

The Gamification Engagement Model

Designing Culture People Actually Participate In

People

The humans at the center

Process

The systems that support them

Participation

The loop that sustains it



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Your Guide to Hybrid Success



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As the Solutions Consultant of Recognize, David has guided organizations in implementing gamified, high-impact recognition and rewards programs for over 6 years.



SECTION 1

The Participation Gap

Why culture programs look great on paper, and disappear in practice. We're moving away from **culture by decree** and toward **culture by design**.



The "Usage Cliff"

Most culture initiatives experience a launch spike, then a total collapse.

The Hard Truth

70% of organizational change programs fail — due to employee resistance and lack of management support.

— McKinsey & Company

The Pattern

- Big launch energy in week one
- Gradual disengagement by week four
- Ghost-town participation by day 90

The Distributed Dilemma

The death of organic recognition, and why it matters now more than ever.



The Visibility Problem

In an office, a manager sees you stay late to help a peer. In a remote world, **that act is invisible.**

⚠ Without intentional visibility, employees believe their extra effort simply doesn't matter, and they stop giving it.

In remote and hybrid environments, visibility isn't a byproduct of proximity. **It's a requirement of design.**

Friction: The Culture Killer

Complexity is the enemy of participation.

EFFORT TO PARTICIPATE



PARTICIPATION RATE

12%

45%

80%

The Design Principle

Lower the friction until participation becomes the **path of least resistance**, not the exception.

- Every additional step in your participation flow is a dropout point. Design for the exhausted employee, not the motivated one.

