

Recognition Buyer's Guide



Finding the right employee recognition partner is an exciting opportunity—especially when you take a thoughtful, organized approach. Based on our experience with hundreds of organizations, this guide contains practical advice, useful tools, and valuable insights to help you prepare, search, and decide confidently.



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PART 1



Get Executive Support

When hiring a recognition partner, you'll need executive support. Your executive sponsor needs to understand your organization's unique challenges and be fully committed to recognition as a solution. You'll depend on leaders to make change, champion participation, and [lead by example](#).

If you're trying to promote employee recognition in your organization, but you don't have the support of an executive sponsor, here's the research and data that will help you get one.

Think like an executive

A thriving company culture improves business results. And nothing improves culture like powerful recognition experiences. Celebrating and appreciating people—it really is as straightforward as that.

According to Gartner, the top priorities for CEOs are [growth and profitability](#). But that doesn't mean money is the only thing executives have to worry about. They also have to think about where money comes from. And that's people.

“Take care of your employees and they will take care of your business.”

RICHARD BRANSON

The sources of profitability—great ideas, products, innovation, service—all come from people. And not just any people, but engaged, healthy, motivated people.

Your employees create the culture that is the heart and soul of your organization. They practice the values that define your work environment.

This culture that your people build and share with one another is the key to a [thriving workforce](#). And a thriving workforce is the key to a healthy bottom line.



Talk cost-to-benefit ratio

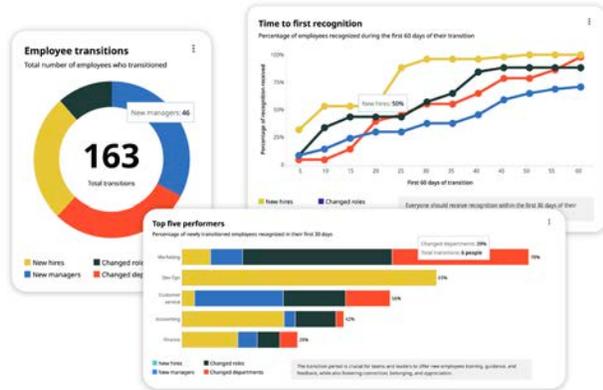
What's the most cost-effective path to a great culture?

Nothing delivers an instant and sustained impact on workplace culture as effectively as employee recognition. Recognition delivers more than a return on investment—it delivers a [return beyond investment](#).

Employee recognition programs are a sound business investment. (And in the case of O.C. Tanner clients, 93% say they see measurable ROI within the first year.) But these programs also increase great work, add around 3.5 years to average employee tenure, and are even tied to [increased revenue](#).

With proven research, you'll be able to convince even the most wary leader to stop thinking of recognition as a “soft benefit” and see it as a driver of success across the organization.

O.C. Tanner’s [Culture Cloud platform](#) comes with advanced analytics that allow you to track recognition participation in real time.



3 recognition must-haves

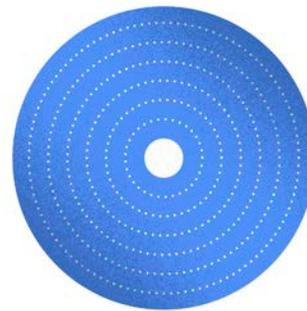
How can you [help leaders](#) see that employee recognition is good for business? Focus on the three big returns on investment: keeping good people, increasing output, and growing the bottom line.

1. Keeping good people

According to Gallup, disengagement and quiet quitting cost the global economy [\\$8.8 trillion annually](#). 51% of employees are actively seeking or watching for a new job. Here’s how it breaks down for an individual organization:

- Low engagement teams have turnover rates that are 18%-43% higher than highly engaged teams.
- The cost of replacing one employee can range from one-half to two times their annual salary.
- A 100-person organization that provides an average pay of \$50,000 could have turnover-and-replacement costs of approximately \$660,000 to \$2.6 million per year.

For maximum effect, do the math and determine your organization’s turnover cost before you meet with leaders. It’s fairly easy using the formula above and your own voluntary attrition numbers and average pay.



785%
IMPROVED ODDS
THAT EMPLOYEES
WILL FEEL THEY
BELONG WHEN THEY
HAVE A STRONG
WORKPLACE
COMMUNITY

But turnover has other costs we can’t measure on a spreadsheet.

Losing your best people often means losing your top performers, your best innovators, and your most effective problem solvers—people with the [institutional knowledge](#) to grow your business.

Attrition also breaks down team morale and customer relationships. Losing your best talent is worth avoiding at all costs.

