UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI
RECOGNITION
TOOLKIT

OVERVIEW
About this Toolkit

Employee recognition has long been a cornerstone of effective management. Sincere recognition is one of the most powerful ways to let an employee know they are valued and their work matters. Providing meaningful, timely, and relevant recognition encourages an environment where employees feel valued and can add value to the overall University mission.

This interactive toolkit provides recognition resources that will help to build a culture of recognition among teams, departments, divisions, and beyond.

Tips to Use This Document

- Use the latest version of Adobe Acrobat Reader. To download the latest version, visit it.miami.edu.

- Download a copy of this document, which has several editable fields and allows you to save your work as you go.

- Click on the icons at the bottom of each page and the links in each section to easily navigate.

Toolkit Sections

Overview   Context   Steps   Ideas   Resources

I want to create a culture of recognition within my team.

Context

- What Recognition Means at UM
- Why Recognition Matters
- Key Principles for Recognition
- Recognition Roles

Steps

- Manager's Checklist
- Understanding Preferences
- Languages of Appreciation
- Recognize What Matters

Ideas

- In-the-Moment Recognition
- Celebrations and Milestones
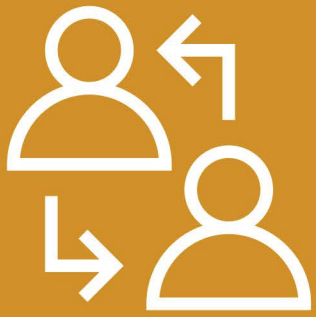- Formal Recognition

Resources

- Thank You Card
- Recognize a Colleague
- Send Praise Through MS Teams
- Recognition Scripts and Templates
- Additional Training Opportunities

CONTEXT
What Recognition Means at UM

Recognition at the University of Miami is part of the **core** of our **culture of belonging**, where employees feel **valued** and have the opportunity to add value to the organization.

All University colleagues are encouraged and empowered to recognize others by expressing appreciation for and acknowledging contributions made by other team members.

Through these actions, everyone affiliated with the University is able to achieve our global mission of transforming lives through education, research, innovation, and service.

| Why Recognition Matters | → |

| Key Principles for Recognition | → |

| Recognition Roles | → |

CONTEXT
Why Recognition Matters

Employee recognition has a direct impact on employee morale and drives engagement, fosters an environment of trust, and reinforces organizational values. Recognition also leads to improvements of the top and bottom line, such as increased productivity, employee loyalty, and retention.

1 Recognized employees are **happy** and **engaged**.
Being recognized at work, especially when it is tied to the DIRECCT Values and Service Standards helps to connect to a greater sense of purpose.

2 Recognition **improves** team **culture**.
Encouraging peer-to-peer, manager-to-peer recognition, builds a great team spirit and helps employees to see the positive attributes in one another.

3 **Meaningful** recognition **lowers** turnover and **improves** retention.
People are more likely to stay in a position and happy if their efforts are noticed and valued.

4 Recognizing others **supports** individual, team, and organizational **goals**.
Recognizing an individual's accomplishments and how they contribute to larger strategic goals help them to feel connected to the University's mission of transforming lives.

Overview   Context   Steps   Ideas   Resources

Exceptional employees know what is expected of them and continuously strive to improve the organization. They live the mission of transforming lives and demonstrate the University values and standards in all they do.

The following principles help align recognition practices to our culture, DIRECCT Values, and Service Standards:

INCLUSIVE

Everyone deserves to be recognized for their contributions to the University's success.

SINCERE

A genuine thank you goes a long way.

INDIVIDUALIZED

Every person is unique in the way they like to be recognized.

CONTEXT
Recognition Roles

All employees at the University, regardless of their role, play a part in recognition.

LEADERS
- Make recognition a priority, and demonstrate what recognition looks like in action.
- Share access to recognition tools and templates that make recognizing team members simple.
- Understand your team's recognition preferences and adjust your approach as needed.
- Ensure recognition is inclusive, sincere, and individualized.
- Ensure consistency in adherence to established guidelines.

EMPLOYEES
- Take the time to express thanks and recognition to coworkers for their contributions.
- Share positive feedback about an individual with them.
- Recognize and celebrate key milestones or achievements of fellow coworkers based on their preferences.
- Nominate a peer for an external or University award to formally recognize their contributions.

