonus money was divided among the employees based on their years of service. An employee who started the Monday AFTER the party received \$100. The largest bonus was \$270,000! If you want a great feel-good moment, search the story and watch the video! WOW!*



## Rewarding people comes in many forms.

*Below are several ideas and before you choose a reward for someone, consider the significance of the event you are recognizing. If they saved the company a lot of money, you want to choose something big. If they did a nice job with a customer, it may be a smaller item but still an important opportunity to say, "thank you for your contribution."*

- Branded items with the company logo can be fun and make sense in some situations, but not in all.
- Gift cards to somewhere they love.
- Plants for their desk. They will think about what they did every time they see it.
- A book they would like.
- Donate to their favorite charity in their name.
- A monthly club like "Jeni's ice cream" club. 🍦

- Coffee memberships.
- Feature them in the newsletter.
- Food is always a plus. Make sure it is appropriate for them (Vegan or Gluten-free).
- Personalized notes from leaders. ✉
- An opportunity to go to a seminar.
- An afternoon off.
- Tickets to a sporting event or a concert.
- Free lunch for a week in the company's cafeteria. If you don't have one, give them a gift card to a delivery service for lunch for a week.
- A spa gift certificate.
- A weekend getaway.
- An outing for four to a fun event. What's new and exciting in their town? Ax Throwing or an Escape Room?
- Cash! 💰

## Building Relationships in the Workplace:

*Consider a time when you had a strong working relationship with a peer, a boss, or an entire team. There were probably tremendous benefits you realized. Some benefits are increased loyalty, engagement, more trust, higher motivation, and less conflict. Strong work relationships also create a great company culture where people want to work!*

*One of my personal favorites was a peer I worked with from 2006-2011. Our offices were side by side. She is smart, funny, a great collaborator, a great listener, and a great relationship builder. We had a lot of fun working together. We laughed a lot! Every year she would indulge me and together we would dress up for Halloween. We were Sonny and Cher, a penny and a peso, and my favorite was when we dressed as a sun and a rainbow! We grew a tremendous friendship that still exists! All borne from that work experience!*

*Here are 10 ways you can build relationships with other employees. Some will work for first time meetings, others are in a team setting, and others for one-on-one meetings with people you already know. During a conversation ask:*

- **E**veryone has a dream job. What does yours look like?
- **N**othing is perfect. What would you change about your job?
- **G**rateful. What are you grateful for?
- **A**nyone in the world. Who would you like to meet?
- **G**oals. What do you hope to achieve in the next 12 months?
- **E**xpectations. What are your expectations of me as your leader?
- **M**otivate. What motivates you to do a good job?
- **E**ducate. What would you like to learn?
- **N**ext. What would you like to do next?
- **T**ime. What is your peak work time?

Having fun at work reaps tremendous benefits. People enjoy it and have good feelings about the company, they build strong relationships, and improves the ability to collaborate.

## Here are 27 ideas to:

- Help team members get to know each other.
- Provide an energy boost during a long meeting.
- Have a teamwork exercise for fun.



1. Write questions on an index card. Put a number on the back of the index card and ask a team member to pick a number. Select that card and read the question. These are lighthearted questions like “If you could be in the cast of any TV show, what would it be?” If you are in person, you can put them in a bag and ask people to pull one out and read it. This is a great way to help people get to know each other and get more comfortable in the meeting.
2. Have participants bring a paper plate to the meeting. Have them put it on their head and be prepared to follow the instructions given by the facilitator. “Keep the plate on your head and no peeking!” Then tell them to:
  - i. Draw a line that represents the floor, just a straight line across.
  - ii. Draw a Christmas tree and add decorations.
  - iii. Draw a topper.
  - iv. Draw a fireplace with a mantel next to your tree.
  - v. Draw a stocking hanging from the mantel.
  - vi. Draw a present.

Ask everyone to look at their drawing and let the giggling ensue! You could give prizes for best picture or most creative.

You could also change the Christmas theme to something else like, draw a barn, draw a cow in the field, a fence, trees, birds in the sky, and a person walking their dog.

