

Employee Engagement: The Power of Moments

Idaho Housing and Finance Association
Management Innovation: Human Resources

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OUR CHALLENGE

Idaho Housing and Finance Association is continually working to live our value of “Employees are our greatest resource.” As unemployment rates have remained at historic lows and quality candidates continue to be hard to find, our focus is to retain our employees and keep them happy.

The numbers from a 2022 Gallup poll speak for themselves:

- 85% of employees are not engaged at work
- Highly engaged employees are 87% less likely to leave their employer
- It costs roughly 20% of a salary to replace a lost worker
- Disengaged employees cost an additional \$3,400 to every \$10,000 in salary
- Companies with the highest rates of employee engagement are 21% more profitable
- 69% of employees report that they would work harder if they felt more appreciated at work

To keep our employee engagement levels high, the Human Resources team have been following the lead of bestselling authors Chip and Dan Heath and focused on “The Power of Moments” in the employee experience.

OUR INNOVATIVE SOLUTION: “THE POWER OF MOMENTS”

Think of big moments in your life: graduating college, getting your first job, landing a promotion, getting married, getting a divorce. The list goes on and on. Our HR team studied making memorable, positive moments in an employee’s work experience and how our organization and leaders can create those moments.

When considering “moments” in an employee life cycle, we identified a few key areas to focus on. These areas include onboarding, employee engagement, wage adjustments, and service milestones. We also considered an employees’ personal life events and thought out how to be part of those important moments.

HOW WE DID IT

We took a few approaches to help create “moments” for our employees. Some ideas took planning and changes to our procedures, others were very easy to implement. We’ll cover a few below, but we try to make as many moments throughout the year that we can. The sky is the limit on what you can do.

Onboarding moments: Joining a new company is a huge moment for employees and can be a wonderful experience or a very negative one. The employee is walking into an unknown and this can create anxiety for anyone. Once we have an accepted offer of employment; our HR team jumps into action to start welcoming the new employee. The offer letter is sent along with a welcome email with all the information the person needs before they start. It explains benefits, where to come for their first day, what the dress code is, and much more; alleviating some of the concern of the unknown.

On the employees’ first day, we changed our process to show the employee we were happy to have them join our team. We “rolled out the red carpet.” Literally. When coming in the building, a sign with

the employees' name greets them with balloons. (Exhibit 1) New employees then walk into the orientation room with a red carpet laid out for them. (Exhibit 2) During orientation, the employee receives company swag and a personalized welcome manual with all the information they need to be successful as they start with our organization. We decorate every new hires' desk with balloons, a welcome card that everyone on their team has signed, and their favorite snack (identified from a questionnaire we send with their welcome email). (Exhibit 3)

Once a month, new employees come to another onboarding moment to further welcome them to the company. During this session, we focus on what the mission of our company is, meet some of the executives, further discuss the business units within the organization, play some company trivia, and of course, give treats, prizes, and company swag. This welcoming moment has helped the new employees feel more part of the organization as a whole and has been incredibly successful.

Ongoing engagement moments: Our employees work hard. We recognize that it brings people joy to have engagement moments throughout the month, so the HR department does at least one activity each month. A few of our most successful activities include an Italian soda bar (Exhibit 4), holiday crafting activity, Halloween costume/decoration contests (Exhibit 5) and an Easter egg hunt. Some months are not as extravagant, we've also gone around our buildings giving out suckers and leaving gold "coins" out for St. Patrick's Day.

The company has a birthday celebration every other month to recognize employees. Along with food and cake for all employees, the employees with birthdays within the two months get a small gift and birthday card. You don't have to break the bank or spend a lot of time on these type of activities; the reward in employee satisfaction is tremendous.

We started to recognize "star employees" monthly based on performance in our call center group. In addition to a recognition poster in the lounge area, the STAR employee(s) for the month are given a gift card to add to the recognition moment for having great performance. (Exhibit 6)

Annually, we have a day set aside for all employees to meet together. Our focus changed this year to incorporate our theme of creating moments. We changed the meeting to focus on team building and togetherness instead of mandatory training. We recognized all new hires who joined us through the year, spent time congratulating those with significant milestones of service with the company and had a great team building activity where groups had a scavenger hunt throughout the city. The time spent that day changed from a boring meeting to moments of connection. (Exhibit 7)

Pay adjustments and service milestone moments: Every time an employee has a pay change, we recognize that with a special brochure showing the new amount, new title if applicable, total compensation, and a letter from our President and CEO thanking them for the employees' hard work.

For service milestones (every 5 years of service) we have multiple moments to show how much we appreciate the loyalty to our organization. We give out awards, a bonus (either cash or an item of the employees' choosing depending on the number of years with the company, and a special moment with an executive in front of all employees to commend them on their service. (Exhibit 8)

Personal life event moments: Sometimes it's important to take a step back and remember we are all just people. We have successes, we have failures. We have exciting, positive moments in our lives and

we have negative and tragic moments. It is important to our organization to recognize and be part of those moments, whether that is to share in the joy or to support in times of sadness.

Through partnership with leaders, the HR department has been able to hear when employees are undergoing a personal experience and create a moment to support the person. When we know that an employee has a new child, has surgery, had a death in the family, etc., we send flowers or other gifts to recognize the event they are experiencing. (Exhibit 9) The connection between the employee and the company changes the perception of being a number to an inclusive environment where the person matters outside as well as during work. It's a moment where the employee can see that the organization cares about them personally and not just how they are performing at work.