HUMAN RESOURCES
- Provide tools, resources, and training to encourage formal and informal recognition practices.
- Encourage recognition at all levels: individual, departmental, leadership, etc.
- Participate in or facilitate formal recognition events.

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STEPS
How to Create a Culture of Recognition

Now that you have a good foundation of recognition at the University, let's go into what steps you can take to keep the momentum going.

This section offers checklists, questionnaires, and resources to deepen your understanding of your team's needs and to help you build recognition practices that support your team's goals and the University's mission of transforming lives.

Manager's Checklist ➡

Understanding Preferences ➡

Languages of Appreciation ➡

Recognize What Matters ➡

STEPS
Manager's Checklist

☐ **Identify where you currently stand with your own recognition efforts.**
Complete the Assess My Recognition Efforts Questionnaire.

☐ **Identify your own recognition style.**
Complete the My Personal Recognition Style Questionnaire.

☐ **Get to know how your team likes to be recognized.**
Send the Employee Recognition Preferences Questionnaire.

☐ **Add your employee's milestones to your calendar.**
Review your team's preferences and plan ahead to celebrate them in the way they want to be celebrated.

☐ **Assess your recognition efforts and ensure alignment to the University's framework of excellence.**
Complete the recognition alignment handout.

☐ **Schedule time with your team to review and recognize them regularly.**
Need ideas? Refer to the IDEAS section in this toolkit for inspiration.

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Employees are like fingerprints—no two are exactly the same. They have different personalities and come from different paths that shaped who they are, how they work, and even how they prefer to be recognized.

For example, some employees like to be praised publicly while others are more reserved and prefer private recognition.

Take a few moments to fully assess your recognition style and your team's recognition preferences.

Understand the four Languages of Appreciation at Work ➡

My Personal Recognition Style Questionnaire ➡

Employee Recognition Preferences Questionnaire ➡

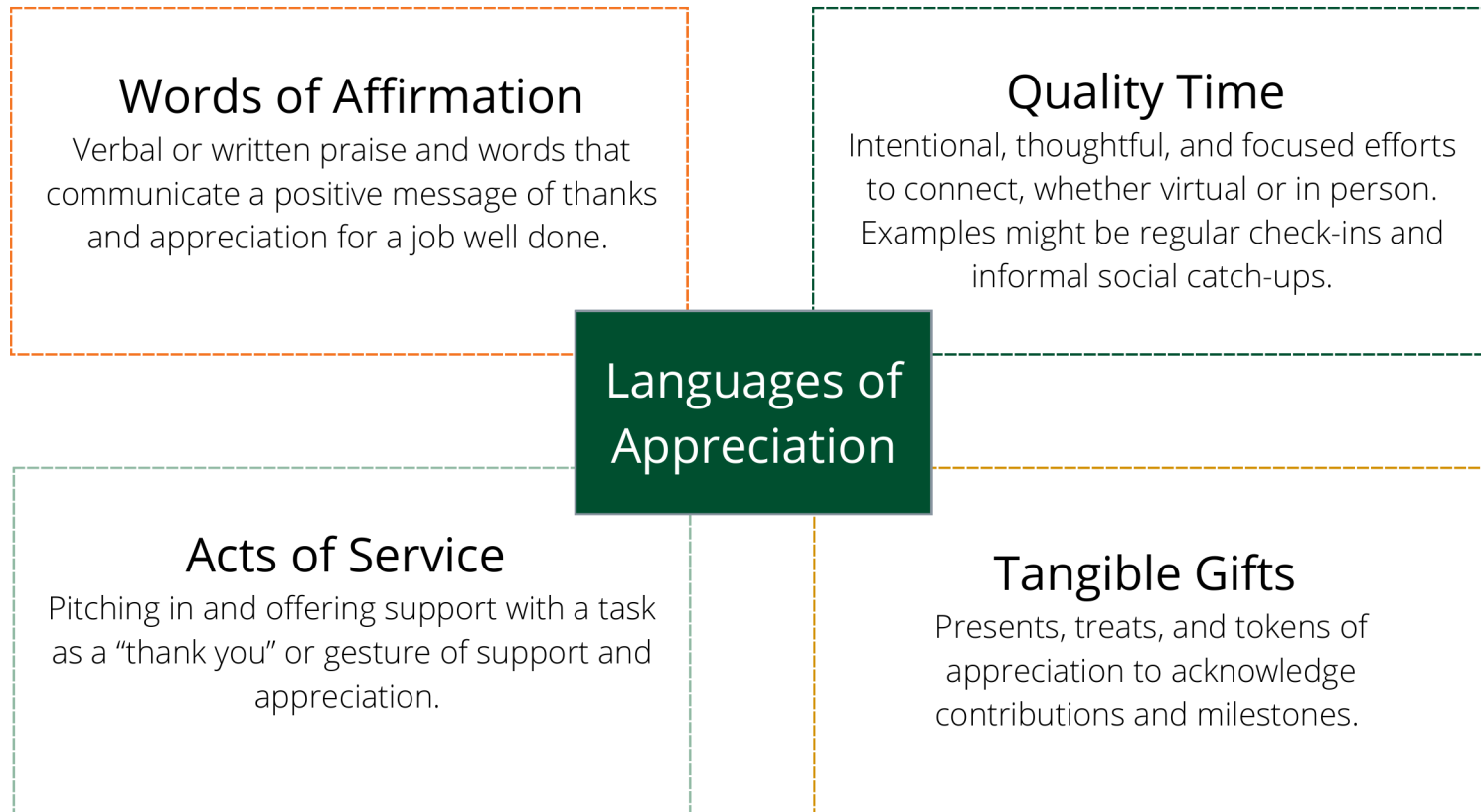Overview   Context   Steps   Ideas   Resources