You could also make the theme your company or class. Get creative with it!

3. Have a “Get to Know You Quiz.” Ask each person to send a fact to the leader/facilitator. The leader posts the question in chat or on the white board and says, “Who is this?” Ask the group to guess. This could be a fun energizer that you do one or two at a time when you come back from a break.
4. Play “Would you Rather.” List options on the whiteboard and have people place their names on the whiteboard under which item they would rather do (Or you could say it out loud and tell them

to write it in chat). Would you rather go to the beach or the mountains, would you rather eat crickets or ants, would you rather bungee jump or parasail, would you rather go motorcycle riding or hiking, read or watch a movie, be in a group or alone, Italian food or Hamburgers? Make them up to fit your group.

5. Photo of your Life. Ask each person to bring a photo of something in their life, anything that tells us a little bit about them. Have them tell everyone about it. You could do the same thing with a mug or a pet. With a twist: the facilitator could show the picture and have the others guess who submitted that photo.
6. Partner Pictionary. As the facilitator, think of items that someone could draw on a whiteboard in the meeting. Ask for volunteers: someone to be the drawer and someone to be the guesser. In a private chat, message the drawer what the item is so no one else knows. Let the drawing begin! Let the guessing begin! You could do teams or have everyone guess.
7. Play Hangman. Assign someone to select a phrase, use the whiteboard and draw a hangman, put the \_\_\_\_ spaces at the bottom representing the letters of the words and ask people to guess. Just like regular hangman except it is on the whiteboard.
8. Words with Friends. Download the app and have people play with a partner/s as a way to have fun together. This would be done outside of the class or a meeting. This could be ongoing for one week and you could talk about the experience at a meeting. It's a great way for people to connect with one another.
9. Two Truths and a Lie. Ask each person to give three statements and only one is true. Have the participants read each of their three statements to the others. Ask the other participants to guess which one is the lie.
10. Bucket List Challenge. Give participants 3-5 minutes to write down things they would really like to do. Ask people, one at a time, to share with the group one or two of the items. If people have the same item, like Run a Marathon, you could challenge them to partner and work together like an Accountability Buddy. A twist on this activity is to have them emailed ahead of time and the facilitator could read one aloud and ask everyone to guess. You could also write one item on the whiteboard before a break and have them guess when they return.
11. The Aliens Have Landed. Break the participants into groups. Tell them that the aliens have landed, and they do not speak English. Have each group come up with five symbols/pictures/images that communicate to the aliens what your company does. If they are not all with the same company, you could ask them to communicate something more general like nourishment, play activities, or something about the class they are in.
12. Create Our Commercial. Create teams of three or four people together and have them come up with the next commercial for the company. It must have a slogan, a jingle, and highlight a feature or benefit of the company's products. Extra points for creativity. Ask groups to report out to the larger group.
13. Team Pet Org Chart. If your team members have pets, have them share pictures and create a funny office title for them to put into an org chart. For example, a cat could be designated as "Director of Lap Warming" or a dog could be the official "Anti-Squirrel Defense Coordinator."
14. Ask each team member to come prepared with a photo of themselves and a celebrity they look like. Have everyone share. Using this theme in a different way, break them into groups and find one person that looks like a celebrity. They need to collaborate and agree. When the group comes back, do a share out.
15. Ask someone to share a special talent.
16. Virtual background creativity contest.

17. Around the Room story. One person starts with one sentence. For example, “I am so happy to see you.” The second person begins the next sentence with the word “you”. It can be a theme-based story they are creating. For example: You all will tell a story about your company and I’ll start:

We provide quality products and services for people who exercise.

Exercise is what we focus on to keep our bodies strong.

Strong bodies are healthier and help fight off illnesses.

Illnesses impact every person in the world.

World efforts to improve health are what we focus our philanthropic efforts on.

On this note, we will end.

