



# UVIC **RECOGNITION** TOOLKIT




Sincere recognition is one of the most powerful ways to let an employee know they are valued and their work matters. Formal awards programs are only one way to recognize employees. This toolkit provides a variety of ways to provide timely, meaningful and relevant recognition.

The key audience of this toolkit is leaders of UVic staff. Employees also have a role to play in peer recognition and can use the toolkit to learn about different ways to recognize others, but it is leaders who create the culture of recognition and who model and encourage recognition activities with their teams. The toolkit is not intended to apply to faculty at UVic.

Recognition does not need to be complicated or time consuming, but it stems from learned skills and habits that may not come naturally to everyone. This toolkit will help anyone who wants to provide more recognition to learn about the different options at UVic and to build recognition habits that feel authentic and meaningful for both the giver and the receiver.

### TIPS

- This document works best when opened with the latest version of Adobe Acrobat Reader DC or Adobe Acrobat Pro DC. Older versions or other PDF software may limit the functionality, in which case manual entry may be required for text boxes and assessment calculations.
- Remember this is a PDF document not a website. This means you can save your work and keep it confidential. It also means the navigation will behave differently than you might expect.
- Save your work (Save-as) so that you can return to this document and modify it as you have time.
- This document is best used in its digital format, but can be printed if needed.
- You can navigate this document using the flowchart in the [Recognition Overview](#) , or if you prefer a more traditional approach, the Index button will take you to a clickable table of contents.

### ICON LEGEND



#### MORE INFORMATION

Hover over this icon for helpful tips and information.



#### ACTIVITY

This icon indicates an interactive space to fill in content.



#### IMPORTANT LINK

This icon indicates links that take you to an important external website.



#### LINK TO A RESOURCE

This icon indicates links that take you to a helpful section within the toolkit.



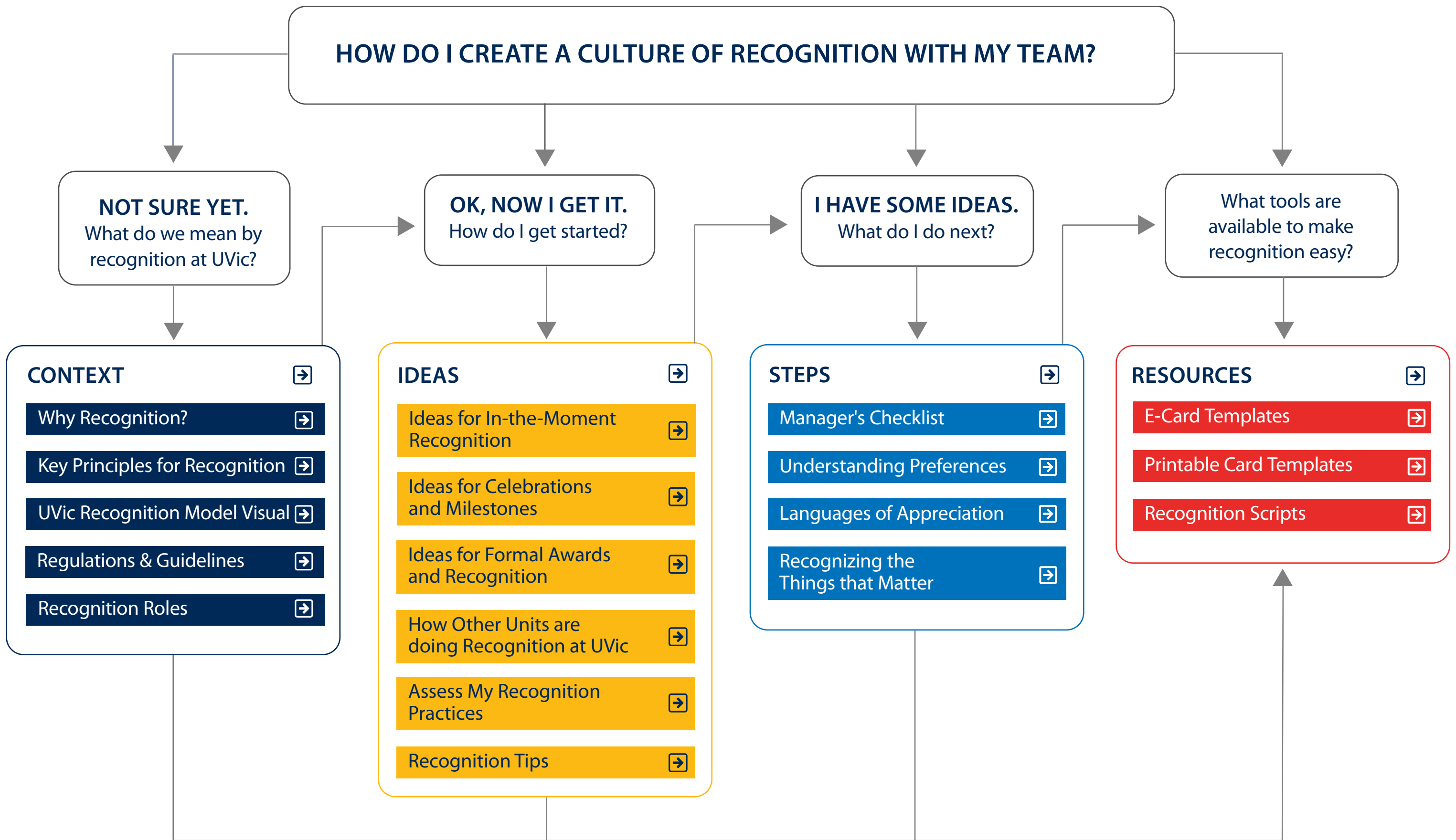
#### INDEX

Click this icon to take you to the interactive index.



#### NAVIGATION

Click these icons to take you to the previous numeric page or next numeric page, respectively.





# WHAT IS MY CONTEXT?

## What do we mean by recognition at UVic?

There are many different types of recognition programs, but for recognition to be meaningful it has to fit with the values that define who we are as an organization and be consistent with the operations of our post-secondary environment. This section outlines how UVic defines recognition through a principle-based approach and presents a model for recognition in alignment with existing policy that both leaders and employees can use to build a culture of recognition in any team.

[Why Recognition?](#) 

[Key Principles for Recognition](#) 

[UVic Recognition Model Visual](#) 

[Regulations & Guidelines](#) 

[Recognition Roles](#) 



# Why Recognition?

Truly seeing, hearing, and valuing people is what makes recognition work. It might seem simple, but feeling recognized, praised, respected, and valued for our contributions at work is something everyone needs. There's nothing louder than the silence where "thanks" should be.

Prioritizing recognition has several practical advantages besides the "feel good" factor as it:

- **Increases job satisfaction and engagement**—being recognized at work is linked directly to employee engagement and contributes to a sense of meaning and purpose.
- **Supports individual, team, and organizational goals**—acknowledging team member successes connects contributions to the bigger picture at UVic, reinforcing how individual or team actions bolster the realization of department and organizational strategic goals.
- **Improves teamwork and relationships**—team celebrations and peer-to-peer recognition help build relationships between team members, leading to better collaboration.
- **Boosts morale and lowers stress**—recognizing team members' hard work both decreases stress and increases feelings of interpersonal connection and belonging.
- **Lowers turnover and improves retention**—people are more likely to stay in a position (and stay happy) if their efforts are noticed and valued.



*There's nothing louder than the silence where "thanks" should be.*





WHAT IS MY CONTEXT?