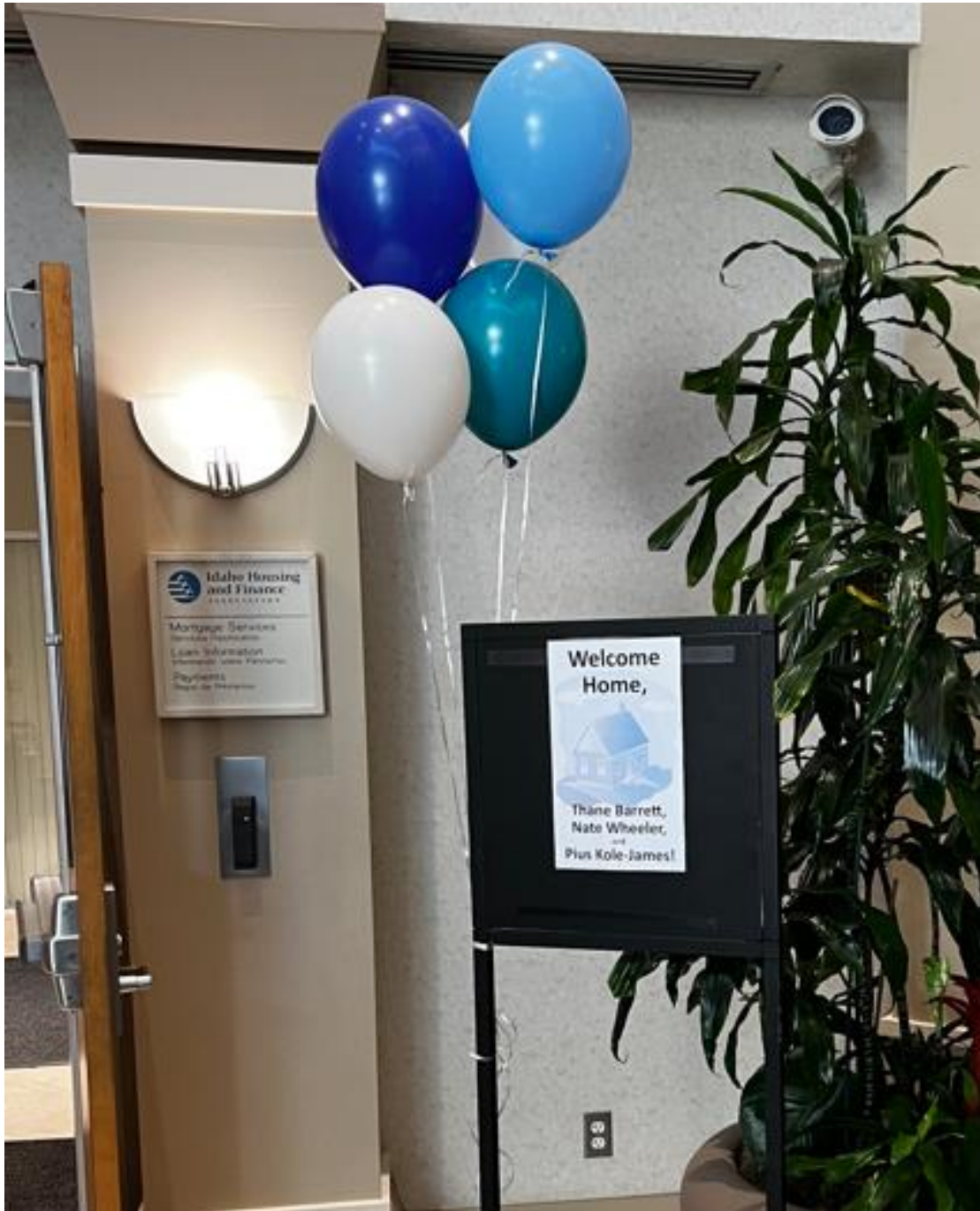
MANAGEMENT OPPORTUNITY AND AGENCY IMPROVEMENTS

As stated earlier, statistics show that engaged employees have longer tenure with an organization, are more productive, and contribute to the bottom line. As leaders, it is our responsibility to create an atmosphere to improve the employee experience. This can be small, such as giving a birthday card to employee on their birthday or more strategic, like building a development plan for an employee to help them become eligible for a promotion. The more moments that an organization makes for employees, the greater the satisfaction, longer the tenure, and more productive people will be.

EASY TO REPLICATE

“Moments” start with you! We all have the ability to make a lasting impression in an employees’ work life. The challenge is to strategically make these moments happen. A little planning can create lasting memories and increase employees’ engagement and loyalty to an organization. Every item that we implemented is easy to do, most cost little to no money. Moments are powerful, we owe it to our employees to create positive and lasting ones.

EXHIBIT 1



New employee Welcome Sign and Balloons when entering the building

EXHIBIT 2



Rolling out the red carpet for new employees

EXHIBIT 3



New employee desk on 1st day with signs, balloons, favorite snack, and card from team

EXHIBIT 4



Italian Soda Bar for Employees

EXHIBIT 5



Halloween photo

EXHIBIT 6



Monthly Star Employees

EXHIBIT 7



Annual all employee meeting with our one and only “Air Band” – featuring employees on air lead guitar, air bass guitar, and air drums

EXHIBIT 8



Employee Service Awards

EXHIBIT 9



Flowers sent to employee after a death in the family