Happily, you can increase retention with employee recognition:

- 79% of people who quit cite [“lack of appreciation”](#) as their reason for leaving
- 31% lower turnover for companies with [recognition programs](#)
- A years-of-service award program increases employee tenure by [2 to 5 years](#)



2. Increasing output

A company that produces more with less has a distinct advantage over their competitors. Employee motivation is key. This isn't about placing stress on employees to produce more, it's about creating a culture of accomplishment where employees are invested in helping the organization succeed.

[Giving and receiving recognition](#) increases productivity. 84% of employees say the simple act of giving recognition inspires them to think about better ways to get things done.

18x [increased probability of great work](#) when employees are recognized

“It all comes down to our people. And when we motivate, inspire, appreciate, and recognize them for their great work, and when we empower them to be themselves, it really does make a difference for them and bonds them to the company.”

[LORI WINTERS, VP OF TOTAL REWARDS, SOUTHWEST AIRLINES](#)

90% of employees have [high trust](#) in a leader who recognizes their accomplishments

Consider your own situation. Can you show leaders data or reference strategy meetings where the need for greater performance was discussed? Combining your organization's own opportunities to improve with the data above sends a powerful message.

3. Improving business results

The ultimate test for any initiative: Does it improve business results? Studies consistently show that [employee recognition](#) increases profits. Make sure you have a clear understanding of your organization's growth goals and connect them to these facts:

Organizations with highly integrated recognition are twice as likely to have [increased in revenue](#) over the past year

Organizations with highly integrated recognition are 73% less likely to have [layoffs](#) in the past year

Elevate results across your business

Company culture impacts employee motivation in a big way. 89% of employees say recognition creates a [healthier culture](#). Here are the six elements that shape a great corporate culture from an employee's point of view:

Purpose - feeling connected to your organization's work

Opportunity - the ability to grow and develop

Success - innovating, doing meaningful work, playing on a winning team

Appreciation - feeling valued and useful

Wellbeing - providing physical, social, emotional, and financial wellbeing

Leadership - support, mentor, and help employees succeed

When you succeed at the six elements of a great culture, you succeed as a business. As you consider how you could give those 6 aspects of the employee experience a boost, look at the impact of just one catalyst—[employee recognition](#):



“The power of recognition can impact engagement, attrition, and net promoter score. There is a business return when you do recognition the right way.”

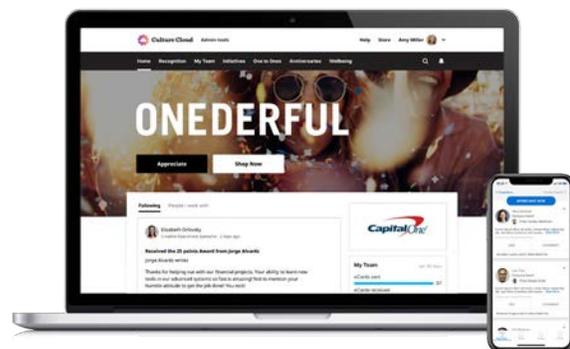
CAPITAL ONE

There you have it: a solid business case for employee recognition. Use our [Discussion Guide](#) to plan a presentation and get the executive support you need.



Capital One spotlight

To keep recognition accessible and top of mind, Capital One’s recognition program integrates with the tools employees use every day. See how Capital One, in partnership with O.C. Tanner, fuels success, engagement, and productivity with [employee recognition](#).





Assembling Your Buying Committee for Employee Recognition

If you're in charge of selecting an [employee recognition partner](#), you don't have to go it alone. This guide offers some handy tips for assembling a vendor selection committee to help you assess employee needs, establish goals, research providers, build consensus, and develop champions that will ensure your program's long-term success.

Selection committees at large and enterprise companies

In large enterprises, the success of any new initiative depends on having support from key stakeholders early on. This is where a vendor selection committee can be your friend. It will provide you with smart people to help guide your decisions every step of the way.

You can't possibly know everything about the employee needs, budgetary constraints, or performance goals in every department of your organization. But your committee members will. Rely on them. Collaborate. Ask questions. Listen. Then choose your employee recognition provider accordingly. And your [solution will be a success](#).

When you choose the right people, a committee can be a dream team that enables success. In the next section, we'll share which key players organizations choose to have on their vendor selection committees. You should also consider:

- **Whose opinions you trust**
- **Who you like to work with**
- **Who can help you with areas you know nothing about**



Roles & responsibilities of selection committee members

Clear responsibilities make teams stronger. Decide which committee members are there to consult, which are there to manage the project, and which ones will make the final decision. This clarity will help everyone relax and prevent endless debates.

It's okay to try a democratic approach and vote on which vendor you want to hire. But what if there's a tie? Or what if a slim majority chooses what the team leader feels is the wrong vendor? To make these scenarios go smoothly, decide up front who has approval and/or veto power.