SECTION 2

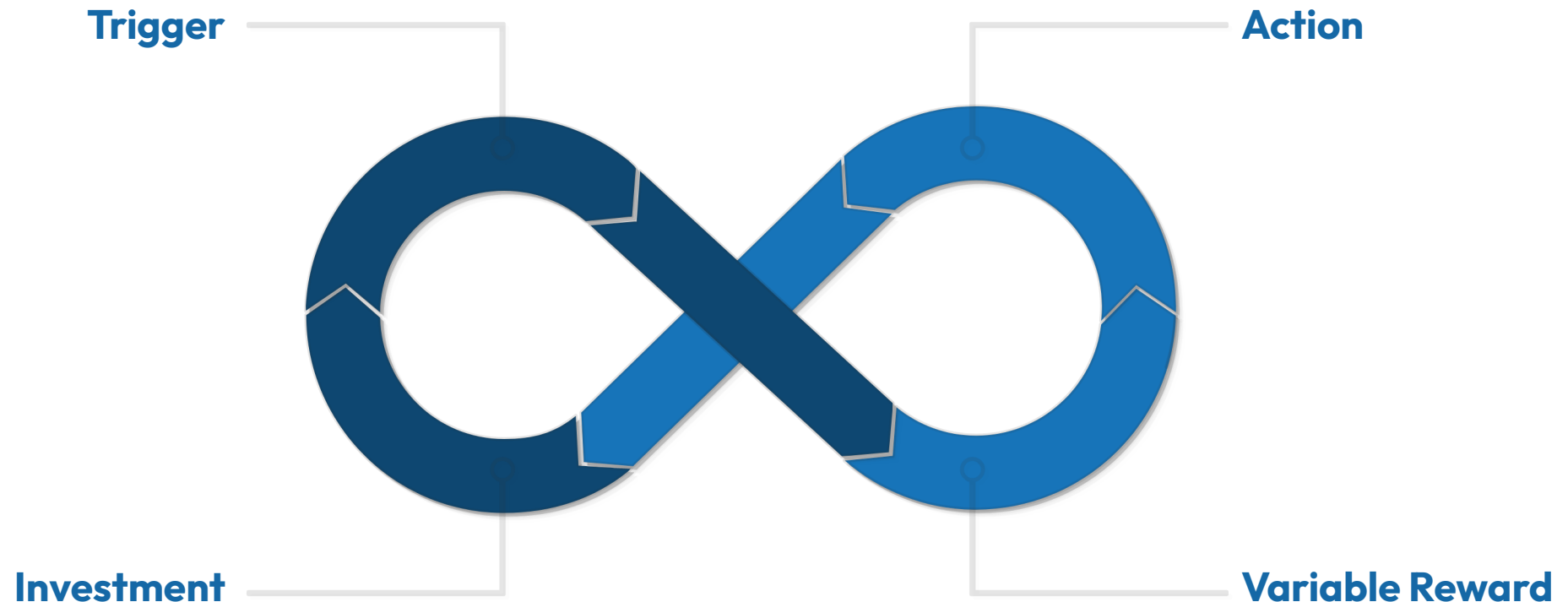
The Engagement Loop Framework

Engagement is a loop, not a one-time event. Behavioral design turns a single action into a recurring habit.

Introduction to the Loop

The Hooked Model, applied to culture. Four stages that transform participation from an effort into an instinct!

The Hooked Model



Each stage reinforces the next. When the loop is closed, participation becomes self-sustaining. Employees don't need to be reminded because they want to engage!



The Trigger: External to Internal

Prompts that spark the first action, and eventually become self-generated.

→ **External Trigger**

A nudge in Slack, Teams, or email.

→ **Internal Trigger**

Over time, employees begin **looking for reasons to recognize peers** on their own. The prompt becomes a mindset.

The Action: The 30-Second Rule

Simplicity isn't a nice-to-have. It's the mechanism that makes culture scale.

Complex Form

Long nomination,
many steps, high
dropout



Simple Action

Badge selection +
one sentence, 30
seconds

The Principle

A quick recognition selection and a one-sentence note is **more effective** than a long nomination form.

- ✔ Reducing the steps in a participation process can increase completion rates by up to **200%**.

Design for the employee with 30 seconds available, not 30 minutes.



Variable Rewards: The Unexpected Win

Predictable rewards become expected compensation. Variable rewards drive behavior.

The Science

B.F. Skinner's research on variable ratios shows that **inconsistent, meaningful rewards create the strongest and most durable habits.**

The Application

Tie rewards to **specific, value-aligned actions**, not just tenure or seniority. Specificity amplifies meaning.

The Result

Employees stay in the loop because they **don't know what's coming next**, and that uncertainty is motivating.

SECTION 3

Gamification Without Gimmicks

Real behavioral mechanics, not superficial fun. Each tool serves a purpose rooted in psychology.

Points as a Feedback Language

Points aren't just for fun. They are a standardized signal from leadership to team members.



Design Points to Reflect Values

- **Not just activity** - points for meaningful behaviors, not mere logins
- **Consistent scale** - employees understand what earns what
- **Visible currency** - public acknowledgment of contribution

☐ When points map to values, they become a common language that spans teams, time zones, and job functions.

Challenges: Gamifying the Strategy

Direct participation energy toward specific business goals.



Knowledge Share Challenge

Cross-departmental collaboration goal - Q3

Safety Compliance Sprint

Operations team monthly milestone

Innovation Submission Drive

Ideas submitted to quarterly pipeline

Challenges create a direct line of sight between individual participation and organizational outcomes, making culture feel strategic, not ceremonial.

Streaks: Rewarding Consistency

Celebrate the marathoners, not just the sprinters!

The Science of Habit

The *European Journal of Social Psychology* found it takes an average of **66 days** to form a new habit, NOT 21!

Streaks are the mechanism that gets employees across that threshold.

What Streaks Do

- Encourage small, weekly recognition actions
- Build recognition into company DNA over time
- Reward consistency over heroic one-time gestures
- Create a natural incentive to maintain momentum



Badges: Visualizing Identity

Badges don't just grant points. They build professional identity.



Customer Obsessed

Awarded for going beyond the scope to create an exceptional customer experience.