# Key Principles for Recognition

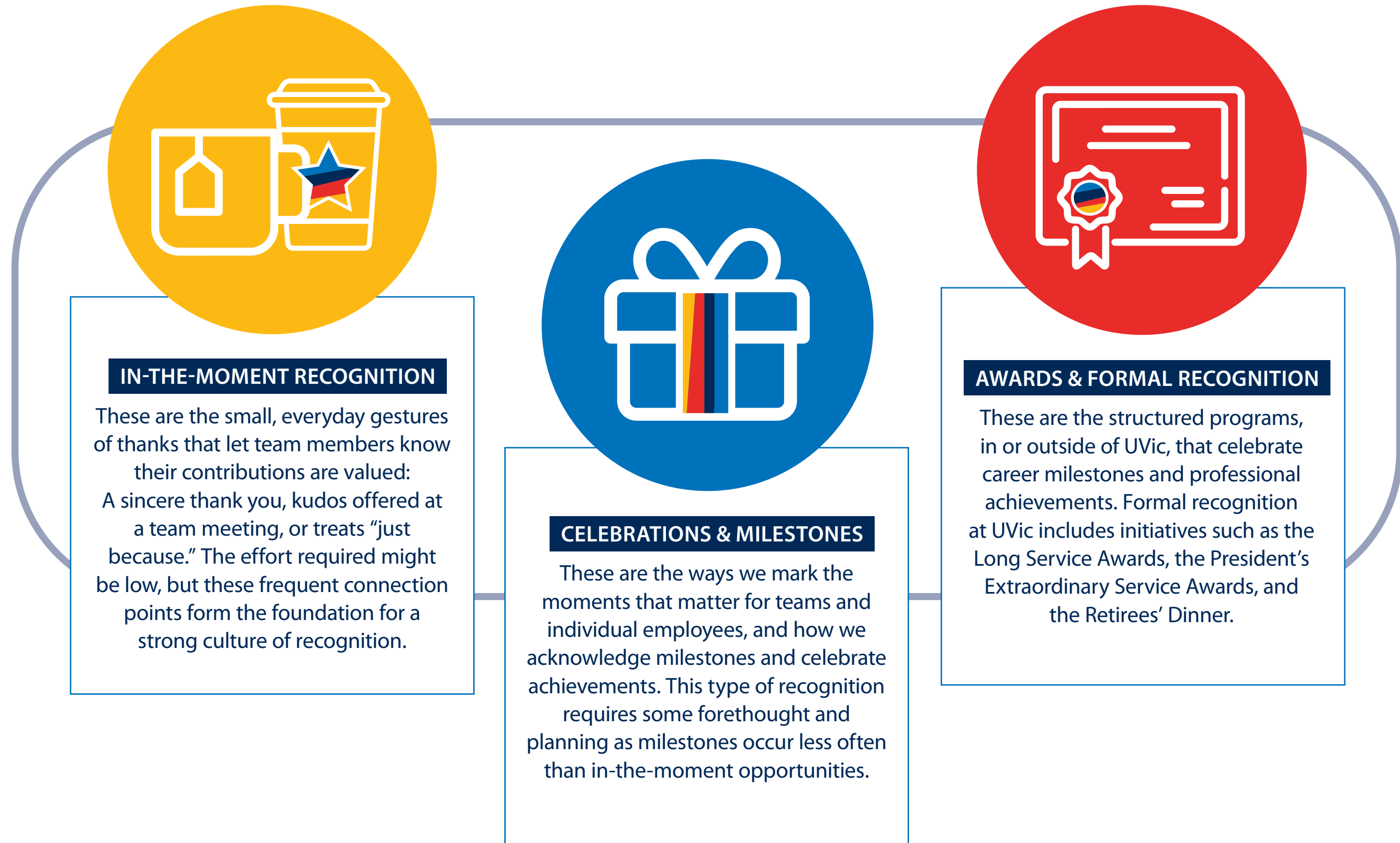
Exceptional employees support the services, teaching and research at UVic that contributes to a better future for people and the planet. Recognition is one of the ways we make UVic a great place for exceptional employees to work. The following principles help align recognition practices to our post-secondary environment and organizational values:

- **Sincere** – A genuine, and explicit thank you goes a long way. It also counters an incorrect assumption that people don't need to be told they are valued. Without sincerity, expressions of recognition may come across as tokenistic.
- **Inclusive** – Whether employees are frontline or behind the scenes, everyone deserves to be noticed when they make an extra effort or contribute to the team's success.
- **Individualized** – Our diversity makes us strong. It also means that people don't all like to be recognized in the same way. There are a variety of ways to recognize employees that can be tailored to individual needs and preferences.
- **Accountable** – Recognition practices can be unique, creative, fun and meaningful. They must also be transparent and accountable to UVic's policies and practices, which ensure compliance with external standards and expectations such as those laid out by the Canada Revenue Agency.



WHAT IS MY CONTEXT?

# UVic Recognition Model Visual





WHAT IS MY CONTEXT?

# Regulations & Guidelines

## HOSPITALITY EXPENDITURE POLICY (FM5600)

[UVic's Hospitality Expenditure Policy](#) and associated guidelines outline the scope of how department budgets may finance recognition activities within existing procedural and legal practices. This includes how much and how often university funds may pay for parties, gifts, awards, and refreshments for employees.

Cash or near cash gifts, gift cards, and certificates are considered a taxable benefit by the Canada Revenue Agency and must be declared through the expense claim process so that they can be reported to payroll. UVic encourages tax-free recognition where possible.

## PLANNING EVENTS AND PURCHASING GIFTS FOR UVIC EMPLOYEES

This "[Hospitality Cheat Sheet](#)" is intended to highlight specific points that are listed in the UVic Hospitality Expenditure policy and act as a consistent tool that can be easily referred to when planning events and purchasing gifts for UVic employees.

For questions about this policy contact UVic Accounts Payable [accountspayable@uvic.ca](mailto:accountspayable@uvic.ca).



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# Recognition Roles

## LEADERS

Leaders and managers are responsible for driving recognition efforts and initiatives and modeling the culture of recognition we all want to see. Though recognition is an important part of everyone's role, leaders set the tone and create the foundation when it comes to recognizing the contributions and achievements of others.

Leaders are responsible for:

- Modeling recognition as a priority, and demonstrating what recognition looks like in action.
- Sharing access to recognition tools, templates, and supports that make recognizing team members simple.
- Understanding your team members' recognition preferences and adjusting your approach to resonate with them.
- Learning about your own recognition style, and implementing recognition initiatives that are authentic, sustainable, and aligned with the ways you naturally prefer to recognize others.
- Acknowledging peer "recognition champions" on your teams by noticing, applauding, and reinforcing peer-to-peer recognition efforts, and by giving everyone the tools and support to recognize each other.
- Putting the recognition into action. To get started, several of the recognition ideas in this toolkit are flagged with a leader recognition icon.
- Ensuring university [policies and guidelines](#)  are followed.
- Having fun with it! Recognition shouldn't feel like a chore. Celebrate team members in ways that you'll both enjoy.

## PEERS

While recognition initiatives and programs are driven by leaders, peer-to-peer recognition is an important element of a strong culture of recognition. Employees often spend more time interacting with coworkers than their managers, which means that peer-to-peer recognition can acknowledge the behind-the-scenes contributions that leaders might not notice.

