

Recognize, Retain, Repeat

How Awardco has used Awardco to build
a culture of engagement

Recognition with real returns: cultural impact, bottom-line results, and keys to **HR success**

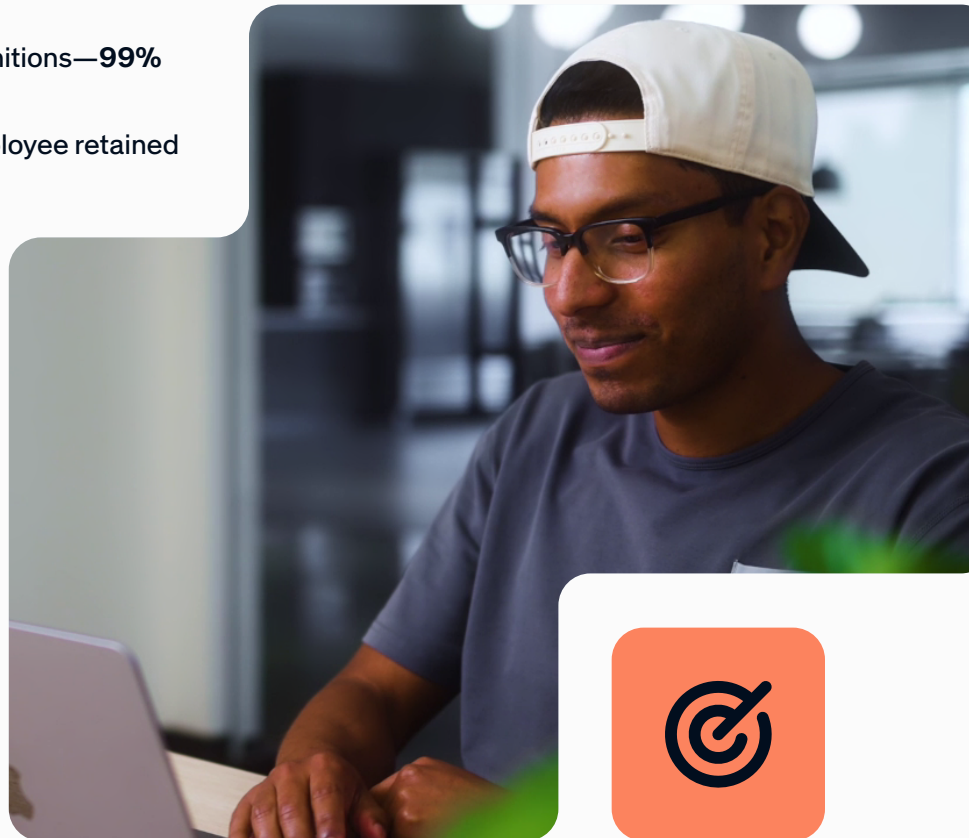
The impact that rewards and recognition has on companies has clearly been shown by the numerous Awardco customers who have shared their stories. But what impact has Awardco itself seen by using its own recognition platform?

After digging into the data, the results couldn't be clearer: recognition has built a culture of engagement, belonging, retention, and happiness for all employees, creating a workplace where people feel seen, valued, and cared for.

The story of Awardco is the story of recognition: see exactly how the company has tied appreciation into every aspect of its culture, achieving impressive ROI throughout its 10-year history.

A snapshot of **key results**

- eNPS went from 38 in 2024 to **58 in 2025**—58% above industry average
- 14% attrition rate in 2025, **6% better than average tech companies**
- **100% user login** on the platform in 2025
- **61 logins per user** on average
- 97% of employees have sent recognitions—**99% have been recognized**
- Save \$100,000 on average per employee retained
- Internal recognitions happen **every two seconds**



The history and background of Awardco

Awardco was founded in 2015 with three total employees using borrowed Wi-Fi. It was a small team with a clear vision: revolutionizing how employees are recognized and rewarded at work.

