

The Ultimate Buyer's Guide: How To Choose the Right Employee Rewards Platform in 2026

By Hoppier



Contents

Why This Guide?	3
In House vs. 3rd Party	4
Personalized Rewards	5
The Best Options	6
Comparison Chart	7
Conclusion	8

INTRODUCTION

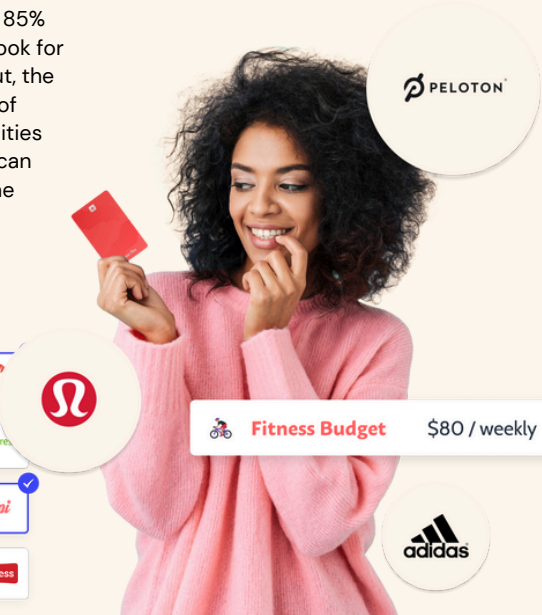
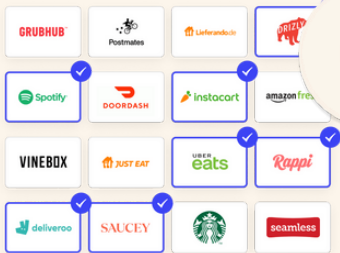
Why This Guide?

If you're evaluating employee rewards platforms, you're not alone. As burnout rises and retention gets harder, HR teams are prioritizing tools that actually improve morale, not just add admin work. This guide walks you through exactly what to look for when choosing a rewards platform—and how to avoid common pitfalls.

Employee engagement is the glue that keeps your business operations and competitive edge together. But in a dynamic business world, the quandary of maintaining loyal employees and attracting top talent takes center stage.

According to one study, a whopping 85% of U.S.-based professionals plan to look for a new job in the coming year. Burnout, the threat of AI replacement, and a lack of advancement and learning opportunities are at the crux of the issue. So, how can companies improve retention and the employee experience?

The answer may lie within employee rewards and recognition. By rewarding employees for their outstanding performance through prizes, social recognition, and hard work, you can build a workplace culture that entices employees to stay, boosts morale, and improves productivity and workflow. Use this guide to learn how to choose the best employee rewards platform, build your rewards system, and create a positive company culture based on merit and achievement.



START

In House vs. 3rd Party Platforms

Building In House

Building an in-house platform is problematic at best, especially without the right employees to create, maintain, and perfect the system. With even a small budget, third-party platforms offer robust options that can work harmoniously with current HRIS — giving you access to employee data, payroll, attendance, and other employee recognition metrics.

How To Choose the Best Employee Rewards Platform

Like many other operational and human resource information and management systems, you're spoiled for choice with rewards platforms. However, putting a premium on a platform with functionality and user-friendly layouts can make a drastic difference. By choosing the best platform for your company, you can streamline the process while fostering a culture of recognition and making informed decisions on the recognition process.

Our Recommendation

Learning how to choose the best employee rewards platform depends on many factors, but to avoid a convoluted, time-consuming process, we highly recommend a third-party employee recognition software. See page 6 for our favorites.

Personalized Employee Rewards

Why personalize?

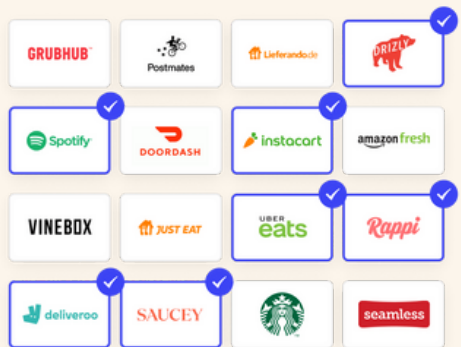
If you want to learn how to choose the best employee rewards platform, look no further than personalized rewards. A culture of appreciation revolves around the person — not as a worker — but as a recognized individual.