Form the committee that fits your unique situation

Here are the most common committee members we've encountered while working through RFPs with hundreds of world-class organizations. You may need more (or fewer) people than those listed below.

You may need two committee members with the same role and you may leave out a role.

But this we know for sure: inviting at least one of the following people to participate on your selection committee will bring valuable insights and make selecting a vendor easier.

Executive - Usually the sponsor and approver. Often an HR VP, CHRO, or CEO. The cost of the program typically comes out of this person's budget, and they are ultimately responsible for its overall reception, impact, and ROI.

Technology Specialist - IT integration and implementation. Top concerns will be security, limiting disruption to IT processes, and hours required for implementation. Their experience with analysts like Gartner, Forrester, and Bersin may also help identify potential providers.

HR Team - Shared owners of the program. These people understand employee preferences and HR tech and data system requirements. They provide critical perspectives on total rewards and workplace culture.

Internal Comms - Branding and communication. These folks may be part of HR, marketing, or the creative group. They can help connect employee recognition to your purpose and values.

External Analyst - Market research and analysis. An independent, objective advisor who provides valuable insights, recommendations, and market intelligence

Procurement - Vendor selection process, payment, contracts. Despite their reputation for price-consciousness, procurement in most larger organizations is a solid

strategic partner that can help you establish clear objectives and make smart decisions.

Learning & Development - Training and adoption. Like any new initiative, a new recognition solution involves change. These people manage change for a living. They can teach employees the what, why, and how of recognition to improve early adoption and long-term participation.

Global Sponsors - Global rollout. If you have employees in different countries, make sure there is a representative for international locations who can give feedback on regional needs, data security policies, and logistics.

Online. Offline. All around the world. [Culture Cloud](#) offers one dynamic platform with infinite recognition experiences.



Next steps

When you have a selection committee, the first thing to do is inspire your team. Let them know the impact a great employee recognition program can have on your work culture and business success.

Promise your team efficient meetings, clear assignments, and a voice at the table.

Tips for working with a buying committee

1. Build consensus

Agree on the “why” by clearly communicating what problems you are trying to solve and defining criteria for success. Our [guide for prioritizing your goals](#) will help. Be sure to align your recognition objectives with business objectives so this is not just seen as an HR initiative, but as a growth strategy critical to business success.

2. Share employee feedback

Know what people love and don't love about the state of their employee experience. Consider a quick survey if you haven't already. What do people want to keep or change? Also understand what types of recognition are currently happening.

3. Create the requirements for your solution

Consider technology, integrations with other HRIS systems, meaningful awards, recognition experiences, presentations, customer service, [customized symbolic awards](#), etc.

The search for a recognition partner is an exciting and impactful process. Including the right people and providing them with helpful information will make your search easier. As a team, you can select a recognition partner that improves your work culture, boosts business outcomes, and helps people thrive at work.



“O.C. Tanner cares about our business. They listen to our strategies and are interested in what drives Chevron. Then they tailor recommendations to what will create value for us. It’s a remarkable partnership.”

[CHEVRON](#)

Learn how [Chevron](#) recognizes employees around the world in a unified, equitable way with O.C. Tanner’s Culture Cloud platform.



PART 3



Prioritize Your Employee Recognition Goals

You can make your search for an employee recognition partner dramatically easier if you identify the outcomes you hope to achieve before you begin. Once your goals are clearly defined, it will be much easier to look for a partner who's qualified to help you achieve them. Here are a few simple ways to get specific about the “why” behind your search for a recognition partner.

Establish why you need a recognition program

A recognition program isn't an end in itself. Recognition can help your employees feel appreciated. But it can also help them enhance teamwork, increase trust in leaders, grow your brand, build your competitive edge, and improve your bottom line. It's up to you to decide what recognition benefits you're targeting and in what priority.

So, [gather your buying committee](#) and ask yourself a few questions:

- What do you hope to accomplish with a recognition solution?
- What areas of your business do you plan to impact?
- What metrics do you want to improve?

No one wants to be that leader who checks a box on their to-do list for a million-dollar recognition program but isn't 100% sure exactly why. So, let's identify your company's unique “why.”

Get insight into how companies like [3M](#), [Southwest Airlines](#), and [Chevron](#) decided on goals for their recognition program—and the results they achieved.



WELLSTAR USES THEIR RECOGNITION PROGRAM TO ALIGN TEAMS AROUND SHARED GOALS AND INITIATIVES—ALL WHILE CONNECTING EMPLOYEES TO THEIR COMPANY CULTURE.

What do you hope to accomplish with a recognition program?

