



Building a Culture of Appreciation and Belonging

A CASE STUDY

workhuman*

Customer spotlight

How can organizations drive greater connection and humanity in the workplace? Is it possible to create a consistent and meaningful experience across a dispersed employee base? Which programs effectively drive organizational change?

Those were some of the questions CAA Club Group of Companies (CCG) asked during a recent business transformation. CCG has been working to keep Canadians safe, mobile, and protected for more than 115 years. Composed of a number of services ranging from roadside assistance, insurance, and travel services, CCG is Canada's largest not-for-profit automobile association, with more than two million members served by 2,000 employees.

This case study explores how CCG partnered with Workhuman® to create and sustain an innovative reward and recognition solution that led to:

- **100% adoption of the program**
- **24,000 unique recognition moments a year**
- **Lower turnover rates**
- **37% lower costs**





The challenge

As an organization with several different business divisions and 34 retail locations, it's no surprise uniting CCG employees under one cohesive recognition model proved challenging. "We knew recognition was important," says Mara Notarfonzo, VP of total rewards, "but the experience was not consistent."

Finding budget

At the time, CCG's recognition program, consisting of e-cards, gift cards, and the occasional lunch out, was ad hoc and lacked visibility.

"You'll be surprised how much money your organization probably spends on recognition without really knowing it," Tony Tsai, VP of corporate communications and services, explains. When CCG started calculating their recognition spend, "We realized we had the funds to support a more centralized recognition program that not only allows people to see recognition across the enterprise, but also gives the business visibility into how much is being spent."

CHRO Mary Duncan knew they were looking for "a program that recognized all our lines of business with consistent rewards, both in why you're recognizing someone, and the money being spent." In addition, CCG's new recognition program had to be social, user friendly, and tied to core values.



**In terms of choosing a recognition partner,
Mara recalls:**

**“We wanted to
partner with a
vendor that is best
in class in terms
of recognition**

**to get the highest return on investment and
successfully build a culture grounded in connection
and engagement.”**



The solution

In partnership with Workhuman, CCG revamped its rewards and recognition solution, Applause. The company also implemented Workhuman's Service Milestones® solution, making it easy to celebrate every employee's work anniversary across the organization.

Choosing Workhuman as their recognition vendor was an easy decision. According to Mara: "Workhuman hit the nail on the head. Our management team unanimously voted for Workhuman when we were deciding on a vendor."

How CCG uses recognition data

Because CCG is focused on fostering a productive and engaging workforce, Workhuman® iQ data and analytics reporting continues to be a highlight of the program. Leaders especially appreciate being able to look at the analytics and see where people range from a performance perspective and the recognition moments they have received. Seeing this in real time creates a clear picture of what's going well, who's performing at their best, and even warning signs of disengaged employees.

Applause was designed to ensure a consistent experience for CCG's distributed workforce, so when the pandemic hit and employees transitioned to remote work, leaders knew the power of recognition could keep the culture of connection alive.



Applause platform

Dana Soubra, VP of claims services and insurance distribution, remembers a discussion at the beginning of the pandemic regarding cutting costs: **“Our CEO said, ‘Applause is one of the key areas that we’re going to increase the budget for and start using even more.’”** CEO Jay Woo had seen that recognition improves employee engagement, aligns employees with company values, and reinforces a culture of gratitude and inclusivity, making it the perfect tool to combat the challenges employees faced during the pandemic.



CCG uses Team Awards regularly to recognize the entire organization. The Team Award called Round of Applause was sent on Employee Appreciation Day and other special events. This past year, a special Round of Applause was sent from our CEO as a moment of gratitude for everyone’s efforts to help CCG’s members and the community at large throughout the pandemic.



TONY TSAI
Vice President, Corporate Communications & Services, CAA Club Group



The result

Before partnering with Workhuman, CCG would send around 400 e-cards or monetary rewards to employees a year, spending roughly \$400,000 annually. After launching Applause, that number jumped to 6,000 recognition moments in a year – for only \$250,000. With a strategic, consistent recognition program, CCG was able to recognize every employee for almost *half* the cost.



100%

**adoption of the program
across all divisions in first year**

24k

**recognition moments a year
and steadily increasing**

15x

**increase in recognition with
37% lower cost**

**Lowest
turnover**

**for employees who have been
recognized the most**



Celebrating each other's success is not just beneficial for recognition recipients, but also for the company as a whole in creating organic human moments that lend to a culture of inclusivity, safety, and gratitude.



MARA NOTARFONZO
Vice President of Total Rewards, CAA Club Group

Return on investment

In the first year, CCG saw 100% adoption of the program across all divisions. This rate of adoption, which continues year after year, shows just how ingrained appreciation and connection have become in CCG's culture. "Daily, we can see upwards of 100 or more recognition moments shared across the platform," Mary says. "Recognition builds team rapport and contributes to a sense of belonging internally – it serves as a good reminder that we are all working towards the same goal."

Applause's return on investment is not only evident by feelings of inclusion and belonging, but also by the bottom-line impact on the business. Since implementing Applause, turnover has consistently

gone down, and that's no coincidence. Workhuman iQ data show the direct correlation between recognition and turnover. Mara explains, "If you look at the people that have been recognized the most, they have the lowest turnover."

It's simple: More recognition equals lower turnover.

Data also show turnover is the lowest for employees who have received awards from both their managers and their peers – further proving the benefits of peer-to-peer connection. And considering CCG sees an average of 24,000 recognition moments a year and award nominations are steadily increasing year over year, CCG can expect these trends to continue.



These little things go a long way in empowering people to say, 'We're all in this together, and we're going to get through this; and no matter what it takes, we're going to support each other.'



DANA SOUBRA
VP, Claims Services and Insurance Distribution,
CAA Club Group



To learn how Workhuman Cloud® can help your organization build and sustain a culture of connection, reach out today.

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