At work, people express and receive appreciation in different ways.

Words of Affirmation
Verbal or written praise and words that communicate a positive message of thanks and appreciation for a job well done.

Quality Time
Intentional, thoughtful, and focused efforts to connect, whether virtual or in person. Examples might be regular check-ins and informal social catch-ups.

Languages of Appreciation

Acts of Service
Pitching in and offering support with a task as a "thank you" or gesture of support and appreciation.

Tangible Gifts
Presents, treats, and tokens of appreciation to acknowledge contributions and milestones.

Source: Dr. Gary Chapman and Dr. Paul White, The 5 Languages of Appreciation in the Workplace

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Use this questionnaire to help you reflect on the ways you like to express recognition and your own personal preference.

Think about a time when you received recognition that was meaningful to you.

What were the circumstances (what, who, where, when)?	
What specifically made it meaningful?	
How could you repeat this experience with your team/employee?	
Which Language of Appreciation did this experience represent?	☐ Words of Affirmation ☐ Quality Time ☐ Acts of Service ☐ Tangible Gifts

Think about a time when you received recognition that was NOT meaningful to you.

What were the circumstances (what, who, where, when)?	
What made this experience not meaningful?	
Which Language of Appreciation did this experience represent?	☐ Words of Affirmation ☐ Quality Time ☐ Acts of Service ☐ Tangible Gifts

⭐ Overview   Context   ✓ Steps   💡 Ideas   🔍 Resources   ⬅ ➡

STEPS
Understanding Preferences: Employee Recognition Preferences Questionnaire

In order to provide recognition for your contributions and achievements in a way that is meaningful to you, please fill out this questionnaire with as much information as you are comfortable sharing, and return it to your supervisor.

Name	
Job Title	
Important Dates (birthdays, anniversaries, etc.)	

Favorite Drinks and Snacks		Favorite Flower/Plant	
Favorite Restaurant		Hobby You Enjoy	
Favorite Sports Team		Other Likes/Dislikes	

Based on the four Languages of Appreciation at Work, what is your most preferred way to be recognized?	☐ Words of Affirmation ☐ Quality Time ☐ Acts of Service ☐ Tangible Gifts

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STEPS

Recognize What Matters: Assess my Recognition Efforts

Recognition, when done correctly, helps connect employees to the big picture of the organization while helping them work toward accomplishing their goals.

Try connecting the recognition to the University's Framework of Excellence and Strategic Priorities.

For more information about the organizational goals impacting your area, please contact your HR Representative.

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STEPS
Recognize What Matters: Assess My Recognition Efforts

Use this chart to identify how your recognition efforts align with the departmental goals and those of the University.

Recognition Effort:	Department/Team Goal:	Strategic Priority/ Initiative:

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IDEAS
How to Get Started

Employee recognition refers to all the ways an organization shows itsappreciation for employees' contributions. It can take many forms and can be done in creative, engaging ways.

Organizations recognize employees for things like:
- Achievements
- Exhibiting desired behaviors
- Going above and beyond expectations
- Service milestones and anniversaries

This section will help inspire you and give you ideas to incorporate your own recognition practices. Select ideas that work for you and try them with your team!

