

How a global pharma manufacturer fixed recognition that **skipped the factory floor**

Plant associates went unseen for years. Here's how recognition now reaches 99% of a 5,500-person workforce.

INDUSTRY Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Solutions

A \$1.2 billion global leader in end-to-end pharmaceutical manufacturing solutions, founded in 1961 and headquartered in Mumbai, employs over 5,500 people across 25+ countries, with a presence in 138 countries spanning six continents. Its portfolio covers hard-shell capsules, advanced barrier packaging, track and trace systems, and specialized process and inspection equipment. Despite its scale, recognition remained manual, inconsistent, and invisible, particularly for plant-floor associates who rarely received timely appreciation. With Vantage Circle, the company built one platform for every level and location, a transformation later recognized in the Brandon Hall Group Excellence Awards for Best Advance in Rewards and Recognition Technology, alongside three consecutive Great Place To Work certifications.

19 min

between recognitions:
one employee
recognized every 19
minutes (FY2024-25)

99%

platform coverage:
nearly every employee
recognized

54%

jump in employee
engagement through
the program (FY2024-
25)

7-8%

attrition held, well
below the industry
average



The Challenge

Recognition existed, but it failed to reach people on time. Manual processes, lengthy approval chains, and scattered offline practices meant appreciation often arrived too late or too inconsistently to have real impact. In many cases, it depended on individual managers rather than being part of a structured culture.

The gap was widest for plant associates, whose contributions often went unnoticed for lack of a unified platform. There were no reminders to prompt managers, no clear link between recognition and strategic goals, and no system to ensure that a plant worker in India felt as valued as a manager in Switzerland.

No structured system

Recognition was manual, inconsistent, and dependent on individual managers remembering to act, with no nudges, no tracking, and no accountability.

Recognition delays

Offline nomination forms and approval chains meant appreciation arrived weeks after the moment had passed, losing its impact entirely.

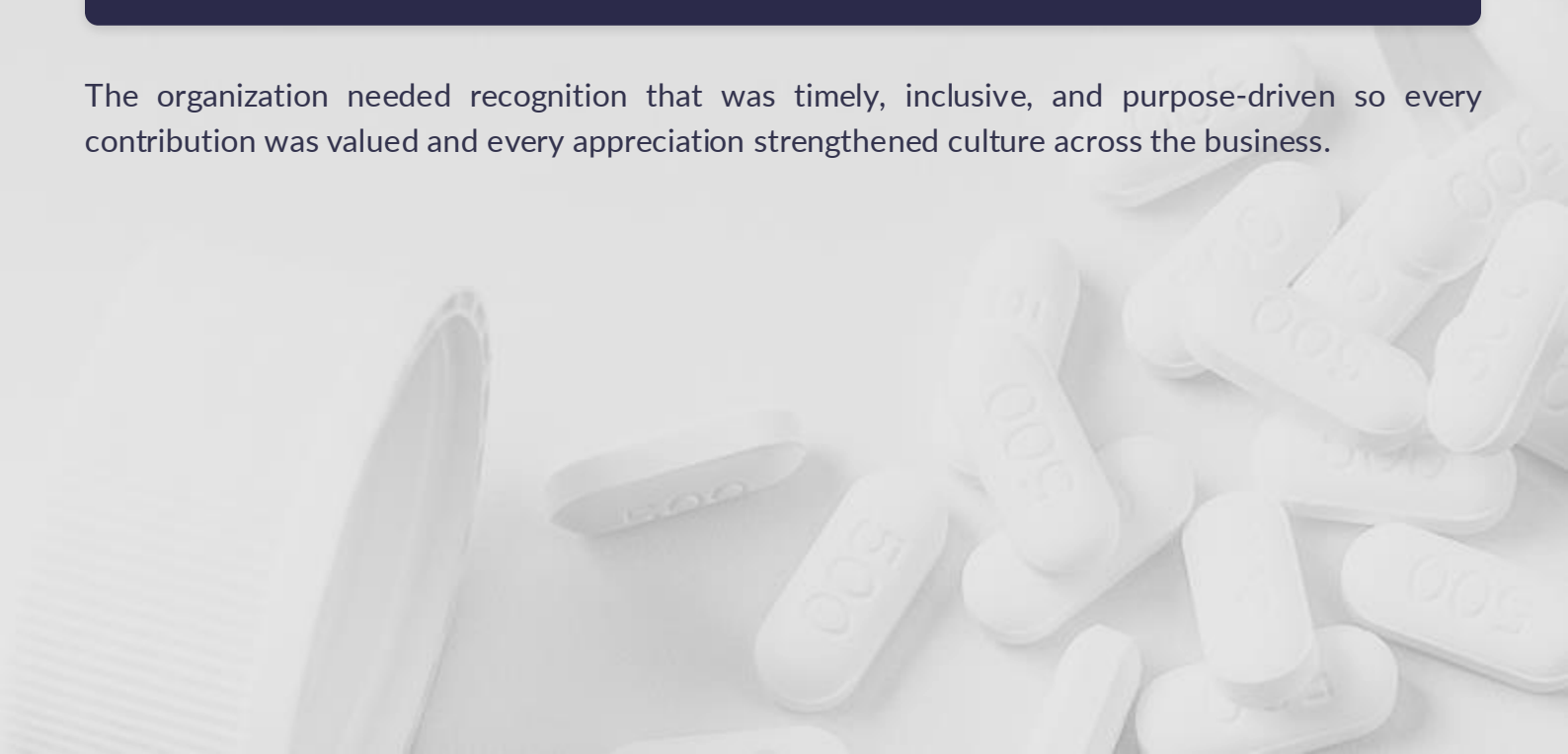
Plant associates left out

Blue-collar workers with limited email or smartphone access were routinely excluded from recognition programs designed only for desk-based employees.