The growth has been exponential from that point onward. In 2021, Awardco secured the largest Series A funding in HR SaaS history, and the company followed it with a \$165M Series B in 2025 to propel our continual innovation and growth.

Now, Awardco has over 600 employees serving 3,000+ organizations, and 6M+ users with redemptions across 163 countries. And asking around, all of Awardco's leaders say the same thing: this impressive growth is possible because everyone believes in the importance of the product.

"We focus on why a company is great: it's because of the people. And if you forget about the people, you're not going anywhere because you overlook the simplest thing: saying thank you to one another."

- Steve Sonnenberg, Co-Founder and CEO



How to maintain a foundation of recognition through growth

From the beginning, founders Steve Sonnenberg, Mike Sonnenberg, and Tanner Runia had a product vision that was inseparable from the culture they wanted to create: one where recognition was not occasional or top-down, but continuous, peer-driven, and deeply human.

As Awardco grew from a startup into a global HR tech leader, the challenge became not only building a world-class product but also protecting and scaling the ethos on which it was founded. It was never enough to deliver recognition technology; the company itself had to live those values and weave them intrinsically into the solution.

Over the past decade, when facing rapid hiring, regional expansion, and evolving workplace dynamics, Awardco tackled the same challenges as its customers: how do you sustain a culture of connection, purpose, and performance across departments, time zones, and diverse experiences and continue to deliver innovative solutions?

VOICES OF AWARDCO

"I've had to make peace with the fact that this could be the best employee culture and environment I'll ever work in. I may never leave just because of that."

Solutions that drive **sustainable** recognition and impactful results

From inception, Awardco hasn't settled with talking the talk. The company puts its money where its mouth is and utilizes its recognition platform more than anyone else.

While Awardco began with simple peer-to-peer and manager-to-peer recognition, like most companies, over time, it expanded into broader programs such as incentives, A-Pay, AwardCodes, and nominations—adapting each to budgetary, regional, cultural, and timing considerations, and embedding recognition more deeply into the culture with every addition.

Dive deep into the strategies Awardco employed and continues to employ to accomplish this far-reaching, sustainable culture of recognition.

Recognition as a leadership practice

At Awardco, leadership's involvement in recognition goes far beyond symbolism—it actively shapes a culture where every contribution is seen and celebrated. From day one, new hires are immersed in this culture: they receive welcome messages and swag points, earn recognition for completing training, and see their names displayed on office screens as part of their onboarding experience.

Recognition is also woven into the company's daily and weekly rhythms. Awardco's CEO Steve starts each weekly all-hands meeting, called *Recognize the Good*, by highlighting a recognition from the platform. He spotlights behaviors that fit with Awardco's culture, and he awards the giver and the receiver with some points, too.

"Recognition allows us to see and appreciate each other, no matter where we live. At Awardco, I make sure it's always front of mind—we weave it into everything, even starting our all-hands meetings with a recognition."

- Steve Sonnenberg, Co-Founder and CEO



Teams are encouraged to start their meetings by shouting out recognitions or positive behaviors, and managers integrate recognition into feedback.

Top-down recognition is the core of Awardco's culture because company leadership understands that employees are what makes the company special.

VOICES OF AWARDCO

"That one line of thanks from a director? That stayed with me for weeks."

Seamless, visible appreciation that reaches everyone

Through smart integrations, recognition has become a natural part of every employee's daily workflow. Below are a few of the available integrations that Awardco uses:

- **Slack:** Employees can recognize peers in the moment by typing “/recognize” into any Slack channel. All recognitions, whether through Slack or in the Awardco platform, also appear in a shared Slack channel to give the entire company visibility and build a culture of recognition.
- **ScreenCloud:** Office screens display a real-time recognition feed, celebrating achievements across locations and teams immediately.
- **HRIS systems:** Automated imports ensure birthdays and anniversaries are recognized on time, every time. Data flows bi-directionally for alignment across systems, and custom reports integrate with payroll to streamline the gross-up process and reduce tax complexity.
- **Social media:** Employees can easily share their recognitions externally with secure, AI-assisted editing to protect sensitive details. This allows positivity to spread to each employee's personal networks.
- **LMS:** When employees complete training such as onboarding and security compliance, they receive a recognition.



