



Recognition Success Story: RBC's Social Recognition Program a Sound Investment

By David Layman, RPI

RBC Royal Bank has continued to find ways to be in the forefront of social recognition, and their efforts are paying dividends.

RBC uses a standard online, internet-based system for the company's recognition efforts, making for a **very successful recognition and engagement program for its more than 75,000 employees around the world.**

"There's no secret that using social engagement works, and that engagement ties to results. It has certainly been an amazing journey for us," said Steve Richardson, CRP®, Manager, Recognition Programs for Royal Bank of Canada.

With employees being so busy with their daily tasks, Richardson said the social recognition platform they use allows managers and employees to give more frequent and timely recognition for a job well done, large or small.

"You need more frequency and things that will literally take seconds, whether it's daily recognition or peer-to-peer recognition," he said. "Our employees like the quickness of it. **You can log in and give recognition in 20 to 30 seconds.** They can leave the screen open on their computer and come in and quickly give recognition. They can get in and get out."

According to a Gallup study, **49% of employees say they would leave their current position to move to a company that recognizes employees for their work.** As expected, the more frequent the recognition, the more successful recognition programs will be.

Another key to the success of RBC's program is that they **regularly train managers on the importance of recognition**, and how to do it. Having worked for years in the banking business, Richardson learned all about the particulars of that business, but no one trained him on the particulars of recognition. Now, he knows how important it is to train managers on how to do recognition.

"We spend a lot of time coaching our managers about what recognition is – the philosophy behind employee recognition – what you say to the employee and how that ties back to engagement, as well as what is meaningful recognition. What do they want to hear?"

And they are looking at ways to embellish their training and how they can get their social recognition tools into the hands of managers, as well as how they can use the data to manage people better and engage employees.

Richardson stressed the importance of manager participation, adding that once a manager "gets it" and ups their game in terms of recognition, more and more people begin using it.

While RBC's social recognition does use a point-based reward program, Richardson added it's not so much about getting "stuff", like prizes and other items, necessarily.

"It's about how that manager makes you feel – that you feel appreciated," he said.

One of the challenges for RBC has been how to grow its recognition program as the company has expanded into other parts of the world. The company has grown from a small bank in Canada to countries around the world and they have had to take other languages and cultures into consideration.

"Social recognition is different depending on what part of the world you're in," he said. "But generally the notion of social recognition is sound everywhere. We speak to our local counterparts to see what we need to do – here's what we want to do, now coach us on how to do it."

One area he sees the company expanding is in **using data to better gauge their investment in recognition.**

"That's the new frontier," he said. "We are looking for more tools managers can use to be effective. We've been successful, we are very happy with our numbers. Now the next phase is tie in financial data to see how it relates back to our spend. Sometimes ROI is hard to answer. We're definitely looking forward to that as the next chapter."