Solution Seeker

Earned by turning obstacles into outcomes and bringing creative fixes to persistent problems.



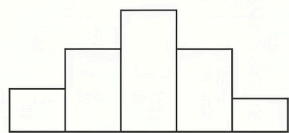
Radical Candor

Recognized for delivering honest, caring feedback that helps colleagues grow.

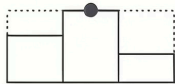
Leaderboards & Social Standing

Competition and prestige are two different motivators. Use both intentionally.

Leaderboards



Real-time



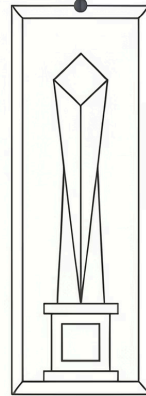
Real-time
Weekly resets

A dynamic system showcasing real-time performance. Weekly resets create a cyclical challenge.

Hall of Fame



Permanent
prestige



Long-term
legacy

A prestigious, curated honor. Recognizes individuals whose exceptional performance has set enduring benchmarks for excellence.

Design Principle

Focus leaderboards on **Values Champions**, not just Point Accumulators. The goal is cultural influence, not a game score.

- Both formats appeal to the human desire for status, but prestige outlasts competition as a motivator.

SECTION 4

Manager-Friendly Execution

Managers are the multiplier and the most common bottleneck. Great culture tools remove burden, they don't add to it.

The Manager Bottleneck

Don't just ask managers to "boost culture." Give them tools that make culture part of their existing workflow.