VOICES OF AWARDCO

“I love knowing that the little things I’ve done have truly impacted my coworkers and friends.”

“Every team meeting and company-wide meeting starts with recognitions, they come in every single day. They’re on our TV screens throughout the office; you can’t go anywhere in the building without seeing them constantly flowing through.

We carry this into leadership as well. Our executive meetings start with recognitions, and we encourage employees not only to recognize but also to call back to those recognitions so people see them more than once. It’s reinforced everywhere, even in our Slack integrations.”

- Amy Butler, VP of People Operations



Offline recognition and redemptions for on-the-go appreciation

To meet employees wherever they are, Awardco has designed tools that make recognition frequent, visible, and effortless—transforming it from a one-time gesture into an always-on cultural rhythm:

- **Mobile app:** Recognition and redemption are just a tap away, no matter if employees are in office, in the field, on the floor, or at home.
- **AwardCodes™:** Easily take recognition offline during meetings, off-site, surprise moments, 1:1s, and more with custom codes printed on cards which can quickly be redeemed in the platform for points. Form a meaningful personal connection as you bring recognition into your daily workflow no matter where employees work.
- **External Recognition™:** Clients, partners, patients, customers, and more can recognize employees instantly through QR codes or personalized links. These messages flow directly into the Awardco feed for all to see.
- **A-Pay™:** A physical and digital card with a simple 1:1 point-to-dollar conversion, A-Pay cards take redemption flexibility to a whole new level. Employees have used A-Pay for nearly 15,000 purchases in 2025 on everything from morning coffee to subscriptions to auto parts.

Innovative features that drive true employee engagement

Awardco is intentionally designed to engender multiple, repeated logins as recognition becomes part of the culture. Every feature is built to spark participation, strengthen programs, and make recognition meaningful.

- **Custom user interface:** Beyond the recognition feed, employees see their A-Pay™ balance, peer milestones, upcoming birthdays, tickets for Delta Center events, retail perks, active surveys, incentive programs, and access to the world's largest rewards marketplace, all on the platform home page.
- **World's largest global rewards marketplace:** With over 300 million options worldwide, including no mark-ups on products through Amazon, items from Best Buy, thousands of gift cards, global experiences, custom swag, charitable giving, and more, everyone can find something valuable. Additionally, transparent 1:1 point-to-dollar pricing eliminates conversion confusion.
- **Encore™:** Managers and peers with budgets can give an encore to existing recognitions, adding additional points and comments with a single click to amplify appreciation.
- **Engagement survey participation:** Awardco employees average 58% more survey participation than industry benchmarks by rewarding survey completions through the platform.

By weaving recognition into workflows, making it accessible on the go, and enriching the experience with meaningful rewards, Awardco has achieved a 100% user login rate in 2025 and helped 100% of employees be recognized.



"Awardco's platform is essentially a modern engagement tool—it helps shape employee behavior, reinforce values, and strengthen culture. We're introducing something new and customizable to HR that positions us as meaningful partners in the organization."

- James Westwood, Director of People Operations



Recognition programs built with purpose

Awardco runs over 50 unique recognition programs, from team- and department-specific challenges to company-wide, value-based initiatives.

This flexibility to innovate ensures recognition is always relevant, meaningful, and adapted to evolving cultural needs. Just a few examples of Awardco's programs are below.

