

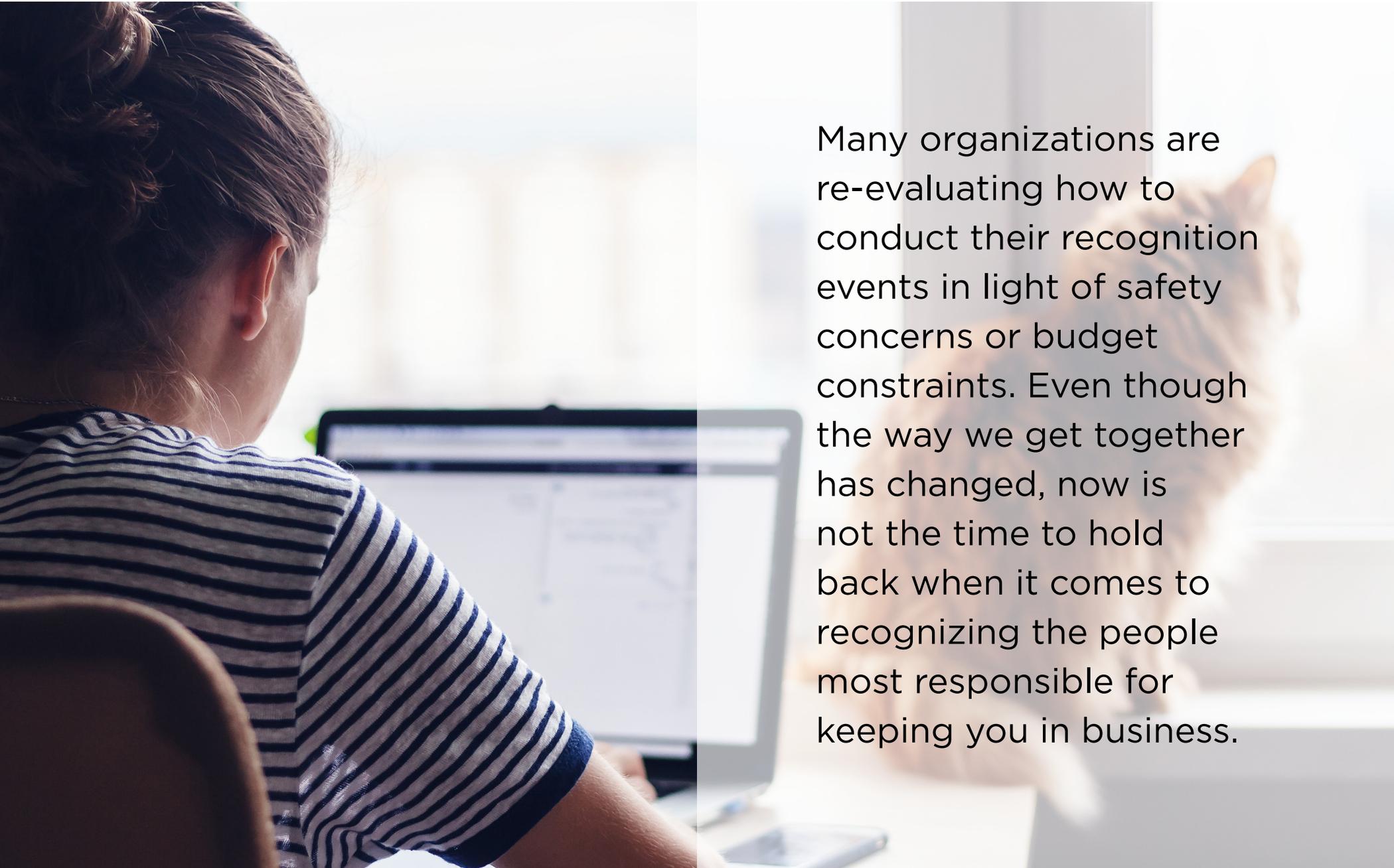
5 Ways to Ensure Your Virtual Recognition Event Is Meaningful

Why Recognition Events Still
Matter in a Digital World



Terryberry





Many organizations are re-evaluating how to conduct their recognition events in light of safety concerns or budget constraints. Even though the way we get together has changed, now is not the time to hold back when it comes to recognizing the people most responsible for keeping you in business.

In a survey conducted by Terryberry, workforce leaders pointed to the impact of recognition in today's tougher times and the difficulty of recognizing employees.

7 in 10

leaders say recognition is more difficult now.

9 in 10

leaders say that recognizing employees has more impact now.

Recent [McKinsey & Company](#) research also points to the impact of recognition as organizations look to return stronger from disruption.

+20.4%

Work effectiveness

+55.1%

Engagement

+49.3%

Well-being



This is also one of those times where the hard data backs up what the heart knows: Organizations need to show care for the whole employee during trying times. With disruption at work and home, creating a sense of purpose, belonging, and motivation is more important than ever.

Although the power of in-person events that happen around the holidays or at other times throughout the year is undeniable, there's more to them than just the getting-together part. It's about infusing people with the energy and alignment they need to be effective contributors to your organization. Virtual events can help deliver a recognition experience that does just that.

Whether it's health and budget concerns preventing an in-person event, or just a push to include more geographically dispersed employees, there's a right and wrong way to create a meaningful virtual event. We created this e-book to help you have the most successful event possible.

1 Align around your culture

When considering a virtual recognition event, you need to think first about your culture and what makes the most sense for your organization. When employees are aligned on values and purpose, it leads to [better retention](#) than higher pay or perks like food or pingpong tables. Every employee counts, especially when we are all asking more of them.