Peers can promote a culture of recognition by:

- Taking the time to express thanks and recognition to coworkers for their contributions (whether verbal, written, or even non-verbal).
- Sharing positive feedback about an individual with them.
- Making note of important dates and marking those occasions.
- Nominating a peer for an external or university award to formally recognize their contributions.
- Putting the recognition into action. To get started, several of the recognition ideas in this toolkit are flagged with a peer recognition icon.

## HUMAN RESOURCES

In our client service model where we "Empower People to Make a Difference," Human Resources provides tools, resources and training to encourage informal recognition practices at the departmental level and HR also participates in or coordinates formal recognition events.





# IDEAS

## TO GET ME STARTED

### How do I get started?

Building a culture of recognition takes time and effort, but it doesn't need to be done all at once. This section provides ideas and inspiration to get you started. Explore and be inspired by different ideas for recognition, assess your own practices, and use the tips to get started. Pick some ideas that work for you and try them out with your team.

[Ideas for In-the-Moment Recognition](#)



[Ideas for Celebrations and Milestones](#)



[Ideas for Formal Awards and Recognition](#)



[How Other Units are doing Recognition at UVic](#)



[Assess My Recognition Practices](#)



[Recognition Tips](#)





## In-the-Moment (It's the Little Things)

In-the-moment recognition efforts build and nurture a culture of recognition. These are those often unexpected gestures that are timely, authentic, and communicate sincere appreciation for all the little things.

This can include a range of efforts and encompass a variety of frequent, smaller initiatives that are low or no cost and can be implemented with little pre-planning. In-the-moment recognition is a cumulative habit: while it may only take a few minutes, little recognition efforts can still be high impact when they are authentic, timely, and specific.

In-the-moment recognition allows managers and peers to make a habit of recognizing and appreciating everyone's contributions. It allows employees to receive immediate feedback on performance and contributes to an internal culture of appreciation.

When recognizing in the moment, remember [individual recognition preferences](#) and target your efforts according to what they like.

### RECOGNITION IDEAS FOR IN-THE-MOMENT

- Offer a genuine, timely, and heartfelt thank you for a specific contribution—make eye contact and give your full attention to make it meaningful. P L R Q
- Recognize someone putting in extra effort by bringing them their favourite specialty coffee/tea the next day. P L
- Read out e-mails from happy clients in a team meeting. L R Q
- Offer an authentic expression of praise and appreciation by sending a specific "thank you" message through a preferred communication method eg. voice mail, instant message, email, personalized note. P L R Q



### LEGEND

Look for these icons to quickly identify ideas that might work for you and your team.

<span>P</span>	Peer-to-Peer Recognition (Appreciation is part of everyone's job)
<span>L</span>	Leader-led Recognition (Some things just can't be delegated)
<span>R</span>	Remote Recognition (Out of sight shouldn't mean out of mind)
<span>Q</span>	Quick Recognition (Make it happen in 5 minutes or less)



- Recognizing an outstanding individual effort at a team meeting or in an “all-staff” email.
- Pay attention to staff likes and dislikes; offer to take on a task they dislike as a thank you.
- Reach out to someone at UVic that doesn’t work with you directly and say thank you for how they have supported you and your team.
- Take the time to show interest in a team member’s personal life by asking “What’s new with you?”
- Recognize the value of helping others. Take note when team members go above and beyond for others. Send or deliver a hand-written note or card thanking them for fostering teamwork.
- Create opportunities for personal appreciation in weekly meetings, where peers have the option to write/share verbally something about a team member that they especially appreciated that week.
- Host a “coffee meeting” and have coffee/treats delivered to employees’ homes.
- Bring in treats or seasonal snacks to a team meeting or just because (Tip: know your team’s dietary preferences and allergies, and accommodate them!)

- Cheers from peers. Give your team a chance to celebrate each other. Ask staff to recognize a peer that has done some great work, and post the kudos publicly in an online forum or blog.
- Make time in team meetings to have each team member share the achievements they’re most proud of that week. This gives leaders an opportunity to hear what achievements are most meaningful to each individual, and the entire team gets to chance to congratulate each other in the moment, when it matters most.
- Give encouragement. Notice something that is really hard for an employee, and acknowledge that one-on-one by saying “I know this will be hard, and I believe in you!”
- Arrange an impromptu visit. Spend some quality face time with someone (or multiple people) that you have not had a chance to meet with one-on-one recently. Go for a walk, take them for coffee (in person) or schedule a Zoom chat.
- Leave a hand-written thank you card or note on a staff member’s desk to recognize the contributions of an employee who prefers to fly under the radar.



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## Celebrations and Milestones (Put it In Your Calendar)

Celebrations and milestones require making a point of intentionally recognizing significant moments and important achievements. These might be team milestones like collectively wrapping up a big project or meeting that term’s goals. These might also be individual personal milestones like birthdays, weddings, the arrival of a new family member, or professional milestones like a work anniversary, fresh credential, or completing a big project.

Recognition of celebrations and milestones happens less frequently than in-the-moment recognition, and is less structured and smaller in scale than formal recognition or awards.

Celebrations and milestones typically involve an element of pre-planning, and may or may not have a financial cost attached. If there are costs incurred, these are generally low (for example, team pizza parties to celebrate a collaborative achievement).





You don’t have to celebrate every milestone (remembering every significant moment can quickly get overwhelming). Pick what makes the most sense to you, and [what your team members have told you is important to them](#) , and put it in your calendar. For recognition to be sustainable and feel authentic, efforts should be tailored to the [recipient’s preferences and to the personal style of the individual delivering them](#) .

Celebrations and milestone acknowledgments are usually driven by leaders, though peer-to-peer participation and support is appropriate with management approval. Review the [Recognition Preferences Questionnaire](#)  to see how staff preferred to be recognized as one person’s recognition could be another’s embarrassment. Work to ensure a balance between public and private recognition as well as individual and team recognition.



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## RECOGNITION IDEAS FOR CELEBRATIONS AND MILESTONES

- Celebrate staff birthdays by bringing in cupcakes and singing to them, or sending balloons or other gifts to their home if working remotely.
- Circulate a fun award or humorous trophy and use it to recognize a staff contribution each week. Have the team come up with a name and criteria for the award.
- Set calendar reminders for career milestones, and send a personal note, card, or letter.
- Mark new employees' successfully completing probation by taking them for coffee.
- For virtual celebrations, order a treat for delivery and hold a celebratory video conference toast.
- Send snail mail. Post a hand-written thank you card to an employee or the partner/family of an employee who has been putting in extra hours at work.
- Have your boss or a leader from another department recognize your employee/team for a significant accomplishment. Sincere praise or thanks from a senior leader shows that you truly appreciate their efforts and go the extra mile to talk about it.

- Recognize an outstanding employee/team contribution by providing paid professional development opportunities.
- Organize a virtual "card" for everyone to sign to mark a special occasion, instead of sending a physical card.
- Throw a potluck or hold an outdoor picnic with individually wrapped sandwiches and beverages to say goodbye to a colleague, welcome to a new team member, or to mark a special occasion.
- Host a yearly staff social event during work hours in honor of your team's accomplishments.
- Order the whole team pizza to celebrate completing a big project, or have pizza delivered to their homes for a virtual celebration.
- Promote continuous learning and connection by hosting rotating lunch and learns where staff can sign up to share an interesting hobby or skill with the rest of the team.