70%

Variance Explained

Gallup: Managers account for 70% of the variance in team engagement scores

60%

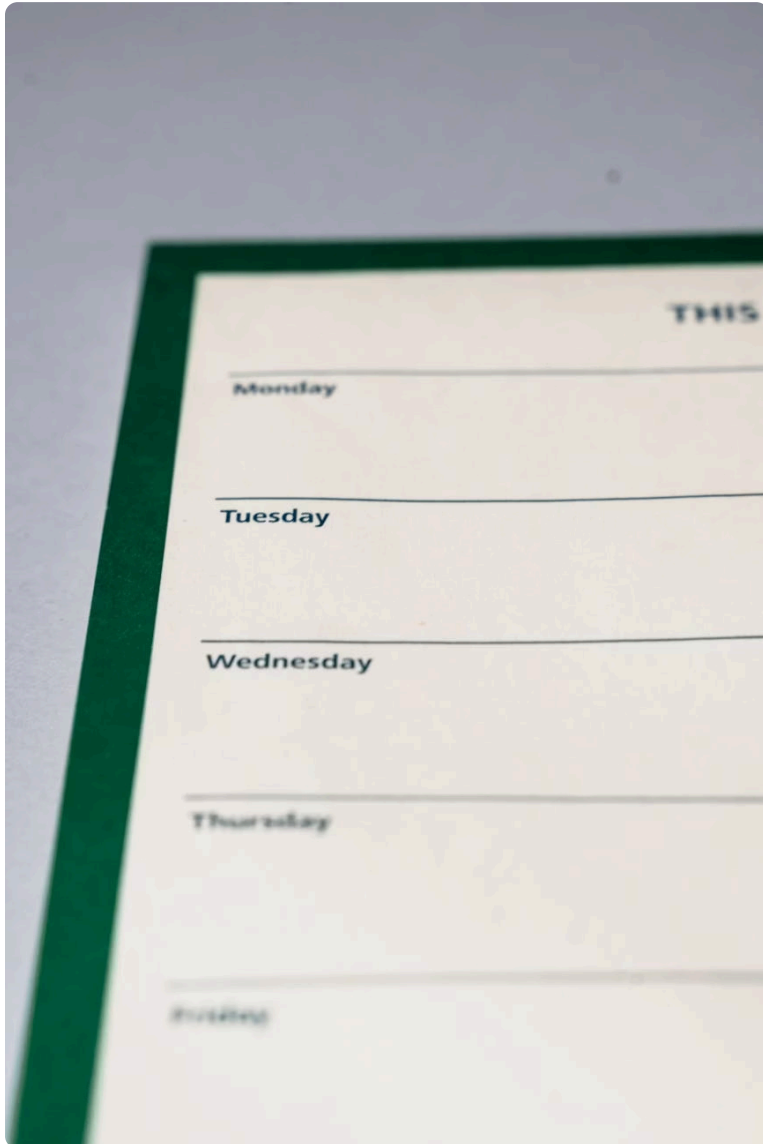
Managers Overwhelmed

Report they don't have enough time for people management responsibilities



Low-Lift Routines: The 5-Minute Friday

A structured ritual that keeps teams connected without adding to the workload.



How It Works

01

One Prompt

A single question surfaces at end of week.

