



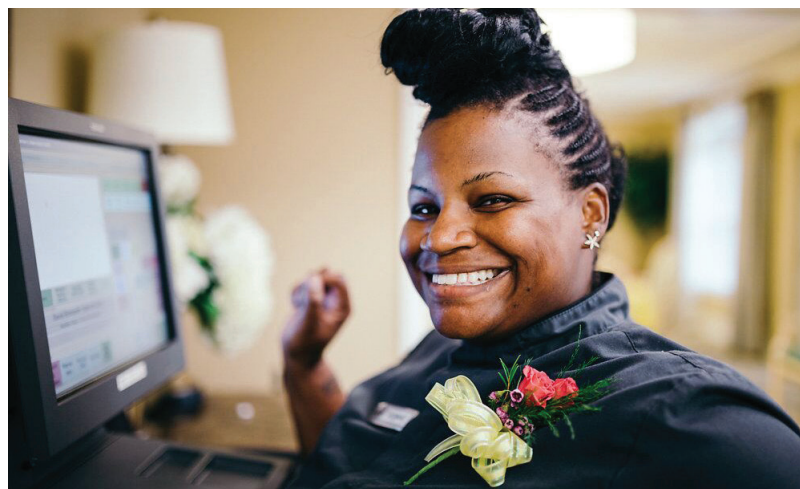
CREATIVE RECOGNITION PROGRAM IMPROVES COMMUNITY CULTURE

A diverse hospitality workforce is brought together by a program that encourages recognition and relationships, driving better engagement, retention and satisfaction.

Great service and hospitality doesn't happen by accident, it happens by design. The Hospitality Experience is designed to create a culture of people demonstrating and recognizing behaviors.

Taking Teamwork to New Levels

Cantata is a nonprofit senior living community helping individuals to live their best lives as they age. Based in Illinois, their successful campus services include independent living, assisted living and enhanced, long-term care. When Stephen Manno came on board as Morrison Living's on-site General Manager of Hospitality in 2017, he noticed a disconcerting trend. Cantata's nutritional, environmental, housekeeping and nursing teams all depended on each other, yet interactions between these groups were siloed, with limited intergenerational and inter-group communication. The result was a staff whose members were serious about their jobs but lacked the higher levels of inclusiveness and open communication found in the most successful healthcare and hospitality organizations.





Manno and Cantata's leadership agreed that there was an opportunity for improvement and Manno leveraged Morrison's Hospitality Experience program to make it happen. The process began at Showtime, Morrison's short, all-hands meeting held at every client location before breakfast, lunch and dinner. In addition to providing information necessary for meal service, Showtime also offered team members an opportunity to recognize each other for jobs-well-done. The experience was so heartening and successful that it opened the door to a more formal, expanded program.

An early component of the program was the establishment of a core mode of behavior, which could be summed up as, "We're happy to be here." This included being sure to speak kindly to one another, always remembering to say "please" and "thank you." It also included a recommendation to respond to thanks with "my pleasure" or "happy to do it," which reinforces ownership of a helpful act, instead of "you're welcome." Even the simple act of smiling at each other helps to set the stage for developing better relationships,

common ground and mutual respect. From there, Manno instituted Morrison's formal peer-to-peer recognition program in which he began by telling team members, "Managers can't be at all points of service to witness all of the extraordinary things this team does. We need your help to bring those moments of excellence to light." He then set up a computer to make it convenient for his associates to write recognitions for each other at the start or end of a shift.

Morrison Director of Field Learning, Tom Rummel, noted that language barriers needed to be overcome in order to encourage better interactions and communication. Even though all team members spoke English, many felt more comfortable speaking their first language (most commonly Spanish and Polish). Since the formal recognition was input into a computer, team members were encouraged to write comments in their preferred language; Manno then translated comments into English. Even with the imperfections of online translation tools, the specific information and feelings within everyone's comments were clear.





Manno also launched a weekly “Celebration Tuesday,” an informal gathering during which Nutritional Services and Dining members are encouraged to get to know each other better. Once a month, Celebration Tuesday expands to include catered food and team members from all Cantata departments. Everyone had the opportunity to share personal anecdotes and enjoyed spending time together.

The program has been so successful that some of its components were rolled out beyond Morrison team members to the entire Cantata campus. Mary Allen, Cantata’s Director of Nursing during the start of the program, recalled, “Morrison

helped us build community among our nursing staff and made us feel like we were a part of something special.”

Allen also mentioned that the program enabled people to come together in a fun way – such as the event in which the nurses were invited to cook together. She said that the program gave her additional tools to help her manage, build and encourage relationships within the nursing staff. “Before the recognition program took hold here, we functioned as separate, distinct teams. But Stephen’s work helped me see how I could implement greater engagement and respect within my nursing team as well.”



“Peer-to-peer recognition is essential. Managers can’t be at all points of service to witness all of the extraordinary things that individual team members do.”
Stephen Manno, General Manager of Hospitality

Increased Participation,
Engagement, Retention and
Client Satisfaction

The results of the program were remarkable. In the first year of the program, 36 percent of team members wrote 101 recognitions praising the work of 55 percent of the staff. By the end of the second year, written recognitions had nearly tripled, with 80 percent of the team writing recognitions for 87 percent of the staff. The recognitions proved to have far reaching impacts to the organization, including:

- A significant employee engagement increase from 76 percent in 2017 to 99 percent in 2018 (significantly higher than the hospitality industry average of 69 percent!)
- A decrease in voluntary staff turnover by more than 20 percent
- A spike in Cantata's client satisfaction rating from 81 (good) to 100 (outstanding)

“This program enables employees to feel heard, know that their opinions have value, and that they have a voice in making things

better,” Allen explained. “The impact of this program on the entire organization cannot be overstated. Recognition led to understanding and communication, which led to greater respect and empathy – starting first with the dining services team but extending to all the teams that support our residents.”

Manno credited the high level of success to a highly engaged leadership team and a campus-wide commitment to accountability. Behavioral standards and peer recognition were modeled after the example of lead associates and were reviewed often and consistently with staff members. In addition, leadership presented the program to team members in an inclusive way by making them central to its creation and success.

“In any diverse community, driving a consistent, positive culture is essential. If everyone stays in their silos, we cannot be truly successful. But working together with our client, as we have at Cantata, makes all the difference,” Rummel affirmed.

¹<https://academy.cultureamp.com/hc/en-us/articles/360000264529>



Cantata Adult Life Services

- Nonprofit
- Located in Brookfield, IL
- Established in 1920
- Independent Living, Assisted Living, Long-Term Care

Key Takeaways

- Engage leaders early and often
- Leverage technology to enable peer-to-peer recognition
- Dedicate time for teams to gather, celebrate and share



About Morrison Living

We are a hospitality company grounded in the power of community. This is reflected through our culinary, environmental services and nutrition and wellness offerings – all of which enrich the lives of seniors every day.

We have the resources to do the right things right. And, we have the passion to create memorable moments through food crafted with care in atmospheres that welcome, connect and excite.