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- Send out home-office care kits. Include a personalized card with small comfort items like: L R
  - Hand sanitizer
  - Healthy Snacks
  - [UVic branded stuff](#) → (mug, notebook, pen)
  - Their favourite chocolate bar
  - Coffee or tea
  - Silly putty or stress ball
- 
- Track team accomplishments visually (an at-a-glance view of progress towards a goal) to keep staff motivated as you work towards a “big win”. Create a celebration routine for each milestone reached L R
- 
- Let your team sign off work early on a Friday after they’ve completed a big project. L R Q
- 
- Submit an article about your team to an organization newsletter, highlighting their efforts. P L R Q
- 
- Maintain a team bulletin board (virtual or physical) with photos of accomplishments and notes of thanks. P L R Q

- Get the whole team in on a thank you or congratulatory video for a peer. It might be helpful to remember sincerity is more important than polished production. P L R
- 
- Create virtual water cooler moments. Send out a video conferencing invite to connect over a beverage on a Friday afternoon. L R
- 
- Schedule a recurring gratitude “stand-up” meeting once a month. Use this time to recognize a member of your team publicly. L R
- 
- Host a surprise virtual birthday party under the guise of a Zoom meeting. Ask attendees to set their virtual backgrounds to cake, balloons, or something that represents a hobby or interest of the team member being celebrated. P L R
- 
- Purchase a clothing item or other UVic SWAG from the [Bookstore](#) → and have it delivered to the team member’s home. Who doesn’t love packages in the mail? L R



### LEGEND

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Looking to show your appreciation through UVic gifts or SWAG? Visit the [UVic Bookstore](#) →.



## Formal Recognition and Awards (Shine a Light)

Formal Recognition and Awards are structured programs with clear criteria and processes, linked to big achievements or career milestones. While some nomination processes can be time-consuming, the impact of nominating a team member or colleague for a formal award can be especially meaningful, and worth the effort. Formal awards might be internal to UVic, or they might be external, awarded by industry or professional associations.

The members of our university community contribute to its success in many ways. UVic celebrates and recognizes faculty and staff for teaching, years of service, volunteering and research. Formal recognition initiatives at UVic include the awards outlined in this section.

### How can peers participate?

Formal Recognition isn't just for leaders. Anyone can take part in UVic's formal recognition and awards programs by building a team and working together to complete the nomination for a peer. Leaders can foster peer participation by sharing nominations with the team and encouraging employees to congratulate each other.

### INTERNAL UVIC AWARDS

The latest details about each of these opportunities are available on the [faculty and staff recognition page](#).

#### President's Extraordinary Service Awards (currently under review)

The President's Extraordinary Service Awards celebrate the outstanding contributions of employees from across campus. Each of the four categories of awards are open to individual or team nomination.

#### Campus Kudos

The Campus Kudos celebrates and acknowledges the achievements and accomplishments of our talented and hard-working faculty, staff, and students. President Kevin Hall will recognize the people receiving Campus Kudos at informal celebration events throughout the academic year. Kudos are shared with our campus community so we can all learn more about the great things happening at UVic and the people that make up this institution.

#### Long Service Recognition

The Long Service Recognition is an annual event that honours UVic employees who have completed 25, 30, 35, 40 and 45 years of service.

#### Retirees' Celebration

The Retirees' Celebration is an annual event hosted by the president, usually including a dinner where we honour retiring UVic employees for their years of service.





### Provost’s Advocacy and Activism Awards

The Provost’s Advocacy and Activism Award acknowledges the presence of dedicated advocates and activists in our community. Any student, faculty, staff or alumni dedicated to social equity can be nominated.

### Provost’s Award in Engaged Scholarship

The Provost’s Award in Engaged Scholarship celebrates outstanding UVic scholarship, teaching and community engagement. The title Provost’s Engaged Scholar is awarded to tenured faculty members who have achieved great distinction as community-engaged scholars.

### REACH Awards

The REACH Awards celebrate teaching and research excellence at UVic on an annual basis. REACH Award recipients have pushed the boundaries of discovery, creativity and innovation to impact our lives and the world around us.

### Sustainability Champion Awards

The Staff and Student Sustainability Awards recognize and celebrate one student and staff member whose efforts to make the campus more sustainable has had a meaningful and enduring contribution towards the climate and sustainability goals of the university.

## EXTERNAL AWARDS

Recognition efforts do not have to be limited to our university community. Explore external association or industry awards and consider nominating a staff member, peer or your entire team. External awards are a great opportunity to publicly recognize outstanding achievements of team members and the contribution their efforts make to the big picture and can also help to advance UVic's local and global reputation. Depending on the specific industry and nature of the work your team does, there are many external awards to consider.

Examples of external awards include:

**CAUBO Quality and Productivity Awards Program** The CAUBO awards program is intended to recognize and share effective and innovative practices that enable excellence in the management of risk, and human, financial, IT and physical resources on our Canadian campuses.






### Professional Association Awards


Most professional associations or industry groups have some kind of annual awards process. Research those related to the work of your team and encourage nominations.



# How Other Units are Doing Recognition at UVic

There are many great recognition initiatives and programs already happening in our community. Connect with your colleagues about their recognition practices and gain idea for putting recognition into action in your unit.

- The [VPFO Service Excellence Committee](#)  has a subcommittee that focuses on employee recognition including hosting an annual appreciation event that highlights years of service.
- [Student Affairs Staff Recognition Program](#)  includes a STUA vision and values awards process.
- [Custodial Services Care Award](#)  allows all UVic community members to recognize our custodial staff.
- Alumni and Development allows all employees to take part in recognition by sending [Giving Grams](#)  on Giving Tuesday.
- [UVic Defenders](#) , hosted by the Information Security Office in University Systems, rewards and recognizes staff who make a meaningful or extraordinary contribution to detecting or preventing information security-related issues at UVic.

Do you have a recognition practice that's working well for your team? Send your suggestions for the Recognition Toolkit to [ODLS1@uvic.ca](mailto:ODLS1@uvic.ca) .



# Assess My Recognition Practices

How are you doing with recognition?

Rate yourself on each action below. Tabulate your score at the end to rate your recognition.

(i.e., If you perform all of these actions all of the time, you will have a score of 30).

3 = All of the time | 2 = Most of the time | 1 = Some of the time | 0 = Rarely or never

RECOGNITION ACTIONS	
Please select the circles to calculate your recognition score	0 1 2 3
I show my employees that I appreciate them on at least a weekly basis.	
My employees understand what behaviors will be recognized.	
I utilize a variety of recognition practices.	
My employees get a choice in how they are recognized.	
I model a culture of recognition by acknowledging the contributions of individuals and teams outside of my unit.	
I encourage employees to participate in team recognition activities and events.	
I highlight the goals and values of my unit by clearly connecting them to my recognition practices.	
I make an effort to connect my recognition efforts to UVic values, priorities and/or competencies.	
I encourage my team to engage in peer to peer recognition practices.	
I recognize the little achievements as well as the large ones.	
TOTAL	<input type="text"/>

SCORE	OUTCOME
26-30	You're an employee recognition pro! Keep up the excellent work.
21-25	You're doing well with employee recognition. You've got the basics down, and have a solid recognition foundation, but there is always room for improvement.
15-20	You're average when it comes to recognizing your employees. Though you aren't failing miserably, there is room for more. You may be missing out on maximizing engagement and connection, so now's the time to commit to making some more intentional efforts around recognition.
10-14	There is lots of room for growth! Chances are good that your recognition efforts aren't hitting the mark with your team, or aren't happening often enough. Now's the time to start making sure team members feel seen and appreciated.
0-10	Consider this check-in as your wakeup call. Your employees are walking in a recognition desert, begging for water. Give them the recognition they need and deserve. It's time to show them that you notice and appreciate their contributions.