02

Three Recognitions

Manager tags three colleagues who made an impact

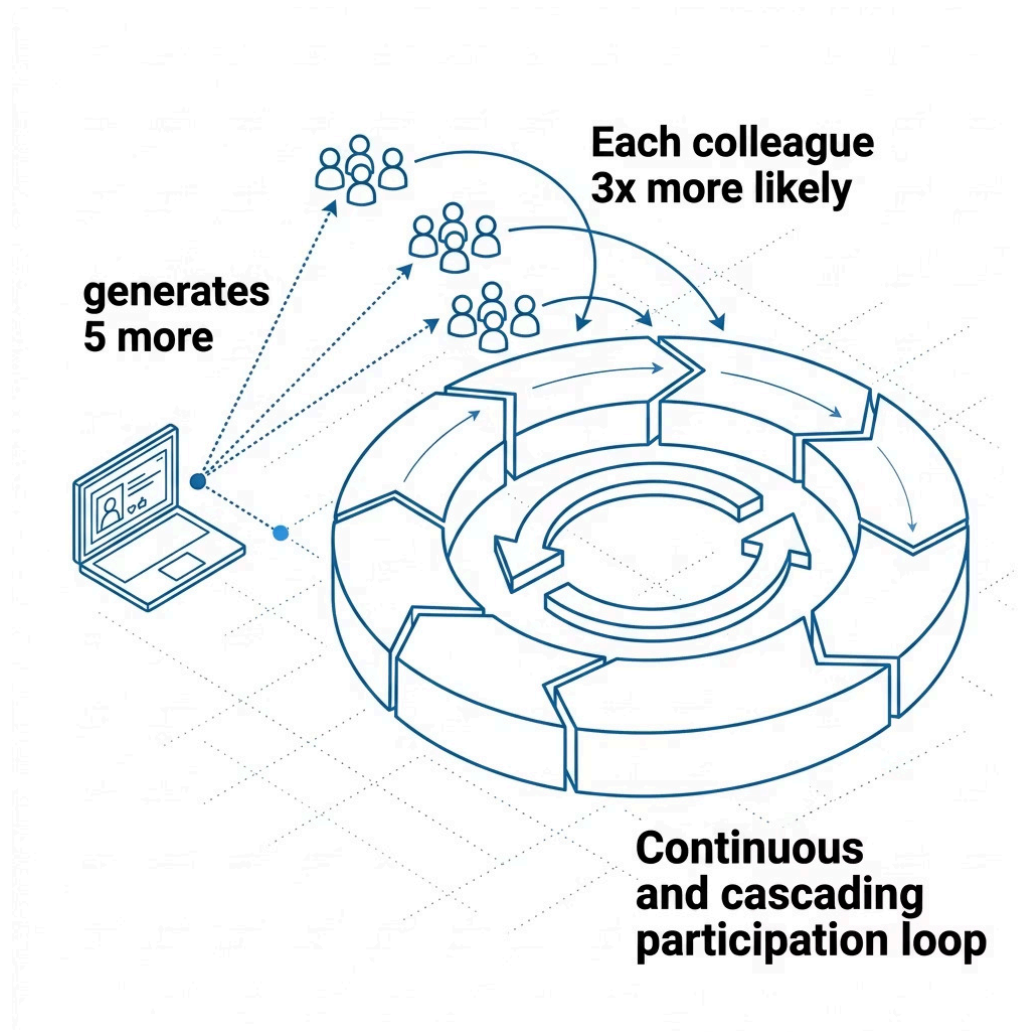
03

Five Minutes

Time-boxed, low-lift, and repeatable — every single week

Social Proof & The Newsfeed

One recognition sparks many. The newsfeed is a self-scaling system.



The Social Proof Effect

When employees see peers being recognized publicly, they are **significantly more likely to participate themselves.**

- Normalizes recognition as a behavior
- Creates positive peer pressure to contribute
- Reduces the fear of "being the first"

SECTION 5

Proof & Measurement

What gets measured gets managed, and what gets recognized gets repeated. Here's how to track what truly matters.

Measuring Active Participation

Registration can be a vanity metric. Real impact lives in weekly behavior, not headcount on a list.



MAU

Monthly Active Users. This is the true pulse of participation health



Give-to-Receive Ratio

Are employees giving recognition, or just collecting it? Balance signals culture depth.



Repeat Rate

How many participants return to the loop the following week?

The Retention Impact

Employees don't leave companies. They leave environments where they feel **invisible**.

The Recognition-Retention Link

Organizations with high-recognition cultures experience **31% lower voluntary turnover**.

