

Who, What, Where, When & How?

Approach to Recognition

Recognition is most meaningful when it is performance-based, given promptly, given frequently, given informally, given in the appropriate setting, and valuable to both provider and recipient.

The best way to get any new behaviour started is to plan for it to happen. Individual recognition is no exception. Planning doesn't need to be elaborate or even formal. A plan can be as simple as deciding to tell someone who has done a good job that you appreciate it. To be most successful, your plan should take into account the stages before and after the recognition:

Recognition does not need to be fancy or complicated; in fact the more simple and direct, the better.

When thinking about informal recognition, a simple and effective approach is to use the who, what, where, when, and how format. This planning format doesn't even need to be written down, but systematically thinking it through will help you do a better job of recognition – especially when you are just getting started with it.

What do I want to recognize?

The best recognition is contingent: that is, in response to a specific behaviour or performance.

Who do I want to recognize?

Identify the person or people most responsible for the desired behaviour or performance.

When should the recognition be done?

The best recognition takes place soon after the desired behaviour or performance.

Where should the recognition be done?

The best recognition is personal; that is, delivered directly to the individual being acknowledged – ideally in person.

How should the recognition be done?

The best recognition is done in a way that enhances its motivational value to the recipient. Who performs the recognition? Is it done in public or private?

Asking these questions will help ensure that your recognition efforts have the greatest impact in providing positive reinforcement and in having recipients receive meaningful recognition that makes them feel valued and appreciated.