# Recognition Tips

- **Notice opportunities:** What doesn't get noticed, doesn't get recognized. The first step of meaningful recognition is a receptive mindset. Pay attention to the ways team members go "above and beyond" and make note of moments that deserve recognition.
- **Do it frequently and make it timely:** A casual "thanks" in passing once a month won't have much of an impact. Offer recognition regularly so that noticing and appreciating employee contributions becomes a habit. Make it timely—link recognition to a specific behaviour, effort or result for the biggest impact.
- **Make it meaningful:** Nothing feels less genuine than constant praise for average work. Recognition should happen regularly but needs to be more than a checkbox on a to-do list to feel authentic.
- **It's not just about the work:** Recognize positive attitudes and behaviours as well as tangible results and work outcomes.
- **It doesn't have to cost much:** Financial rewards are great, but they're not the same as feeling genuinely recognized for going above and beyond. Feeling seen and valued for our efforts will always be a basic human need.



# STEPS

## TO CREATE A CULTURE OF RECOGNITION

### What do I do next?

Keep your recognition momentum moving forward. 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 UVic's strategic priorities. Small efforts over time will build a culture of recognition that all employees can contribute to and benefit from.

Manager's Checklist



Understanding Recognition Preferences



Languages of Appreciation



Recognizing the Things that Matter





# Manager's Checklist

**STEP 1:** [Complete the Assess My Recognition Practices](#)

Moment of truth—do you excel at recognition or is there room for improvement?

**STEP 2:** [Complete the Leaders Recognition Style Questionnaire](#)

Identify your “default modes” when it comes to recognition, and what feels authentic and natural to you. Challenge yourself to step outside of your recognition comfort zone as well, incorporating different languages of appreciation.

**STEP 3:** [Send the Employee Recognition Preferences Questionnaire](#)

Pass this questionnaire along to each team member, so that you’re not guessing if your efforts will hit the mark.

**STEP 4:** Pick a Milestone and put it in your calendar.

Review and get familiar with your team's [recognition preferences](#) . Choose a milestone or anniversary for each employee and put it in your calendar as a recurring event.

**STEP 5:** Recognize the things that matter.

Use the [Assessing Alignment with UVic Frameworks Tool](#) to compare your current recognition efforts against strategic priorities, goals, and competencies.

**STEP 6:** Schedule time with your team to regularly review and expand your recognition practices.



Not sure where to start? Refer to the [ideas section](#) section of the toolkit for inspiration.






It is a natural tendency to treat others as we would like to be treated, but this approach fails to honour the diversity and unique preferences of your team. Start by understanding your own style, then explore the diverse preferences of your team.

Make the effort to find out what your employees' values are as people, and how those values are then expressed in their work. Taking the time to recognize skills and talents that staff value in themselves goes a long way to ensuring a happy, loyal team.

Individual preferences for receiving recognition and appreciation show up in different ways. Understanding and noticing team members' languages of appreciation can help you offer the right type of appreciation and recognition. Team members will feel most valued when they are appreciated regularly in the ways that are most important to them, in a way that feels genuine.

Recognition efforts are most meaningful when they are timely, authentic, and tailored to the individual. The [Employee Recognition Preferences Questionnaire](#)  can be used to better understand your team member's individual likes and dislikes. It's a good idea to discuss with your team how to use and share the information in a way that is comfortable and meaningful, so you can work together to create a culture of recognition. Download a PDF of the questionnaire on the [Recognition Toolkit website](#) .

Have a plan to put what you learn into practice. Asking about preferences may create an expectation that the information you've learned will be applied. Keep track by saving the completed forms somewhere safe or creating a spreadsheet with everyone's answers in one place.

- [Leaders Recognition Style Questionnaire](#) 
- [Employee Recognition Preferences Questionnaire](#) 
- [Informal Ways to Uncover Recognition Preferences](#) 



## LEADERS RECOGNITION STYLE QUESTIONNAIRE (Pg 1 of 2)

This questionnaire is for you to reflect on the ways you naturally like to express recognition. In order for recognition efforts to be genuine and sustainable, they need to feel authentic to you. Complete the exercises below to identify your recognition style and preferences as a leader.

1. Think about a time when you were on the receiving end of a truly meaningful recognition experience.

What was it? Who was involved?

What elements of that recognition experience made it meaningful?

How could you replicate that experience with your staff?

Which [language of appreciation](#)  or recognition style did this represent? (Ex: Words of Affirmation, Acts of Service, Gifts, or Quality Time)

*This is significant as we tend to deliver recognition in ways that are meaningful to us. If a language of appreciation is our preferred style when receiving recognition, it likely also feels most natural to us to give recognition using that language.*






## LEADERS RECOGNITION STYLE QUESTIONNAIRE (Pg 2 of 2)

2. Think about a time when you were on the receiving end of a recognition experience that was not particularly meaningful to you.

What was it? Who was involved?

What elements of that recognition experience didn't work for you?

Which [language of appreciation](#)  or recognition style did this represent? (Ex: Words of Affirmation, Acts of Service, Gifts, or Quality Time)

*This is significant as we tend to deliver recognition in ways that are meaningful to us. If a language of appreciation isn't our preferred style, we may miss the mark when giving recognition to those who do prefer that language.*



## EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION PREFERENCES QUESTIONNAIRE (PG 1 OF 3)

Please complete and return this questionnaire to your supervisor.  
This will help your leaders and teammates recognize your contributions in the ways that mean the most to you.

Name	
Job Title	
Anniversaries or special days you enjoy celebrating (Wedding/ Employment/ Family events etc.)	
Birthday (optional, and you don't have to put the year)	

Share this resource as a separate document by [clicking here](#)

### Likes/Dislikes: Help us get to know you better

Favourite hot beverage (e.g., what's your Starbucks order?)	
Favourite cold beverage (e.g., pop, smoothie, juice?)	
Favourite sweet snack or dessert	
Favourite salty snack	
Favourite chocolate/candy bar	
Favourite restaurant	
Favourite flower or plant	
Favourite sports team	
Favourite hobby	



**EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION PREFERENCES QUESTIONNAIRE (PG 2 OF 3)**

Questionnaire continued

Food allergies/dietary restrictions (eg. For Ordering Catering)	
Other likes/dislikes?	

What kinds of work accomplishments or contributions would you most like to be recognized for by your supervisor?

Meeting an individual, team, or department goal	Collaboration or support of a team effort
Taking on extra responsibilities	Innovative or creative ideas
Problem-solving/overcoming challenges	Completing a challenging project or task
Consistent job performance	Other (include details):

In what kinds of settings are you comfortable receiving recognition? (select all that work best for you)

<input type="checkbox"/> Private	<input type="checkbox"/> Public	<input type="checkbox"/> Small-Group/People I know well
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What was the most meaningful way you have been recognized by someone at work?



## EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION PREFERENCES QUESTIONNAIRE (Pg 3 of 3)

Is there anything else you'd like to make sure we know about how you like to be recognized and appreciated?

Based on the four different "Languages of Appreciation" (Chapman & White, 2012) at work described in the table below, what is your most preferred way to receive recognition?

LANGUAGE OF APPRECIATION	EXAMPLES	MY PREFERRED LANGUAGE (RANK 1-4)
Words of Affirmation	Verbal or written praise and words that communicate a positive message of thanks and appreciation for a job well done.	
Acts of Service	Pitching in and offering me support with a task as a "thank you" or gesture of support and appreciation.	
Tangible Gifts	Presents, treats, and tokens of appreciation to acknowledge my contributions and milestones.	
Quality Time	Intentional, thoughtful, focused and meaningful efforts to connect, whether virtual or in person. Examples might be regular check-ins and informal social catch-ups.	