— Bersin by Deloitte

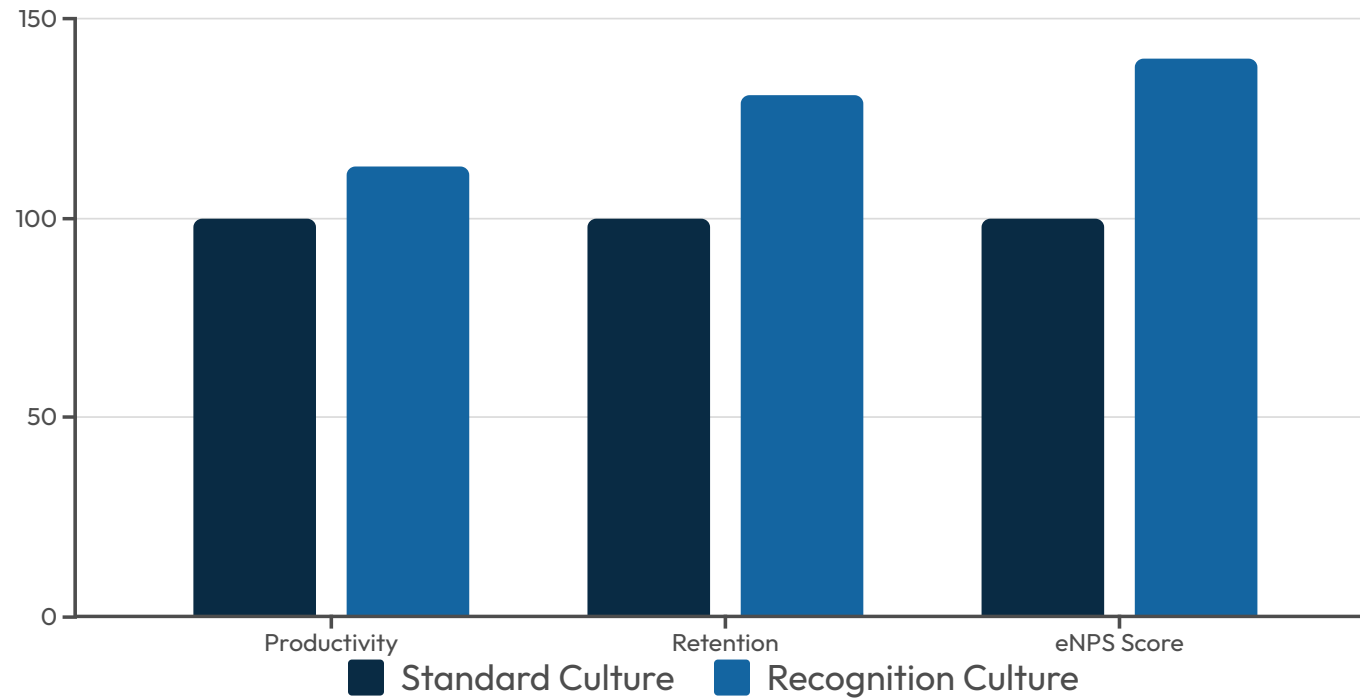
What Visibility Creates

- Employees feel **seen** for their contributions
- Managers build **trust** through consistent acknowledgment
- Teams develop a shared sense of **belonging**



ROI: eNPS & Productivity

Happy workers are more productive workers, and recognition is the force multiplier!



The Oxford Finding

Oxford University research found that workers are **13% more productive when they are happy** at work.

When engagement rises, output rises with it. Recognition doesn't cost the organization. It compounds for it.

Conclusion: Design, Don't Declare

Engagement doesn't happen by accident. Culture is a system. And systems must be designed.



1

Start with the Trigger

Put the prompt where the work happens

2

Simplify the Action

Make participation the path of least resistance

3

Measure the Repeat

Track weekly behavior, not registration numbers



If you want a culture people actually participate in, you have to **design for it.**

Q & A Time with Recognize



LIVE DEMO

Register here for *Make Recognition Visible Across Your Team* - our live demo shows you how to recognition!

The banner features a blue background with a yellow sun icon in the top right. At the top left, a dark blue button with a play icon and the text 'LIVE DEMO' is displayed. Below this, the title 'Make Recognition Visible Across Your Team' is written in large, bold, black font. To the left of the title, a calendar icon is followed by the date 'Tuesday, April 28th', and a clock icon is followed by the time '12 PM ET | 9 AM PT'. On the right side, there is a circular portrait of Jess Vigorito, with her name 'Jess Vigorito' and the title 'MC' below it. In the center, five gold stars are arranged horizontally. Below the stars is a dark blue button with the text 'JOIN US' and a mouse cursor icon pointing at it. On the bottom left, there is a portrait of David Jones, with his name 'David Jones' and the title 'Recognition Partner' below it. At the bottom of the banner, the Recognize logo (a blue star in a circle) is followed by the word 'Recognize' in a large, blue, sans-serif font. Below the logo, the website 'RecognizeApp.com' is written in white, followed by a right-pointing arrow.

Tuesday, April 28 - 12 PM ET | 9 AM PT

In this 45-minute live session, you'll see exactly how modern organizations are making recognition visible, consistent, and impactful across remote, hybrid, and field-based teams.

Bonus:

- Live Q&A
- \$100 gift card raffle
- 🎁 \$1,000 in rewards credit for new customers

👉 If improving engagement and retention is on your radar, this will be a high-value 45 minutes for you!

Register here:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/RcFUEclzShmGkutltbS8WQ>

NEXT WEBINAR



SCALING PEOPLE OPS: SYSTEMS, RHYTHMS, AND STRUCTURE FOR REMOTE- FIRST GROWTH



TUESDAY, 05 MAY

01:00 PM ET



Live Webinar



Alex Grande

Chief Executive Officer
@Recognize

Powered by:



May 5 | 01:00 PM ET | 10 AM PT

Key Takeaways:

- How to evolve People processes as headcount grows
- The operating rhythms high-performing remote teams rely on
- Ways to maintain culture consistency across distributed teams
- How to equip managers to scale communication and performance

REGISTER HERE:

https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/3017761162209/WN_3jAr-t5WTEGtsQldsehZPA