In-the-Moment Recognition →

Celebrations and Milestones →

Formal Recognition at UM →

In-the-moment recognition is:
- Timely
- Authentic
- Sincere
- Simple

Consistently practicing in-the-moment recognition may only take a few minutes, but these small efforts can make a big impact.

To effectively practice in-the-moment recognition, remember individual recognition preferences and target your efforts according to what the employee likes.

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In-the-Moment Recognition Ideas to Get Started:

1. Offer a genuine and timely "thank you" for a specific contribution.

2. Read out emails from happy customers, coworkers, students, etc...

3. Bring someone their favorite beverage for a job well done.

4. Send a virtual "Thank You" card through the HR website.

5. Recognize an accomplishment by sending an email to the entire staff to recognize this individual.

6. Have each member of your team share their proudest moment for the week at the next staff meeting.

7. Give encouragement when you notice them struggling with a task or project. Say "I know this will be hard, but I believe in you!"

8. Schedule an impromptu meeting, face-to-face or through Zoom just to say thank you for something they recently accomplished.

9. Leave a hand-written note on the employee's desk to recognize their contributions.

10. Reach out to someone outside of your department to say thank you for supporting your team's efforts.

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Recognizing important milestones in your team members' personal and professional careers is a great way to build a positive environment and highlight significant moments or achievements.

These might be
- Wrapping up a big project
- Meeting a goal
- Birthdays
- Weddings
- Arrival of a new family member
- Work anniversary
- Completing a development course

These types of milestones are less frequent than in-the-moment recognition, and are less structured than formal awards or celebrations.

Make sure to tailor the recognition for these events to your employees' preferences. Look back on the Recognition Preferences Questionnaire to see how your team prefers to be recognized.

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Celebrations and Milestones Ideas to Get Started:

1. Celebrate staff birthdays by bringing in cupcakes, or sending balloons or other gifts to their home if they are working remotely.

2. Set calendar reminders for career milestones and send a personal note, card, or letter.

3. Organize a bulletin board, virtual card, or Kudo Board and invite the team to post a nice message.

4. Create a swag bag of treats or UM themed giveaways for the employee.

5. Order pizza or lunch for the team to celebrate completing a big project.

6. Have your supervisor or a leader from another area recognize your employee for their accomplishments.

7. Use "Recognize a 'Cane" to acknowledge their contribution and tag them with a DIRECCT value.

8. Let your team sign off work early on a Friday after they've completed a big project or event.

9. Create virtual water cooler moments. Send out a Zoom or Microsoft teams meeting invite to connect over their favorite beverage.

10. Celebrate a virtual birthday by pretending to schedule an important meeting. Create a special Zoom background and have the team display it at the meeting.

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Formal Recognition and Awards are structured programs with clear criteria and processes, linked to big achievements or career milestones.

The University celebrates and recognizes faculty and staff for teaching, years of service, volunteering, and research at the division, department, or unit levels.

A few examples include*:
- UM Faculty and Staff Long Service Award Ceremony
- Faculty Senate Awards
- Provost Awards
- UHealth Daisy Awards
- The UShine Award
- The Good Catch Award

*This list is not all inclusive. If you would like your recognition program to be highlighted on this document, or you are interested in starting your own recognition program, please email benefitsexpert@miami.edu.

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RESOURCES
Available Tools to Make Recognition Easy

The University of Miami has many existing tools to support you in your recognition efforts.

This section provides several examples, designs, and links to tools that you may customize and use with your team.