## INFORMAL WAYS TO UNCOVER RECOGNITION PREFERENCES

Questionnaires are helpful, but there are other ways to uncover individual recognition preferences. Pay attention to the following for clues to indicate how your team members like to receive recognition.

**Notice how they recognize others.** We tend to recognize others in the ways we want to be recognized. Pay attention to how employees recognize others, as it can be a good indicator of what they would like others to do for them.

**Notice what they request of others.** What we ask of others tends to align with our recognition preferences and style. For example, when we ask someone to support us on a work task, it's a good indication that one of the appreciation languages or styles that work for us is acts of service.

**Listen to their complaints.** The things an individual complains about may actually also indicate what they like. Pay attention to employee dislikes, as the opposite behaviour is likely to be a behaviour they appreciate. For example, if they vent about not receiving a "thank you" from a coworker after they helped them on a project, it's a good indication that receiving verbal praise is meaningful to them.

Refer to any personality style/preferences instruments your team has completed (Lumina, Insights, MBTI) for hints to align recognition practices with other communication preferences.



# Languages of Appreciation

The following four Languages of Appreciation from Gary Chapman and Paul White are common ways to differentiate between individual recognition preferences at work.

**Words of Affirmation:** Verbal praise and words that communicate a positive message of thanks and appreciation for a job well done. Some people highly value verbal acknowledgment of their contributions and accomplishments. Praise offered verbally or in writing will be received best by employees whose primary language of appreciation is words of affirmation.

**Acts of Service:** Acts of service means pitching in and offering help or assistance with a task as a “thank you” or gesture of support. Some individuals value acts of service as thanks for a job well done. Service-based “thank yous” might look like: offering help with a challenging task, helping solve a problem, or dropping off a cup of coffee or lunch at their desk.

**Tangible Gifts:** Some team members will value gifts highly as a token of appreciation or recognition. Whether it’s a tangible gift such as UVic branded SWAG or an experiential gift like tickets to Cinecenta or a Vikes game, gifts will resonate with some employees. Tailor the gift to the individual for the biggest impact. For example, gift tickets to the Pheonix Theatre for an arts lover, a CARSA climbing wall session for the adventurer or provide a catered coffee break for a team of coffee lovers. Whether purchased on or off campus, be sure that any gifts purchased with university funds fall inside of UVic’s Hospitality Policy.

**Quality Time:** Some people value intentional, thoughtful face time as a “thank you.” To acknowledge the achievements of someone whose primary language is quality time, you might book a one-on-one chat over a cup of coffee or a walk around the Ring, or make a point of spending time together volunteering or sharing a meal. The important part is making a meaningful effort to connect with an individual, giving them your focused, undivided attention.

Chapman, G. D., & White, P. E. (2012). *The 5 languages of appreciation in the workplace: empowering organizations by encouraging people*. Rev. and updated. Chicago: Northfield Pub



Successful recognition efforts mean making sure recognition practices and initiatives highlight the things that matter. Recognition efforts should align with and reflect UVic Strategic Priorities, Values, and Competencies, as well as team and department objectives.

Strategic UVic documents to refer to and keep in mind when planning recognition activities include:

### UNIVERSITY STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

The [University of Victoria's Strategic Framework](#) articulates our shared understanding of our vision, values and priorities.



### UVIC COMPETENCY MODEL

The [UVic competency model](#) offers a high-level view of what it means to work at UVic and is aspirational, recognizing that pursuing our strategic objectives will always require us to lean into the edge of learning, growth and discovery.

As a leader, it's up to you to decide which principles make sense to focus on. Pick the ones that resonate most for you and your staff.

The alignment tool helps identify how existing or proposed initiatives fit with your team's goals as well as the bigger picture.





## ALIGNING RECOGNITION TO UVIC STRATEGY

Fill out the chart below to identify which goals, objectives, principles, values or competencies your recognition practice supports. The best recognition programs incorporate a variety of practices that align with or support elements from each column below.

RECOGNITION PRACTICE	DEPARTMENT OR TEAM GOAL OR OBJECTIVE	UNIVERSITY PRINCIPLE, PRIORITY OR VALUE	UVIC COMPETENCY



# RESOURCES

## What tools are available make recognition easy?

A culture of recognition means that recognition becomes a part of what you do on an ongoing basis, and is embedded in your routine practice without needing a lot of effort to keep it going. The tools and resources available in this section make it easy to customize and send messages of recognition through a variety of designs, printing options and sample scripts for voicemails, e-cards, and note cards.

[E-Card Templates](#)



[Printable Card Templates](#)