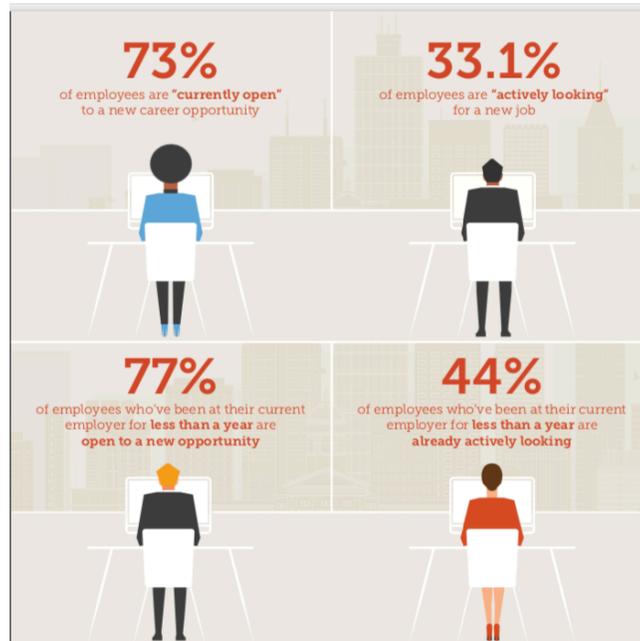
18. Have someone facilitate a DISC or MBTIonline.com assessment. Some are free, like this online option. You could have people get together and discuss what were their ‘a ha’ moments.
19. Win of the Week. Ask a team member to share a big win they experienced since the last meeting.
20. Kahoot.com or Sli.do. Create fun questions and see how everyone responds. Having them use their phone or computer keeps them engaged.
21. Fashion Week. Ask everyone to dress up in formal wear. Or you could ask everyone to come back from a break wearing a hat.
22. Show us your favorite GIF. Ask them to share a GIF that looks like them or best demonstrates how they are feeling, or how they feel when they eat their favorite meal!
23. Commonalities. Put people in break out rooms, give them five minutes to find out as many things as they have in common and come back to the room to share out.
24. Customize a Bingo card with a variety of items and have people meet each other, mark out a square and someone will win. If working virtually, you can put them in break out groups of three or four, give them five minutes, mix them up and do it again, and again.
25. Foodie Icebreaker. Ask one person to bring to the meeting a special food they love. If in person, that works great to share it. If you are working virtually, they could do a demonstration and the others have a new recipe!
26. Create a Jeopardy game with different categories, just like on TV. This will require time to create and play but would be a fun event if you have a meeting that calls for something longer.
27. Quick Icebreakers: have everyone go around the virtual or physical room in a fast popcorn style and list: first concert, first job, first car, favorite cartoon as a kid, favorite thing they are binge watching right now, favorite movie. A different variation is to go around quickly in popcorn style and have everyone say in one word how they feel, what word describes our team, or an adjective that describes you that starts with the letter of your first name.

For some of these ideas, you may be able to give a prize to add more fun. You could have a *traveling trophy*. You could play something at a team meeting keeping the same teams for a full quarter and have a *team award*. There are a lot of variations. Have fun with it and get creative.

*Creating fun at work adds to employee engagement. When employees are disengaged, they:*

- negatively impacting your outcomes through work avoidance.

- are scared to ask questions because good relationships have not been established.
- are not going to go over and above the call of duty.
- are talking badly about your company on social and in person.



*Empify Employee Engagement Trends 2021*

## ***How do you get them to stay?***

We're going to work *40-50 years in our lifetimes*. Creating a good environment is the key to getting people who will do great work for you and who will want to stay with the company.

You need to implement a strategy to

*create a workplace they cannot even imagine leaving!*

Contact me for a  
consultation:

Dana Vogelmeier, CPTD  
[Dana@vogelmeierconsulting.com](mailto:Dana@vogelmeierconsulting.com)



VOGELMEIER CONSULTING, LLC  
DEVELOPING TEAMS & LEADERS TO CHANGE  
THE WORK & WORLD.



Prosci® Certified Change Practitioner  
Issued by [Prosci](#)

Join the Making Great Workplaces  
Group on Facebook for more ideas

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/812771332529661/>