Send a Thank You Card ➡

Recognize a Colleague ➡

Send Praise Through MS Teams ➡

Recognition Scripts and Templates ➡

Additional Training Opportunities ➡

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Thank a 'Cane is a tool that allows you to send a note of gratitude to any UM employee or student. There are several templates for you to choose from that can easily be downloaded and shared with your team.
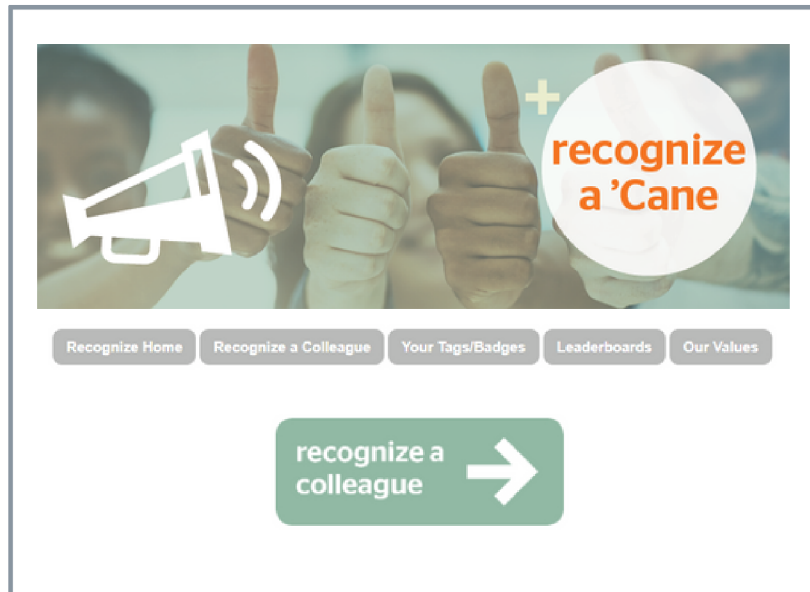
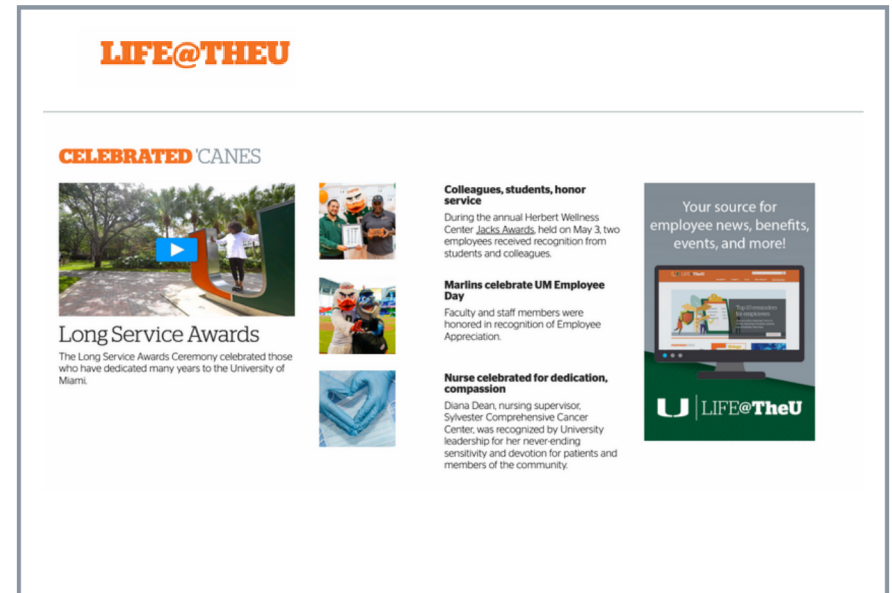## Here are a few samples:

Recognize colleagues by tagging them in a recognition post. Tagged colleagues get an email letting them know they have been recognized.

Earn fun and unique badges when tagging colleagues with our DIRECCT values.

Have a special story about a coworker, leader, or team?

Submit a request to highlight them in an upcoming News@TheU daily news email. All requests can be sent to Life@TheU, lifeattheu@miami.edu.