At Terryberry, we wanted to do something to make our virtual service award event special. Before the big night, we sent each recipient their award and a wine and cheese package. At the virtual event, we had a cheese expert talk through the cheeses we sent before we got into the program recognizing employees who have been with the organization for years. **The shared experience created a sense of togetherness, even though we were apart.**

A wine and cheese event may not be the style of your organization. There are many different options for virtual team-building experiences. Others have played interactive games across teams, or enjoyed a talk from a special guest. You can also brainstorm ideas with employees — they may have had a virtual experience that's fun and appropriate for your organization.

There's probably no wrong way to approach programming a virtual event, as long as it's aligned with your culture and supports your values.

Key Points:

- Take your collective culture into consideration.
- Add special elements that are aligned with your culture.
- Brainstorm and ask for ideas from employees.

2 Make recognition *the* event

Many employees already spend an inordinate amount of time on virtual meetings. [Zoom fatigue is real](#), so adding another event where people will be on their computers may seem counterintuitive.

That's why it's important to center your event solely on recognition. While in-person events can mix company business, news, and updates in with recognition, your virtual event will inevitably fall flat if it comes off as more of an obligation than an opportunity to celebrate.

Whether you're celebrating service, achievements, or sales performance, the event should be centered around finding ways to make it fun and memorable. Consider ways to involve your employees in the event so they can actively participate. Some organizations have sent everyone fun props to use — like a big foam finger. When celebrating your people over video, this is a visual way to represent the applause that an in-person event offers.

Maybe more important, it ensures your event doesn't come off as just another work meeting. And for those who don't do many virtual meetings, ensure they have easy-to-follow instructions to make it seamless.

Key Points:

- Don't let your recognition event come off as an obligation.
- Focus on recognition rather than company business or news.
- Inject your event with fun ways to boost participation.
- Ensure that employees have easy-to-follow instructions for how to join and participate.

3 Focus on the recipient

Not every company recognizes people the same way. As mentioned earlier, culture should play a big role in determining what a recognition event looks like for a recipient.

But people also want recognition that's personalized to them. We know that focusing on the types of recognition people want [supercharges the effect](#). An avid cook appreciates a special pan he has had his eye on more than cash, and a superfan appreciates a new piece of memorabilia for her collection more than a Starbucks gift card.

We also know some people like very public recognition in front of family and friends while others prefer a more private thank-you. While an in-person event may already account for this, remember this is still true in virtual formats.

The great thing about a virtual event is that those who enjoy praise can share the night with more people and those who prefer something more low-key can keep their camera off and enjoy the night on their own terms.

Also, realize that some people may have technology limitations that impact their ability to participate in a virtual event. Ensure you've found unique ways to recognize each individual.

Key Points:

- Make sure to create a unique recognition moment for everyone.
- Personalization increases the effectiveness of any recognition event.
- Think of ways to take into consideration public vs. more discreet recognition.

4 Create a new experience

When many organizations first look to create a virtual recognition event, they think of ways to reproduce the in-person experience. That limits the opportunities to take full advantage of what a virtual event allows you to do, though.

When Terryberry created a virtual recognition event for our service award recipients, we knew it would be different. While it wasn't like our in-person event, we were able to add employees who worked outside our headquarters, extended family, and even retired employees to celebrate the accomplishments of friends and family members.

"It was kind of neat how my whole family was able to watch this year," said one employee. Another said, "At first, I didn't think I would like the virtual platform, but being able to see our sales admins' and sales teams' achievements made it feel a bit more special."

This is an opportunity to bring more people into your celebration, create a new experience, establish new traditions, and make them more meaningful. It's also a great opportunity to encourage people to use platforms like internal recognition software or social media to share the event.

Make the most out of this new opportunity without trying to limit yourself to ineffectively copying the in-person experience.

Key Points:

- Don't try to reproduce the in-person experience virtually.
- Think of ways to incorporate the advantages that going digital gives you.
- Including more people can create new traditions and more meaningful recognition

5 Make the thought count

You've heard the expression, "It's the thought that counts." As organizations navigate uncertainty and disruption, your people really prioritize the thought you put into your actions and [it helps build trust](#) in the organization.

As organizations consider all kinds of strategies, from compensation and staffing changes to adjustments to rewards and recognition programs, you need to make the thought count. **With many companies unable to offer award travel or experiential rewards, now is the time to consider alternatives to ensure that people feel appreciated.**

For instance, instead of canceling a president's club trip to a great destination, what if you turned it into a virtual shopping spree to help your top performers outfit their homes? Think of ways something tangible can help close the recognition loop when other options may be off the table.

Key Points:

- Putting thought into what you do for employees matters now more than ever.
- Many organizations are considering new reward strategies.
- Use tangible rewards to close the loop when experiential rewards are off the table.

Top 8 Ideas to Make Remote Recognition Events Work

Looking for some ideas to ensure your remote recognition event is successful? Here are the eight top tips from Terryberry that you can use in your own organization.

1 Host a virtual gathering via video conference

2 Include everyone and encourage employees' family and friends to join

3 Share a special message of appreciation from your CEO

4 Enjoy an experience together, like a fun online class, games, or a guest speaker

5 Include ways for participants to interact, with online applause, comments, or video props

6 Ship a special gift to employees' homes

7 Reward achievements with a virtual shopping spree

8 Use your social recognition platform to increase the reach of the event

In-person recognition events are such a valuable touch point for connecting and encouraging your people.

Virtual recognition events can also be a powerful tool to inspire your employees. It can open new opportunities to engage a geographically diverse workforce and even share the impact of a person's work to family, friends, and former colleagues.

When created in a way that is aligned with your culture, takes into account your people's preferences, and focuses on thoughtful recognition, these events can create fun new traditions and expand their reach.

At Terryberry, we're focused on creating great recognition moments that ignite potential in your people. We're here to help, whether it's to think about your overall recognition strategy or to close the loop with rewards for any achievement.

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