



Guide: How to Integrate Recognition & Performance

At HeyTaco, we believe that recognition and performance aren't two separate tracks—they're deeply connected. But too often, recognition is treated as a once-a-year checkbox during a performance review or as a generic “shoutout” in an all-hands. That kind of surface-level appreciation doesn't move the needle in modelling, recognizing and encouraging the desired behavior.

Here's what we believe actually works:

1 **Recognition should be ongoing, not episodic.**

You shouldn't have to wait until a performance review to hear you're doing a great job. Recognition is most effective when it's in the moment, specific, and frequent. This builds a continuous feedback loop that fuels motivation and reinforces what good performance looks like.

2 **Peer-to-peer recognition captures what managers miss.**

Managers don't see everything. Teammates are often the first to notice when someone goes the extra mile, helps unblock a project, or lives out a company value. Peer recognition fills in the gaps and helps create a more complete picture of performance.

3 **Recognition should reinforce values, not just results.**

Performance isn't only about hitting metrics—it's about how those results are achieved. When recognition is tied to core values, it reinforces the behaviors that shape your culture and long-term success.



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Recognition data can enhance—not replace—performance conversations.

We don't believe in replacing thoughtful performance feedback with tacos. But when used intentionally, recognition can inform reviews by highlighting patterns, celebrating growth, and giving context from across the team.

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Performance is personal—and people should own it.

Performance management doesn't have to be top-down. Individuals can (and should) take ownership of their own growth. With HeyTaco, people can look back at the tacos they've received to spot trends:

- What do people consistently appreciate me for?
- What values or behaviors do I naturally lean into?
- What could I do more of?

It's a simple but powerful way to build self-awareness—and to grow not just based on KPIs, but based on the impact you're actually making on your team.



Putting Recognition & Performance Principles into Practice with HeyTaco

1 Recognition should be ongoing, not episodic.

- **Make recognition a daily habit.** Aim to give at least one meaningful taco per day.
- **Recognize small wins, not just big milestones.** Did someone jump in to help, share a helpful resource, or ask a thoughtful question? That's taco-worthy.
- **Add a recognition ritual to recurring team meetings.** Kick off your weekly standup with "taco shoutouts."

2 Peer-to-peer recognition captures what managers miss.

- **Encourage your team to give tacos across roles and departments.** Recognition shouldn't only flow upward or downward—sideways matters.
- **Use @ mentions strategically.** Highlight collaborations that managers might not have visibility into.
- **Create a norm: If you see it, taco it.** Everyone plays a part in surfacing great work.

3 Recognition should reinforce values, not just results.

- **Use Taco Tags to connect recognition to your company values.** Whether it's #empathy, #innovation, or #ownership, show how someone lived the value.
- **Share examples of value-based tacos with everyone during meetings.** Normalize giving tacos that say how someone achieved something, not just what they achieved.
- **Review top value tags monthly to see which ones are showing up—and which ones need more attention.** And celebrate those people who are being celebrated for living company values!



4

Recognition data can enhance—not replace—performance conversations.

- **Encourage managers to review individual's taco activity before 1:1s or performance reviews.**
- **Look at taco trends as signals.** Is someone being recognized for mentoring others? Leading tough projects? That's valuable context for development conversations.
- **Use HeyTaco reports** to balance quantitative and qualitative performance insights.

5

Performance is personal—and people should own it.

Encourage people to do the following:

- **Reflect on your own taco history.** Look at the last 30 tacos you received—what themes or patterns do you see?
- **Ask yourself:** What do people appreciate me for the most? Is it problem-solving, communication, positivity?
- **Set personal growth goals based on that feedback.** If you're often recognized for collaboration, how can you lean into that strength even more?
- **Create a 'Taco Journal.'** Save meaningful tacos or tag them for your next self-review.