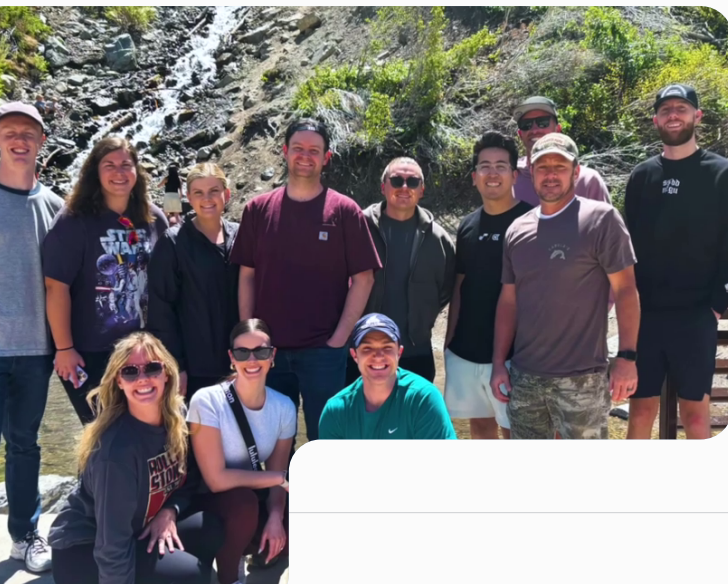
VOICES OF AWARDCO

"I've never worked at a place where recognition was so real, so frequent, and so human."

Elevate and Stay Active Program

This wellness-driven incentive program rewards employees with up to 1,000 points total for hiking local mountain peaks that correspond to the names of Awardco's office conference rooms. Its goal is to tie recognition to wellness, culture, and community.

Additionally, to improve inclusion for those not able to hike, or are not based in Utah, Awardco has set up similar participation programs with similar incentives that reward healthy behaviors.



Through the Elevate and Stay Active program, Awardco has seen:

- Over one-third of employees participating
- Over 450 hikes completed, totaling 1,700 miles
- More than 31,000 points awarded, with participants averaging ~135 points each

"The health benefits keep employees feeling recognized, appreciated, and incentivized to recharge, re-up, and engage outside the office."

- Isaiah Bryson, Chief Operating Officer (COO)



Celebrate Pride Program

As part of Awardco's Recognize a Cause initiative, this program promoted inclusive storytelling and community building. In June, all employees were invited to share why Pride matters to them, sparking empathy, belonging, and meaningful conversations while reinforcing equity, diversity, and inclusion in the workplace. These recognitions were shown throughout the company on shared screens.

This is but one of many ways Awardco uses recognition to support Employee Resource Groups to drive awareness, inclusion, and support.

VOICES OF AWARDCO

"Awardco just does it better. Where many companies just temporarily 'rainbow-ify' their logo for the month (or backtrack entirely from any mention of Pride support) Awardco fosters an environment of safety and inclusion and truly CELEBRATES individuals for who they are. There's a huge difference."

A-Team and G.O.A.T Nomination Programs

Awardco has many unique nomination programs, two of which are the A-Team and G.O.A.T. programs. These unique nominations recognize standout employees both across the company and within departments, and highlight Awardco's core values in action.

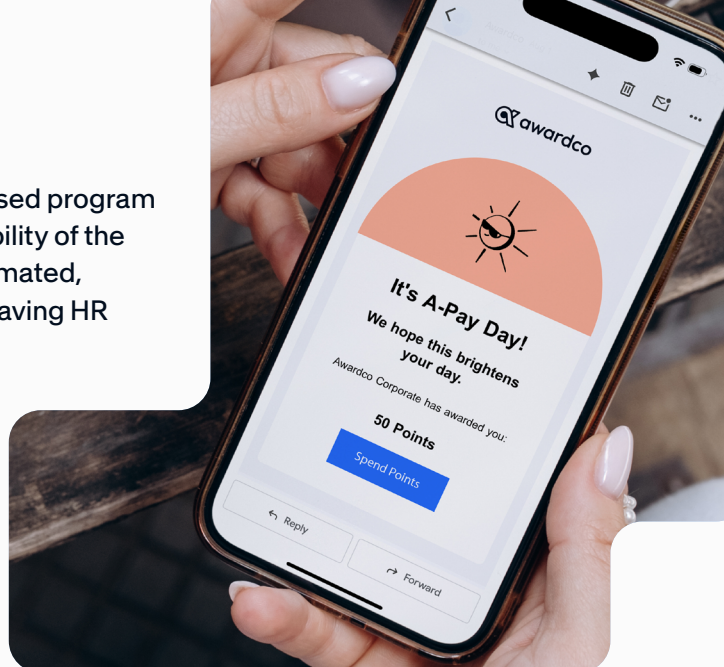
The A-Team program highlights three exemplary employees on a regular basis with a company-wide recognition and celebration. Any employee can nominate any colleague, creating equity across recognitions and helping leaders see all the incredible work across all teams.