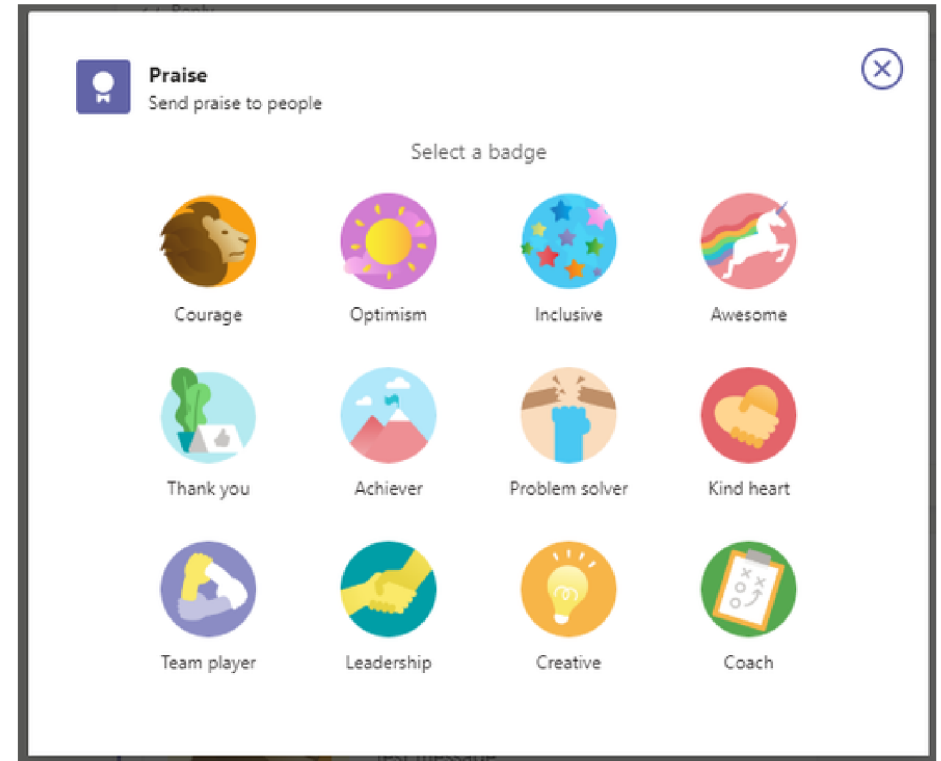Overview   Context   Steps   Ideas   Resources

Sometimes a quick, in-the-moment recognition is appropriate. For that, you can send Praise through [Microsoft Teams.](#)

To send Praise:

1. Below the space where you write a new message or reply, select Praise or click the three dots to find it.

2. Choose a badge.

3. Add the name of the associate you want to praise and an optional description.

4. Select Preview, then Send.

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Sometimes we don't always know the right words to say. Use these sample scripts as inspiration to write something personal for your employee.

Thank you!

Work Anniversary:

Happy anniversary, **NAME**! As we continue to grow as a team and organization, I am increasingly thankful for all of your contributions and effort to fulfill our mission of transforming lives. You continue to add so much value to this team, and I appreciate how you approach every day with the same energy, focus, and enthusiasm as the first day you arrived.

Thank you for everything, and I am looking forward to celebrating many more years together.

Thank You Message #1:

NAME, thank you for your positive attitude and incredible effort on **PROJECT OR TASK**. I appreciate the way you approached this complex situation and worked with the team to get the job done. I truly see how you practice the DIRECCT Values of Teamwork and Excellence in all you do.

Thank You Message #2:

Thank you **NAME** for your recent effort on **PROJECT OR TASK**. Your contributions resulted in **IMPACT**. This is the type of commitment we need to achieve our mission of transforming lives. I look forward to seeing what else you can do!

Thank you Message #3:

I could not have completed the **PROJECT OR TASK** without your expertise in **SPECIFIC AREA**. I know I speak for all of us when I say that I feel lucky we had you on the team leading the way. Excellent work!

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Quick Phrases to Add to a Card, Email, or Note:

1. Your hard work and dedication is an example to everyone on our team! Thank you for being your best every day!

2. It's a great relief to work with someone who is an excellent manager as well! Your effort is deeply, deeply appreciated.

3. I'm so grateful for all of your hard work. It definitely hasn't gone unnoticed!

4. The perfect employee lifts others up. Thank you for being a positive influence!

5. I'm so grateful that you always take the time to help your coworkers. It's really made our team come together.

6. Thank you for being such a team player. We wouldn't be the same without you!

7. Your unique perspective adds so much to our team. We're so grateful to have you with us!

8. You did a fantastic job helping our team reach its goal. Thank you for setting such a fantastic example!

9. I'm so grateful that you're not afraid to ask questions! It helps me be a better leader.

10. Watching you strive to improve has been an inspiration for both me and the entire team. You're amazing!

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RESOURCES
Additional Training Oppotunities

There are many opportunities to continue learning about best ways to recognize your employees.

The department of Talent and Organizational Development for example, offers a variety of courses including leadership development, recognition and coaching, and many more.

For more information on training options, contact the department of Talent and Organizational Development TOD@miami.edu, visit miami.edu/inspire, or scan the QR Code below.

Additional training through Talent
and Organizational Development

Online self-paced courses:

Linked**in** Learning

Recognizing and Rewarding Your Employees

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If you have any questions regarding this toolkit or any of the resources, please email HR - Total Rewards, your pay and benefits team, at benefitsexpert@miami.edu.