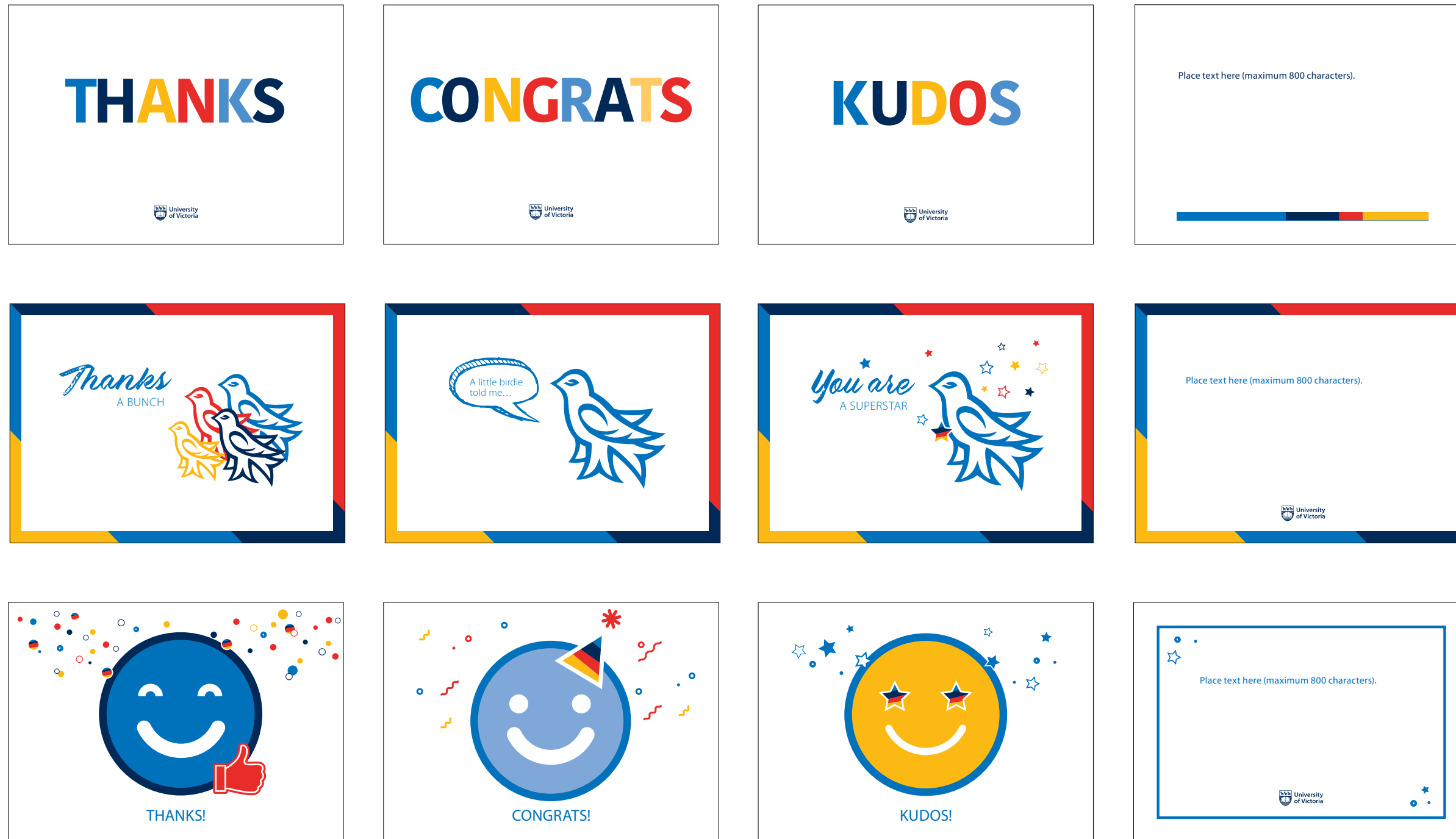


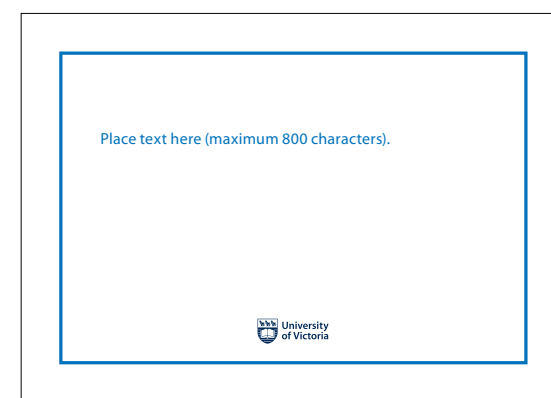
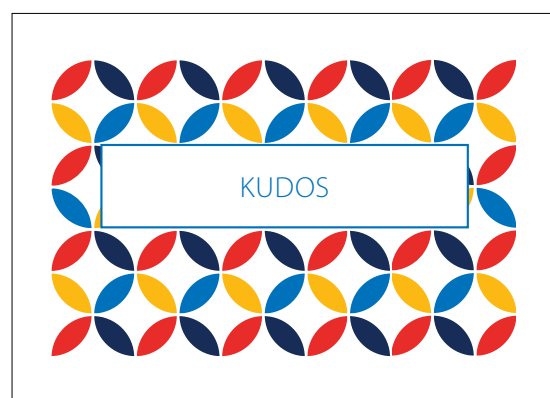
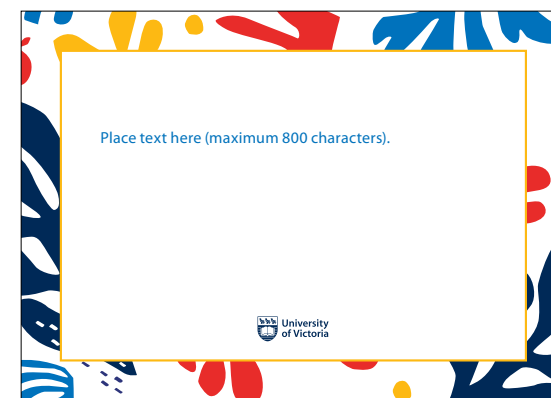
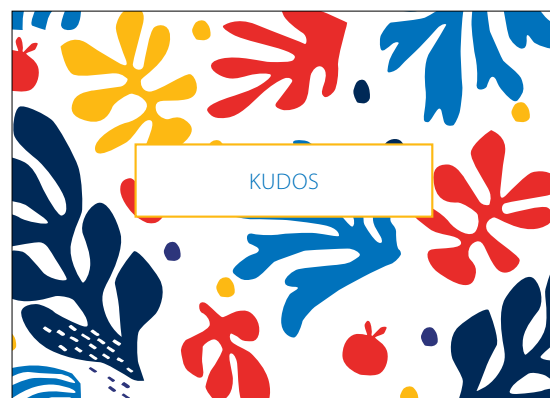
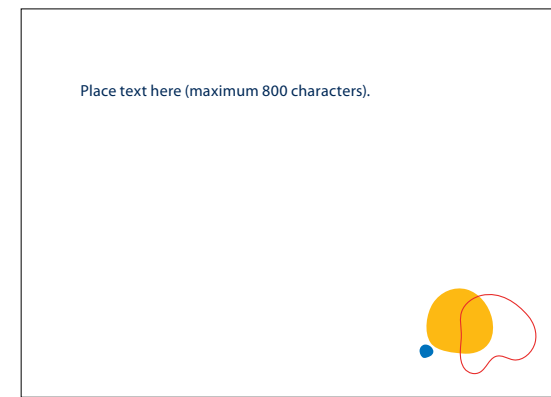
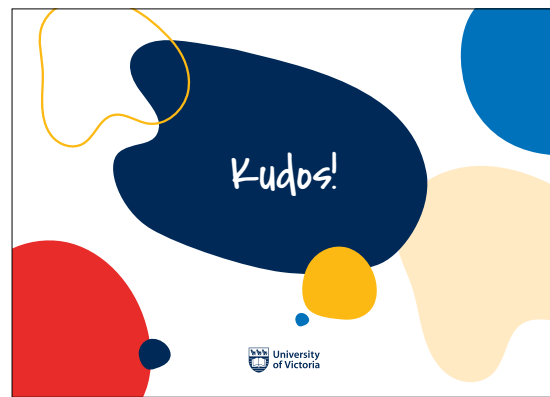
[Recognition Scripts](#)





Send an E-Card to make everyday recognition efforts easy. Let team members know you notice and appreciate their contributions by taking a few minutes to acknowledge them virtually. Download and customize your preferred template from [the Recognition Toolkit website](#) to send via your preferred email or messaging service.

