

“LIKE THIS.”

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THE REMARKABLE POWER OF THE RIGHT RECOGNITION

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Our global research into the elements of highly engaged employees is called

The New Rules of EngagementSM.

One of the twelve rules that drives higher employee engagement is to “magnify the success” of our employees, where we recognize and celebrate when our associates have made meaningful contributions to the success of our organization.



To find out more about the New Rules, please visit: BIWORLDWIDE.com/newrules.

The great basketball coach John Wooden, who holds the record for winning the most NCAA championships, was known for his meticulous approach to teaching every element of the game, even seemingly minor tasks.

At the beginning of each season, Coach Wooden showed his players how to properly put on their socks and shoes. Now, his players had been putting on socks and shoes to play basketball long before they came to college and surely they knew how to perform this simple chore. But along with showing them the proper way (and there is a proper way) he also told them why it was important. In this case, Coach Wooden told them the proper method would keep their feet healthy and free of blisters and that was important because players couldn't perform at their best if their feet hurt. Finally, Coach Wooden's training accentuated the behavior he was looking for by a phrase his players heard frequently:

“Like this,” he would say.

Coach Wooden's approach to building a successful basketball team was to reinforce the behaviors he wanted and then tell them why those behaviors led to success – in this case, winning championships.

What impact can Coach Wooden's approach to success have in the world of business? Specifically, does recognizing behaviors the organization views as important have a bottom-line impact?

Is “like this” a competitive differentiator?

We recently conducted a novel study with a global retailer. For several years the retailer has offered opportunities for managers and peers to post recognitions on an online portal hosted by BI WORLDWIDE. To conduct our study, we analyzed the results of recognitions from two different regions of the chain for which we had business results, specifically store sales and customer service ratings.

We conducted what is called a content analysis of the recognitions, studying what was actually said in each recognition message. The company provided us with their corporate values, the beliefs and behaviors the company viewed as important to the success of the organization. If the content of the recognition was aligned with the corporate values, it was given a score of one. A message that wasn't aligned with the values, even though it might be sincere, was scored a zero.

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To give you an example of how this analysis worked, below are two recognitions. In this case let's say we're evaluating the recognitions through the lens of one of the corporate values of BI WORLDWIDE, which is **“Fast is better than slow. Action is better than talk.”** How would you score the following statements?

	Recognition Content	Values Alignment Score
1	“Thanks for getting that report to me. Getting it to me on time helped me prepare for the customer meeting.”	
2	“Thanks for getting that report to me. You are a great co-worker and I appreciate your friendship.”	

The first statement is more aligned to this corporate value and in this case, would be given a score of one. The recognition, in the parlance of Coach Wooden, has the right “Like this.”

In the second statement the author talks about the importance of the relationship with the co-worker, which isn't a bad thing, but it's not as aligned with the corporate value, so would be scored a zero.

We conducted this analysis with hundreds of recognitions in the two different regions of the global retail chain and here's what we found:



Managers and employees in Region Two were doing a better job of “connecting the dots” in their recognitions, reinforcing the behaviors the company valued. Employees in that region also repeated those behaviors more frequently. This becomes, then, a cycle of success, where the right behaviors are consistently reinforced and then expressed by employees. And in the case of this company, customers saw the difference in employees in Region Two and rewarded those stores with higher sales and better customer satisfaction ratings. It turns out that the “like this” approach to recognition, where the right behaviors are taught and reinforced, makes a huge difference. It's not just about providing any recognition – but giving recognition that is aligned with and accentuates the values and behaviors an organization holds dear.

Are you looking for better business results?
Align your recognition to what's important.

To learn more about BI WORLDWIDE, visit:
BIWORLDWIDE.com or email LATAM@BIWORLDWIDE.com.