In the 1960s, the head of the industrial engineering department of Yale University reportedly said, “If I had only one hour to solve a problem, I would spend up to two-thirds of that hour in attempting to define what the problem is.” Objectives matter. So, before you ask how long should this take or what's our budget (both good questions, by the way), consider asking questions that are more purpose-oriented like:

- What problems do we hope to solve?
- What cultural impact do we hope to achieve?
- How will we measure success?
- You could even use author Clayton Christensen’s [jobs-to-be-done theory](#) and ask this: What job are we hiring employee recognition to do?

This exercise doesn’t need to take a long time, but it does need to happen. When an organization can articulate exactly what job they’re hiring a new recognition program to do, it becomes much more obvious which providers are a good fit and which ones are not.



Get the data you need to refine your employee experience and workplace culture goals in our annual [Global Culture Report](#).

Plan your return beyond investment

The most common employee recognition mistake that we see organizations make is aiming too low. Working with thousands of companies, we’ve seen dramatic results

“When [recognition is done right](#), it helps success come more easily. We currently have the highest quality outcomes in the history of our organization.”

DANA ULLOM-VUCELICH, CHIEF HUMAN RESOURCE AND ETHICS OFFICER, OHIO LIVING

from employee recognition beyond our clients’ expectations.

Recognizing employees has led to such unanticipated things as improved customer experiences (in retail), [improved patient outcomes](#) (in healthcare), increased innovation, and the list goes on. So, it’s good to think beyond your current aspirations to imagine what’s really possible. Go into your dream space for a moment. Consider the return you’d like to see beyond your investment.

Here are the top 5 questions we get about the [ROI of recognition](#), including how to plan your budget and how to measure impact across your organization.

What will success look like for you?

A good way to get a little more aspirational with your goals is to check 10 items on the following wish list. We’re warning you, it’s a good list. You may be tempted to check every item on it, but don’t. The purpose of the exercise is to help you prioritize.

Business Impact

- Grow our bottom line
- Increase profitability
- Retain our best employees
- Attract new talent
- Boost engagement
- Drive sales
- Enhance productivity
- Improve customer/patient experience

Culture Impact

- Drive innovation
- Give work purpose
- Increase the sense of opportunity
- Magnify feelings of success
- Make employees feel appreciated
- Strengthen wellbeing
- Help leaders become trusted mentors
- Connect employees to one another
- Fuel more teamwork
- Become more inclusive
- Champion our values
- Increase employee motivation
- Decrease burnout
- Keep people safe
- Develop skills and competencies

Employee Experience Impact

- Improve participation
- Make giving recognition easy
- Provide a top-rated mobile app
- Integrate with apps people use
- Deliver strong offline recognition
- Delight with great award choices
- Make it fun with digital awards
- Create custom trophies and awards

Administrative Impact

- Consolidate platforms/programs
- Reduce costs
- Replace an outdated program
- Show results with smart analytics
- Enable self-serve programs
- Integrate with other HRIS
- Provide great budgeting tools
- Keep employee data in my country
- Customizable to fit our culture
- Improve customer service
- Comply with recognition tax laws

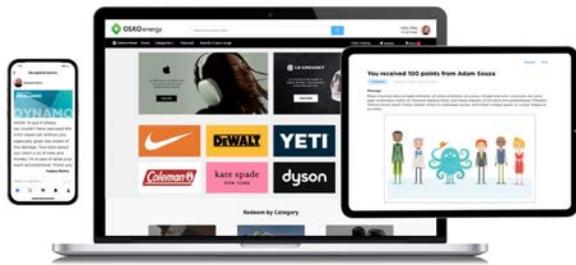
It's exciting to think of all the ways a well-executed recognition solution can impact your organization. Now, where did your wishes cluster? Did they tend to bundle in any area in particular? Or were they all over the map?



“The power of recognition and appreciation can impact engagement. It impacts attrition, it impacts net promoter score. There is a [business return](#) when you do it the right way.”

HR DIRECTOR, [CAPITAL ONE](#)

Many vendors can tailor offerings up or down in comprehensiveness to meet client needs or will point you to another company, if necessary. But be careful. Even when considering simple recognition functionality, not every [employee recognition vendor](#) offers the same level of HRIS integration, mobile app development, strong analytics, customer service, etc. It still pays to [compare prospective recognition partners](#) against your wish list and find a good match.



Also, don't forget your needs are likely to change in the future. Since engaging a partner is an investment in and of itself, it pays to choose a partner who can grow with your needs.

You'll need a partner who has worked with hundreds of enterprises and offers a complete range of culture consulting services, [world-class technology](#) and features, [award design and manufacturing](#), supply chain management and fulfillment, and research and insights to drive your business goals.

See [what sets O.C. Tanner apart](#)—in the words of our clients—and why we have a **97% client retention rate**.

