

Success Story: Delta Airlines

Employee engagement activities support business strategy

Challenge

Delta's recognition philosophy "If we take care of our employees, they will take care of our customers" originated when the company was founded. Their various recognition programs began in 1996, serving 80,000+ employees in multiple countries but were de-centralized and many did not support business objectives. As employee engagement activities became even more closely woven into the company's business strategy, recognition programs took on a larger and more strategic role. To align all programs, a recognition plan that recognized each employee more than four times a year, that was accessible by all, grounded in behavioral science and with achievable Return on Recognition (ROR), was needed.

490,002
individuals
recognized

\$346 Million
value to the business

Solution

Delta and Inspirus jointly developed MyDeltaRewards (MDR), an enterprise-wide points-based recognition platform that supported day-to-day, informal and formal recognition. It incorporated the seven Recognition Professionals Internal (RPI) best practice standards to develop and maintain a culture of recognition. The centralized platform gave all employees access to all 25 currently operating recognition programs.

Results

MDR was such a valuable tool that it remained in place through Delta's bankruptcy and through the company's merger with Northwest Airlines. In the first year, the program recognized individuals 490,002 times and delivered \$346 million in value to the business – a whopping 3,975% ROR. When surveyed, 96% of their multigenerational workforce responded positively when asked about the variety and value of items in the platform.



About Delta's Focus: the Seven RPI Best Practice Standards

To ensure success, Delta incorporated all of the RPI best practice standards into its recognition efforts. The focus on these best practices earned Delta an RPI Award for Events and Celebrations Best Practice Standards in 2008 and for Best Overall Award for all standards in 2009, honoring the company's advancements in recognition over those years."

- I. Strategy** – Recognition at Delta is more than just one program. It is a suite of programs from across the enterprise that encompasses milestone events, corporate enterprise recognition and localized recognition. Delta's recognition strategy takes each of these programs into account and uses a three-dimensional approach for the organization that is made up of day-to-day, informal and formal recognition.
 - II. Management Involvement** – Recognition as part of corporate culture at Delta not only has buy-in from senior management, but it has their involvement at a high level in defining and documenting the recognition strategy and policies for the organization.
 - III. Measurement** – Measurement is a critical element to Delta's recognition success. Program results are reviewed against specific program objectives and the larger overall organization recognition strategy, and then the results are measured for effectiveness.
 - IV. Communications** – The primary goal of Delta's recognition programs communication plan was the successful branding of the recognition experience at Delta overall and of specific recognition programs. This goal was met by establishing MDR as the brand of recognition at Delta, and centralizing and unifying all recognition programs.
 - V. Training** – Delta's recognition training provides managers and employees with a suite of user-friendly, on-demand tools to educate, inform and support recognition in the workplace.
 - VI. Events and Celebrations** – Recognition events and celebrations are a key element to recognition at Delta. These events are all aligned with the recognition strategy by prescribing specific guidelines and processes for informal celebrations, local events and formal events.
 - VII. Change and Flexibility** – Delta uses a standard framework to develop, deploy and assess program performance. Based on informal feedback and a formal annual review, Delta's recognition programs are adjusted to meet the diverse needs of individuals and teams.
- Employing each of these standards has allowed Delta to develop and maintain a culture of recognition.

However, Delta's experience and recognition needs are not unique to corporate America. The company operates in an extremely challenging and competitive environment, and it looks to serve and recognize more than 80,000 employees across multiple countries who speak multiple languages. Delta continues to grow and adapt in its recognition efforts, but it has maintained a foundation in the RPI best practice standard.

About Inspirus

Employees play a large part in defining a company's culture — their everyday experiences create the foundational structure that drives an organization to be strong, high-performing, and ultimately successful. Through our technology and integrated solutions, we elevate the employee experience and optimize organizational culture by providing a holistic approach throughout the entire employee journey. We influence the employee experience through our six Quality of Life dimensions: recognition, health and well-being, personal growth, physical environment, social interaction, and ease and efficiency.

Only Inspirus combines an integrated rewards engine, learning courses, communication tools, and analytics into a single platform spanning recognition, service anniversary, well-being, and diversity and inclusion. Inspirus aims to bring joy to work, one experience at a time.