The G.O.A.T. program is a non-monetary program unique to the Product Team. Coworkers nominate each other for the Greatest of All Time award. Nominees go through a simple approval process, highlighting their work to team leaders, and a fun goat statue is awarded to winners.

Service Awards

Awardco celebrates loyalty with a fully automated, tenure-based program powered by our HRIS integration and facilitated with the flexibility of the platform. This program is unique in the industry and fully automated, rewarding employees with a growing monthly stipend while saving HR time and busywork.

- \$25/month from day one
- \$50/month after 1 year
- \$75/month after 2 years
- \$100/month after 3 years
- \$125/month after 4 years
- \$150/month after 5 years (and beyond)



This seamless program drives greater retention and ensures employees feel valued consistently throughout their careers, starting right from day one.

Additionally, Awardco deploys custom MemoryBooks® for service anniversaries: a digital “yearbook” style experience where coworkers can comment and leave pictures to celebrate the tenure of their peers.

VOICES OF AWARDCO

“For me, there isn’t just one favorite recognition because together, they tell a story of gratitude, connection, and the power of simply saying, ‘Thank you. I see you. What you do matters.’”

The **results** Awardco has seen from these efforts

By striving to build recognition into the very core of what Awardco is, the company has seen impressive outcomes across engagement, retention, performance, and overall employees satisfaction.

Increased employee engagement

- 100% of employees logged into the platform in 2025, averaging 61+ logins per user
- 42,058 recognitions submitted in the first half of 2025
- 70 recognitions submitted on average per employee
- 99% of employees have been recognized, creating a culture of inclusivity
- 400% increase in recognitions given following Slack integration
- 84% program participation rate, well above the ~80% industry benchmark for recognition-rich cultures
- 1,700+ miles hiked as part of the Elevate and Stay Active wellness challenge, incentivized through the platform
- 95% engagement survey participation after linking recognition to survey completion



"What I enjoy most is seeing the energy, enthusiasm, and engagement we have at work—and then being able to connect that back to the numbers. With the platform, we can see exactly which behaviors are being recognized and rewarded."

- James Westwood, Director of People Operations

Better retention and hiring success

- Attrition dropped by 41% YoY
- Offer acceptance rate rose from 84% in 2024 to 89% in 2025
- Awardco's culture fueled 25% YoY employee growth
- Average employee tenure sits at 4–5 years

"A big part of that retention jump was career progression. Employees want to be at Awardco. That's very clear in the way that they use our platform. They want to be able to build their career here and stay here."

- Amy Butler, VP of People Operations



Impactful results for HR

- 20 hours per week saved—about half a full-time HR administrator—through automation and integrations
- eNPS response rates increased by 10% year-over-year
- eNPS score grew 53% in one year and is now 8% above the industry benchmark
- Over 90% of employees report that their skills and talents are valued



"Our eNPS soared from 38 in 2024 to 58 in 2025. That's unheard of and something I've never been a part of before. I think it speaks to the really special culture that Awardco has built through recognition and through building a culture where people feel like they belong."

- Amy Butler, VP of People Operations

Recognize more and pay less

With attrition running 6% lower than the tech industry average (14%), Awardco is achieving significant cost savings by retaining top talent.