Though they have their place on certain occasions, the days of swag, generic gifting, or monetary rewards are far removed. Today's effective employee recognition platforms center around a multitude of acknowledgment and reward options.

To some degree, how you showcase your team members' achievements is every bit as important as the method of recognition. Social kudos, such as online shoutouts, earning badges, and gamification, make employee rewards feel far more personalized. Make sure your employee rewards platform improves your recognition efforts.



THE MORE OPTIONS THE BETTER!



SOME OF THE BEST OPTIONS

1. Hoppier

With the ability to send e-gift cards to recipients in 60 countries, select vendors, customize each card, and do it all with attractive pricing, Hoppier is the best employee rewards platform available today. The intuitive website and interface offer an easy way to scale your employee recognition program rewards without needing individual gift card purchases or cutting through red tape.

Hoppier doesn't require you to select specific vendors for your gift card, but you can choose to do so. If you're promoting a company-wide health initiative, selecting healthy food stores and wellness companies is an option. If you want your employees to buy from organizations that reflect your company's core values, that's also an option.

2. WorkTango

WorkTango is a platform that combines employee rewards and recognition systems with employee feedback and pulse surveys. The key to this platform is that it automates many aspects of recognition and feedback, giving you more time for other workday tasks.

3. Bonusly

Combining recognition, rewards, performance, and insights into a single platform, Bonusly is an all-encompassing solution for your platform needs. It uses a social media-type feed and a simple interface that motivates your teams and bolsters your peer recognition initiatives.

4. Awardco

If you're still on the fence on how to choose the best employee rewards platform, Awardco offers a strong option. Awardco is an adaptable recognition network with an in-house rewards platform to celebrate service awards and incentivize employees to build a solid work culture.

Through the platform, you can send shoutouts with company value-related hashtags that allow other employees to reply, schedule and automate milestones like birthdays or work anniversaries, and customize incentive programs.

5. Guusto

Guusto is one of the only employee rewards platforms that allows users to choose industry-specific metrics and interfaces for their company. Instead of a single platform, users can change the interface to suit companies in the healthcare, retail, manufacturing, financial services, and hospitality industries.



THE VERDICT

Comparison Table

Tool Name	Ease of Use & Setup	Customization & Brand Control	Global Gifting & Refunds	Price
Hoppier	✔ Instant, no-code launch	✔ Full branding + control	✔ 60+ countries, refunds	\$\$
WorkTango	⚠ Survey-heavy setup	✘ Minimal branding options	✘ Limited, no refunds	\$\$\$
Bonusly	✔ Easy, familiar UI	⚠ Points-based, low branding	⚠ Global, points expire	\$\$\$
Awardco	⚠ Admin setup required	✔ Custom incentives available	⚠ Global, mixed refunds	\$\$\$\$
Guusto	✔ Quick to launch	⚠ Basic branding, few filters	⚠ Some global, no refunds	\$\$

Time Management

Exploring new tools and platforms is important, but it can quickly become a time sink if not managed intentionally. Set clear boundaries around how much time you dedicate to researching vendors or testing new solutions. Block focused time for evaluation and avoid letting it pull you away from higher-leverage priorities like team leadership, growth strategy, or customer acquisition. Staying informed is valuable as long as it supports your core responsibilities as a business leader, not distracts from them.

CONCLUSION

Build a Culture That Lasts

Choosing the right employee rewards platform isn't about finding a perfect fit. It's about creating the right foundation for your culture, your people, and your goals.

The tools you invest in should help you celebrate wins, boost morale, show meaningful appreciation, and retain top talent in a way that feels authentic and effortless. Whether your team is remote, hybrid, or in-office, the impact is the same recognition that actually matters.

As you move forward, keep the focus where it belongs: on your people. When employees feel valued, supported, and seen, everything else becomes easier.

Hoppier is here to help you make that happen.

- **HOPPIER**