No strategic alignment

Recognition was not tied to the company's scorecards, strategic goals, or core values, making it generic rather than culturally or commercially reinforcing.

The organization needed recognition that was timely, inclusive, and purpose-driven so every contribution was valued and every appreciation strengthened culture across the business.



The Transformation

The company partnered with Vantage Circle to build a white-labeled digital recognition platform designed around its identity, values, and people. The goal wasn't simply to deploy software; it was to make appreciation a natural part of how work feels every day for every associate, regardless of role, location, or level. The program was structured around Vantage Circle's AIR^e Framework, built on Appreciation, Incentivization, Reinforcement, and eMotional Connect, so every design decision aligned with real business outcomes.

1. Strategy-linked recognition

Every award is directly linked to the company's strategic priorities and core values, ensuring recognition reinforces both the culture and the business performance behind it.

2. Instant spot awards

Managers grant point-based awards to any associate, anywhere, instantly, without multiple approval chains or delays. Recognition is delivered the moment it is earned.

3. Inclusive for plant associates

Blue-collar workers with limited device access receive recognition through Amazon Pay, with easy redemption built in. Shop-floor employees feel the same appreciation as their corporate peers, which is where most recognition programs quietly fail.

4. AI-powered nudging

Automated reminders prompt managers at the right moment so recognition never falls through the cracks. Timely acknowledgment becomes a system-driven habit, not an individual's memory.

5. One annual awards stage for everyone

Annual awards became the centrepiece of leadership-led recognition: nomination-based categories evaluated across business units, business verticals, and group level, with the entire process digitized on the platform. For the first time, plant associates and management employees competed for the same awards, judged on the same criteria, and celebrated on the same stage.

6. HRMS-automated backbone

The platform integrated with Zing HR, the company's HR management system, automating data sync, eligibility, and lifecycle updates across all business units. Reward values were calibrated to local contexts, so fairness was built in, not bolted on.

7. Visibility and accountability at scale

HR leaders gained real-time dashboards, participation heatmaps, and self-service reporting. Managers could see whom they had recognized and, just as importantly, whom they hadn't. Recognition stopped being a vague sentiment and became a measurable, trackable element of engagement and culture.

Results & Impact

What started as a platform rollout became something harder to measure and more valuable: a culture shift. Recognition is no longer an occasional event. It is part of the culture.

Employee engagement through the program jumped **54%** in FY2024-25, with **4,700+ associates receiving at least one recognition** and **13,000+ peer badges awarded**, a **47% year-on-year increase**. The platform processed **31,000+ reward transactions** across monetary and non-monetary awards, and registered users grew 10.3% year over year (7,325 to 8,083). Attrition held at **7-8%, well below the industry average**, with reduced turnover cutting hiring and onboarding costs significantly. Three consecutive Great Place To Work certifications confirm the culture that was built.

An associate is recognized **every 19 minutes**, with **99% platform coverage** nearly every employee recognized.

Every quarter, the platform surfaces recognition trends, cross-functional appreciation data, and inter-business insights. In Q1 FY24-25 alone, 185 inter-business recognition cards were exchanged across functions, a signal of the collaborative culture the program was designed to build. Leaders, for the first time, have real-time visibility into recognition ROI across 25+ countries on a single platform. The program's design and results were recognized in the Brandon Hall Group Excellence Awards for Best Advance in Rewards and Recognition Technology (2025).

Success Highlights

- **Recognition as a rhythm:** An associate is recognized every 19 minutes, with 99% platform coverage across the workforce.
- **Engagement that moved:** A 54% jump in employee engagement through the program in FY2024-25, with registered users up 10.3% year over year.
- **Peer recognition at scale:** 13,000+ peer badges awarded in FY2024-25, a 47% year-on-year increase, plus 31,000+ total reward transactions.
- **Retention that pays for itself:** Attrition held at 7-8%, well below the industry average, cutting hiring and onboarding costs significantly.
- **Frontline inclusion, finally:** Plant associates receive and redeem recognition through Amazon Pay, and compete for the same annual awards as management, on the same stage.



The platform behind results like these.

Vantage Circle is a global employee recognition and rewards platform, grounded in behavioral science, backed by a dedicated program advisory team, and connected to a rewards catalog spanning 70+ countries. Recognition happens in the flow of work, right inside Microsoft Teams and Slack. More than 700 companies and 3.2 million employees use it to make recognition consistent, meaningful, and measurable. Pair it with Vantage Pulse, Vantage Fit, and Vantage Perks when you're ready to extend into listening, well-being, and benefits.

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