Talk to other HR leaders and experts

Talk to HR leaders in and out of your industry about what they're doing. What's working? What's not? How much do they spend on recognition? And how are they using recognition programs to [drive business results](#)? Attend conferences, visit websites, and yes, even talk to a sales representative or two.

If you're nervous, you can make it clear that you don't want to buy anything right away. Ask them to consult with you first. A good sales rep will respect your wishes. A bad one will help you eliminate that prospective partner from your list right away. Either way, you win.

“[O.C. Tanner’s] consultation and world-class research provide ideas and strategies that help shape recognition at our organization.”

HR DIRECTOR, CAPITAL ONE

As an alternative, if a prospective provider has a [consulting team](#), engage with them first. We've seen that approach work wonders for clients, whether it leads to a recognition solution purchase or not. It always pays to learn from people with experience. It's much easier than reinventing the wheel.

Once you've gained a little bit of insight into what's possible, revisit the wish list exercise above. See if you've added any aspirations.

You're getting closer to understanding your goals and selecting a vendor.

Set your recognition budget

Finally, money matters. If you already have an annual [employee recognition budget](#) in mind, good on you. Your foresight and preparation will make the search for a vendor much easier. If you aren't really sure what to spend, now is a good time to learn and decide.

Remember that you aren't looking to create a once-a-year impact. The best recognition solutions facilitate frequent [employee appreciation](#). Plan enough money in your budget to allow peers to recognize peers with some frequency. Then, add how much you'd like to set aside for higher value award nominations that require manager approvals. Finally, add what you plan to spend on meaningful years-of-service awards.

If that's too difficult, a good place to start is to simply ask yourself how much you'd like to spend per employee per year on recognition.

For a frame of reference, the most widely agreed upon standard throughout the industry, including the Society for Human Resource Management, is that 1% of payroll is a sweet spot for what to spend per employee per year. Spend less, and you

may not achieve your desired outcomes. Spend more, and you may be overdoing it. The companies we admire push toward this spending goal. They know their people and culture are worth it.

\$200-\$350
per employee per year
is a good starting point
for your recognition spend

1%
of annual payroll is a good
aspirational goal for
maximum program impact

Perhaps the best advice is to spend as close to 1% of payroll as you can afford—while remembering that every dollar you spend will pay you back with interest in increased productivity, motivation, engagement, tenure, and business results. Don't forget: When it comes to the millions that companies lose in high turnover, low productivity, burnout, and other aspects of a weak culture, 1% of payroll is a drop in the bucket.

Once you've set clear goals and put a solid budget in place, you're ready to research top providers, and find the perfect recognition partner for your organization.



“What we are seeing right now is that companies who [truly value their people](#) are going to not just survive but thrive.”

SENIOR EXECUTIVE, [THE AUTO CLUB GROUP](#)



Researching Top Employee Recognition Providers

In your search for a new recognition provider, researching potential partners may be the most important step before you speak to a provider's sales team or invite them in for a demo. Use our guide for tips on how to search, what to look for, and how to find the [best partner](#) when all providers sound the same.

Identify potential employee recognition providers

There are 2 main ways most companies curate a list of potential partners.

1. Phone a friend

You likely have peers at other organizations who have already researched potential [employee recognition partners](#) and solutions, and have a partner they love (or experience with one they would not recommend).

Questions to ask:

- Why did you choose your recognition provider?
- What do you like best about the partnership and their products?
- What do you like least?

- Would you choose them again if you had to do it over?
- Who else should I ask?

LinkedIn HR groups are also a great source of personal experience, or you can tap into your own network of connections for information.

2. Google it

Here are a couple of things to keep in mind during web research:

- **Look to thought leaders.** HR industry associations and analysts like IDC, Everest Group, Fosway, Forrester, Gartner, WorldatWork, Employee Benefit News (EBN), HR Certification Institute (HRCI), Human Capital Institute (HCI), and Recognition Professionals International (RPI) all have sites and content worth reading that often name providers. Be wary of any outlets that are funded by advertising.
- **Be aware.** The user reviews on software review sites such as Capterra and G2 are valid and trustworthy. However, the rankings on some sites (like Capterra) are paid for, while on others (like G2), the reviews themselves determine position.



4. Unwired and offline tools

If you have employees who don't work at a computer, do they have mobile apps, plug-ins, and [tools to recognize](#) those workers?



“We worked hand-in-hand with O.C. Tanner to ensure all employees had access to Everyday Wins, which is often the single biggest barrier. Our office employees had computers, but for many of our production employees we created kiosks so they could access the program.”