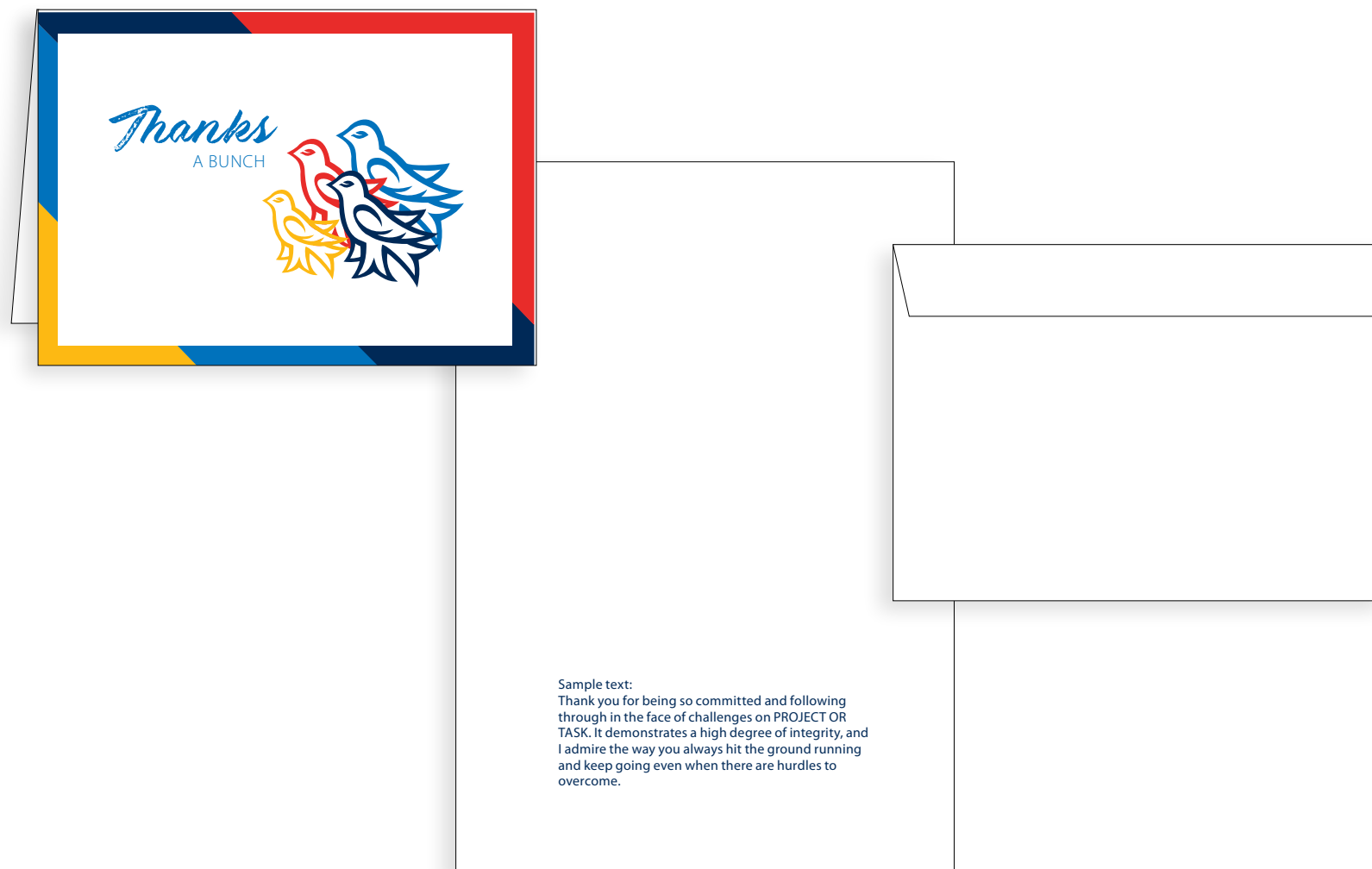


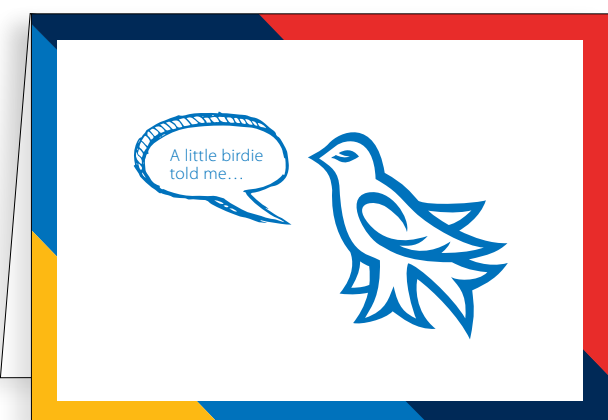


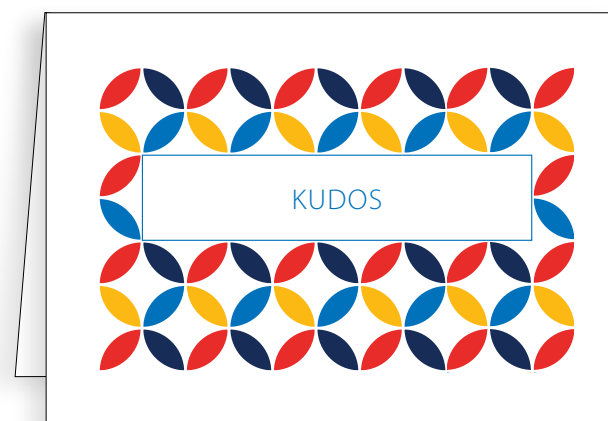
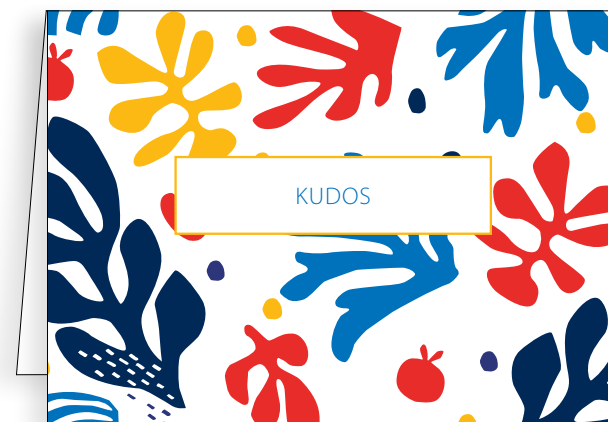
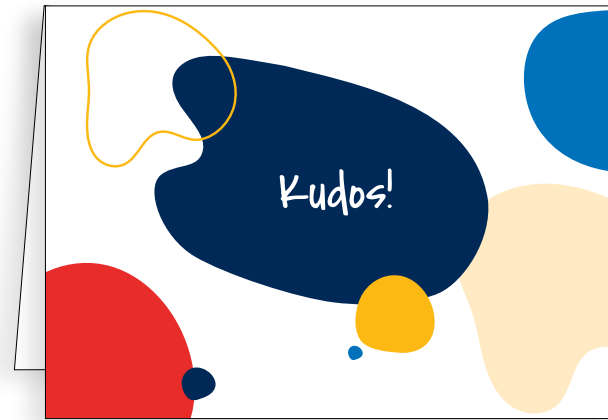


# Printable Card Templates Pg 1 of 3

The following cards are available to order from Printing Services. Visit [Printing Services](#)  to customize and order your own set of cards. FAST charges will apply.









# Recognition Scripts

Sometimes it's hard to know exactly what to say. These recognition scripts can be used as inspiration—tailor them to suit your style and the occasion!

### Anniversary message:

Happy anniversary, NAME! This organization has changed a lot in the NUMBER of years you've been here. You continue to add so much value to our team, and we all appreciate your hard work. You still treat every day with fresh energy, like it's your first day on the job. Here's to an admired, appreciated and inspiring colleague. Thank you for all that you have done, and continue to do, for this organization.

### Thank you message:

Dear NAME,  
Thank you for all your help on our recent PROJECT OR TASK. It was incredibly helpful to have your input and contribution on SPECIFIC ASPECT OR AREA OF EXPERTISE. I'm grateful to have you as a part of this team and I really appreciate your willingness to help out wherever needed. It's that kind of expertise, flexibility and dedication that make this TEAM/DEPARTMENT successful.

### Sample script 1:

*Thank you for having such a positive attitude at work. Projects become easier to complete, changes become easier to roll out, and problems become easier to solve with your involvement.*

### Sample script 2:

*Thank you for being so committed and following through in the face of challenges on PROJECT OR TASK. It demonstrates a high degree of integrity, and I admire the way you always hit the ground running and keep going even when there are hurdles to overcome.*

### Sample script 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.*

### Sample voicemail thank you message:

*Hi NAME! I wanted to leave a quick message to thank you for doing such an excellent job on TASK OR PROJECT. Your contribution meant that IMPACT and I'm so glad to have you on this team. I hope your day is going well.*





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