- For every employee retained, Awardco saves \$100,000 in turnover-related expenses
- In 2024 alone, over \$4.67M was saved, and 2025 is on track to surpass that figure.

Beyond cost savings, Awardco also benefits from higher offer acceptance rates, faster onboarding, and stronger team morale, especially in higher stress environments.

For example, the Marketing team shipped a fully rebranded, net-new website in 50% less time, completing a year's worth of work in just six months. Regular recognition boosted teamwork and trust, enabling quick, quality results.

Within just two months of relaunch, Awardco nearly fully recovered in both traffic and keyword rankings—regaining search engine visibility, increasing page views by 33%, boosting engagement by 21%, and driving significant organic traffic growth.

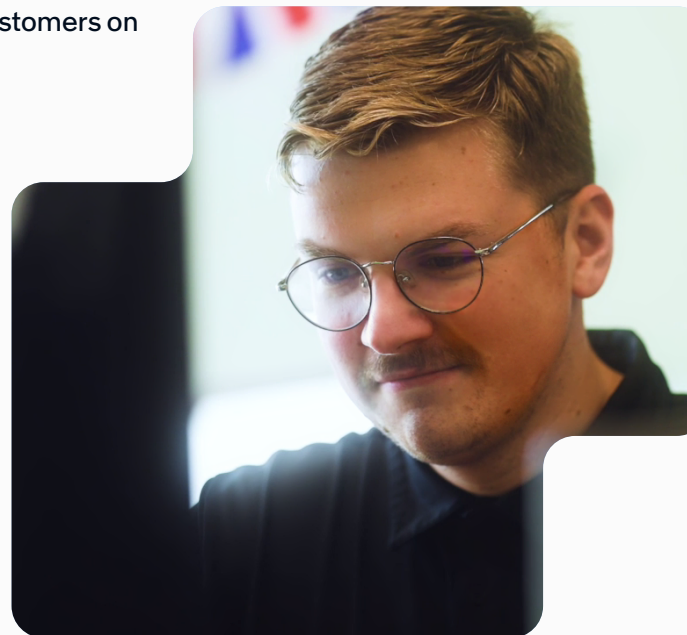
By comparison, a similar SMB/mid-market competitor that went through a rebrand, URL change, and site relaunch has seen only 75% recovery over 1.5 years. The industry average for full traffic recovery post-migration is 17 months—underscoring the speed and success of Awardco's approach.

Does all this really work for other companies?

Not every company was built around the framework of frequent recognition—so do these strategies translate to companies of all different backgrounds, industries, and locations? See these results for the answer:

- Awardco has maintained a 91% client retention rate, while the industry average hovers around 80%
- G2 award winner:
 - › #1 Highest Rated Employee Recognition Platform by Customers on G2
 - › Top 100 Highest Satisfaction Products 2025
 - › Best HR Software Products 2025
 - › Best Software Products 2025
 - › Best Mid-Market Products 2025
- 20th on G2's Best Software Products Ranking
- 4.9/5 ranking on G2, GetApp, Capterra
- 4.7/5 on Gartner

By showing recognition as a strategic investment that delivers bottom-line value, companies are waking up to the true ROI of recognition—and Awardco is empowering their efforts.



"We've accomplished so many amazing things and built such a strong foundation, it's now up to us to take the next step. How do we keep evolving to ensure we don't fall behind? The blueprint of HR is changing."

The way things were done thirty years ago, or even the way we've done them for the past thirty, no longer works. We're just getting started on this journey of evolution. We're beginning to mature, grow, and scale, and I'm excited to see what comes next. It's been a fun ride so far, and I truly believe we have incredible opportunities ahead of us."

- Amy Butler, VP of People



Let our story **inspire** yours

Recognition isn't just a tool: It's a culture transformer. With the right leadership, mindset, and platform, the results Awardco has seen internally can be replicated anywhere. [Contact Awardco to see for yourself.](#)

Schedule a demo at

awardco.com/demo