JEFF FINLEY, TOTAL REWARDS AND RECOGNITION PROGRAM MANAGER, 3M



5. Reporting capabilities

What engagement reports, insights, and [AI capabilities](#) do they offer?



6. Customization

Are their awards and platforms [customizable](#)? Can they provide solutions that look and feel like part of your company's culture?

7. Services

Are there [consulting, communication, training, and measurement services](#) available to help you maximize your recognition efforts?



8. Global reach

Do they have global expertise in local markets? Can they help with translations, local taxes, local customer service, global award offerings, and global strategy best practices?

9. Customer endorsements

What other companies do they work with, and what do those [customers](#) say about their partnership?

10. Third-party credibility

What do software sites like [G2](#) say about the provider in comparison to others? How do they perform in evaluations by [PEAK Matrix® for Rewards and Recognition by Everest Group](#), [IDC's Vendor Assessment](#), or the [Fosway 9-Grid](#)? How many clients do they have on FORTUNE Best Companies to Work For® and other lists?



Let's talk about RFPs

While RFPs may seem intimidating and cumbersome, they don't have to be. Use these six tips to make sure it goes smoothly:

1. Narrow the search

Choose three to five vendors to target—more than that and it will overcomplicate the process.

2. Decide on features

Understand which program features are commonly available and which stand out, and don't compromise on the most important ones to you and your organization.

3. Include a scorecard

Create a scorecard to ensure your request addresses all the needs of your organization. It'll also minimize bias and protect against groupthink when it's time to review proposals.

4. Tailor the RFP to the employee recognition industry

Sending a generic RFP template is a big, time-consuming mistake. Ask questions

“In a tight and unpredictable talent market, a positive workplace culture can be the difference that helps your business retain its people and thrive. By providing employee recognition solutions that clearly enhance job satisfaction, O.C. Tanner has earned their place as a Strategic Leader this year.”

DAVID WILSON, CEO AND FOUNDER OF
FOSWAY GROUP

specifically around recognition platforms and solutions.

5. Keep it simple

The more questions you ask, the more questions you'll have to read, analyze, and score. Stay focused and ask only the questions you couldn't answer in your research.

6. Don't rely on the RFP alone

As good as an RFP can be, it's not sufficient by itself. It's a start to helping gather as much information as possible, but it shouldn't replace conversations, presentations, demos, and follow-up meetings.

Start your RFP

Compare, contrast, and choose

The hard work doesn't stop after you've narrowed down your list of providers. To truly compare them all, you'll want to:

- See their [platform demos](#)

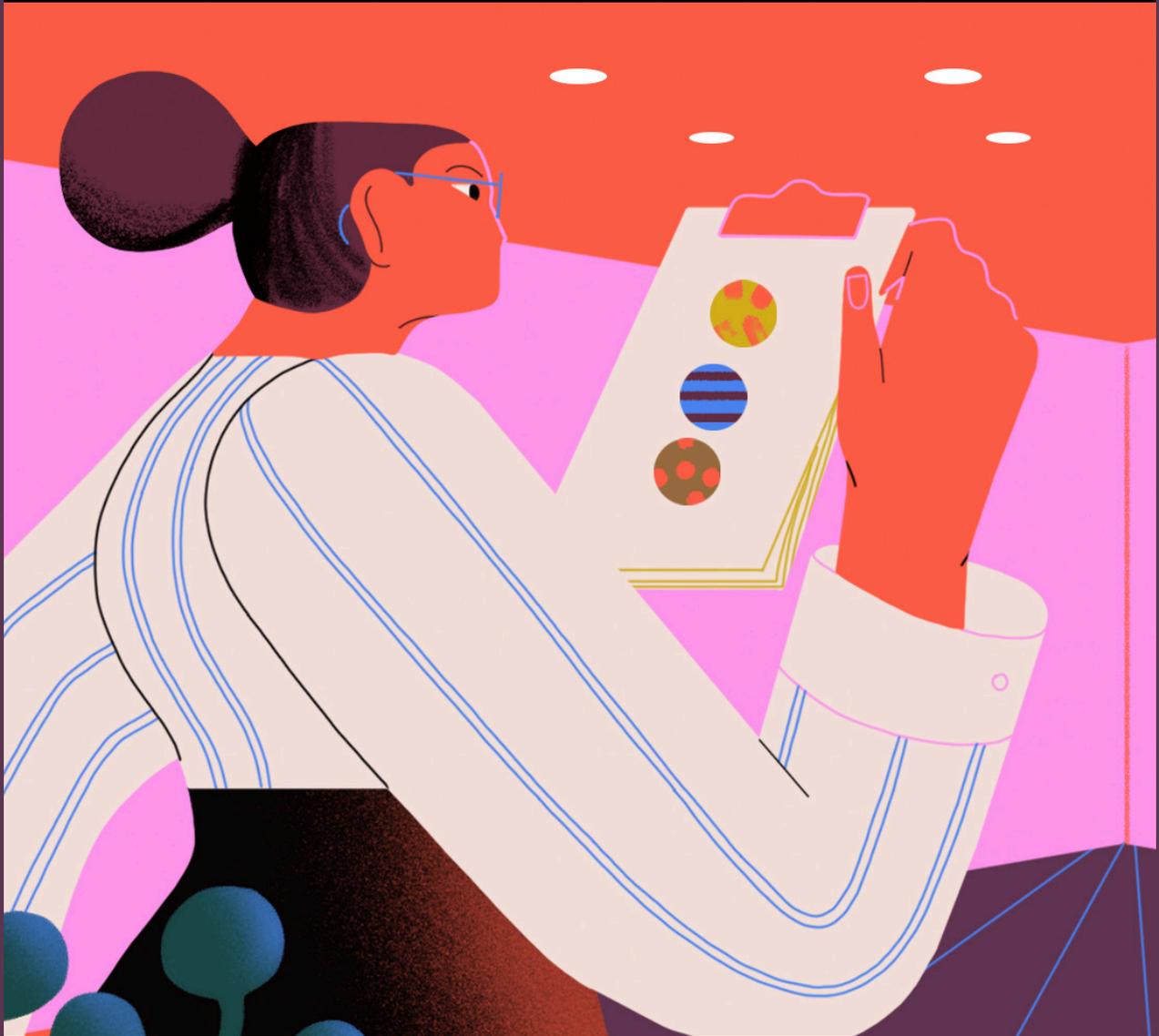
- Call their client references
- Visit potential vendors' facilities (virtually if necessary)
- Meet the team(s) you'd be working with to confirm the solutions and chemistry are everything you expect

If you've leveraged your referrals, done your research, and conducted a prudent RFP, your organization is perfectly positioned to make a final decision.

“O.C. Tanner was very accommodating in the way they customized the whole program for us. We wanted a Deloitte look and feel with branding, tied back to our values, and a certain process flow. O.C. Tanner helped us assemble this culture of appreciation.”

**DR. BADARI NARAYANA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
DELOITTE INDIA**





Selecting the Right Employee Recognition Partner

After researching dozens of employee recognition providers, watching [demos](#) and presentations, meeting with salespeople, and narrowing down your choices, it's time to decide on a [partner](#). Learn how to evaluate the different providers and choose the best one for your organization.



Look for pros and cons of each provider

As you evaluate each provider, consider these red flags and green lights:

4 Red Flags

- 1. Indirect answers.** Vendors may use generic or vague responses that lack substance or detail when they want to avoid responding to a question.
- 2. Software-only providers.** A solution won't be effective if it's just a piece of technology with no support, communication, or strategy behind it. Many recognition providers are in fact, technology companies with no actual recognition expertise.
- 3. Generic solutions.** If your solution looks like everyone else's, doesn't integrate with your existing tools or culture, or is not flexible to accommodate your needs, it's probably not the best one for you.

4. Only provides one type of recognition.

If a provider only has one type of recognition solution (like only points) or is just a gateway to an Amazon catalog, will that really be impactful to your employees? Or does recognition just become another form of compensation or currency?

5 Green Lights

- 1. Various solutions to meet all your recognition needs.** Look for a [provider](#) that can meet [all your recognition needs](#) with unique solutions tailored to each type of recognition, whether you want to recognize during [onboarding](#), for [service awards](#) and career anniversaries, [every day great work](#), [company celebrations](#), [team goals and initiatives](#), [innovation](#), sales goals, retirement, etc. How you welcome new hires will be different from how to recognize an employee's 10-year anniversary. Giving points for everything will dilute the meaning of recognition.

The possibilities for recognition are endless—your recognition partner's solutions and reward options should be, too.



2. Deep expertise and research.

Expertise in recognition and workplace culture is critical. Do they understand [communication strategy](#), customer service, education, measurement, integrations, technical support, and award strategy? Look at what third parties say about the provider, their [client satisfaction](#), company history, and where their [research and best practices](#) come from.

3. Partnership.

There's a lot to be said for working with [people you trust](#).

Is the team of salespeople and subject matter experts made up of smart, caring people who listen? Do they understand you? If a potential vendor uses high-pressure tactics or drama to get you to make a decision in their favor, what will they be like as a partner?



The O.C. Tanner Institute tracks, analyzes, and reports on ongoing organizational changes each year in their [Global Culture Report](#).

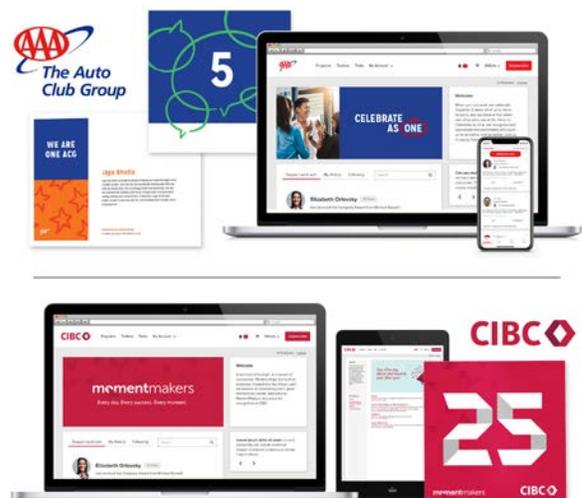
“O.C. Tanner cares about our business. They listen to our strategies and are interested in what drives Chevron. Then, they tailor recommendations to what will create value for us. It’s a remarkable partnership.”

TIM PAPA, HR GENERAL MANAGER, COMPENSATION AND MOBILITY, CHEVRON

The pre-sales stage is a good preview of what the potential partnership will be. If the relationship doesn't feel right, it probably isn't.

4. Customization of platform and awards.

If you want your recognition program to reflect your brand, culture, and values, find a partner who can [customize their platform](#) and awards. Your recognition program should [look and feel like you](#), not the vendor.



“We found a company that truly partners with us and has the values we have. We have a connection with our O.C. Tanner team—they make us feel seen and appreciated. They care, and that’s a partner you want.”

— ETHAN LINDSTROM, DIGITAL SOLUTIONS ADVISOR, CHEVRON

5. Unwired, offline solutions and integrations. Employees who [don’t use computers](#) or mobile devices in their daily work need [options to give and receive recognition](#). The best partners will help you ensure no one is left out.



Evaluate employee recognition providers with a scorecard

Use a [scorecard](#) to help you compare the spectrum of strengths and weaknesses of the providers on your short list. Your scorecard should contain:

- **Criteria** of functional, technical, and performance requirements

- **The weight** assigned to each criterion
- **Ratings** for each provider
- **A final score**

Example scorecard:

CRITERIA	RECOGNITION PROVIDERS:		
	A	B	C
Company Reputation	10	15	5
Financial Strength	16	4	16
Platform Usability	8	4	8
Platform Design and Branding	4	8	4
Mobile App & Offline tools	6	15	6
Integrations	6	3	6
Admin Tools, Reporting, Analytics	15	9	3
Customer Service	4	8	6
Award Selection	6	10	10
Custom Awards	4	5	2
Global Capabilities	11	8	10
Technical Expertise & Data Security	12	14	13
Implementation/Launch Support	6	6	7
Product Development	2	6	5
Pricing and Cost	8	9	10
WEIGHTED TOTAL SCORES	118	126	111

Tip: There may not be one partner who is at the top of every single category. Choose a provider who is a consistent performer across the board, rather than one who scores really high in one area but is mediocre or low across the others.

Build consensus across your selection committee

Your scorecard or RFP may not show you one clear winner. You may need to confer back with your selection committee. Here are a few tips to help you achieve unity to reach a final decision:

- **Keep the lane lines clear.** Your IT ambassador should speak to [technology](#)

[considerations](#), your finance delegate should focus on the most consequential costs. Be upfront with each committee member about what you need from them, and what you don't.

- **Expect to have more questions.** Your committee may raise new issues that require additional answers. Be ready to pose more questions to your vendors—which a good partner will be happy to answer.
- **Keep communication flowing.** Hold regular meetings with your committee throughout the process. And post-decision, include those same teams in meetings with your new recognition vendor as you implement your new solutions and tools.
- **Decide who has the final say.** It pays to designate someone to be the ultimate

decision maker— someone who hears all of the committee's input and makes the final selection or breaks a tie in a split vote.

“There is a shared commitment and desire to help our associates feel appreciated. The tools, data, and collaboration have been instrumental in creating a strong culture of recognition at Capital One. I appreciate the partnership and relationship that has been built over the years with the O.C. Tanner team to help support our program.”

NICK ROSENTHAL, PRINCIPAL ASSOCIATE, [CAPITAL ONE](#)





Selecting the best employee recognition partner for your organization is a monumental task—with equally massive rewards. In your search, you’ll inevitably find that not all recognition providers and programs are equal. That’s why the search itself is important and why we at O.C. Tanner are always ready to assist you.

O.C. Tanner’s Culture Cloud platform helps thousands of companies around the world deliver meaningful employee recognition experiences.

Schedule a demo today.

