



SELECT-YOUR-GIFT™
EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION

**Step-by-Step
Guide**



Complete Guide to Employee Service Awards



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About the Author: Greg Kern



Greg Kern is a founding partner of Select-Your-Gift and has spent more than 26 years helping organizations build meaningful employee recognition programs.

Over the course of his career, Greg has partnered with thousands of companies, from growing small businesses to large enterprises. Helping them design, launch, and refine Service Award programs that employees remember and managers can run with ease.

In this guide, Greg shares proven best practices for recognizing employee service - covering program structure, milestone categories, award selection, budgeting, presentation strategies, and the latest trends shaping service recognition today. Whether you're building a new program from scratch or refreshing an existing one, you'll find practical, actionable guidance on every page.

The strategies in this guide come directly from what works. Tested across thousands of real programs at organizations of every size. Use them to create a Service Recognition Program that motivates your team, deepens their loyalty, and reflects the values your company stands for.

You can contact Greg at:

gkern@Select-Your-Gift.com



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Guide to Employee Service Awards - Introduction

Your employees remember exactly how long they've been with your company. The question is: does your company remember too?

A well-designed Service Recognition Program is one of the most powerful and cost-effective tools available for building employee loyalty, reducing turnover, and creating a workplace culture people are proud to be part of. This guide gives you everything you need to build one.



What You'll Find in This Guide

This guide draws on insights from thousands of Service Award programs implemented across organizations of every size and industry. It's built around what actually works — not theory, but tested best practices from HR professionals and recognition specialists in the field.

Whether you're launching your first employee recognition program or upgrading one that's overdue for a refresh, you'll find clear, practical guidance here. From defining milestones and setting budgets to choosing the right awards and presenting them in a way employees will never forget.

Purpose of Service Recognition Programs and Awards

At its core, a Service Recognition Program exists to do one thing: show employees that their loyalty and contributions matter. Done well, it strengthens the bond between your organization and your people, signaling that years of dedicated work don't go unnoticed. This guide helps you build a program that delivers that message clearly, consistently, and memorably.

Benefits of Service Recognition

Service Recognition doesn't exist in isolation - it's part of a broader culture of employee recognition that reinforces positive behavior at every stage of an employee's career. When employees feel consistently acknowledged and valued, the results are measurable: stronger engagement, higher productivity, and significantly improved retention.

Creating a Culture of Recognition

Recognition isn't a perk, it's a strategy. Organizations that build recognition into the fabric of their culture see real differences in how employees show up, how long they stay, and how strongly they identify with the company's mission. Your Service Award Program is one of the most visible expressions of that culture. This guide gives you the tools to make it count.

Key Sections in the Guide

- **Defining Service Recognition and Its Benefits:**
Understand the importance and impact of recognizing employee service milestones.
- **Brief History of Service Recognition:**
Learn how service recognition has evolved over time.
- **How to Get Your Program Started:**
Step-by-step instructions to launch a new program or update an existing Service Recognition program.
- **Latest Trends in Service Recognition:**
Stay updated with the current trends to keep your program relevant and engaging.
- **Categories of Service Recognition:**
Explore different types of service awards to include in your program.
- **Budgeting for Service Recognition:**
Practical tips for defining and managing your service recognition award budget.
- **Formal Recognition Ideas:**
Creative ideas for making your service award ceremonies memorable and impactful.

Apply the best practices in this guide and you'll build a Service Recognition Program that does more than acknowledge years on the calendar. It celebrates the people behind those years, deepens their commitment to your organization, and sets a standard that inspires everyone around them.

Start building your culture of recognition today.

Understanding Employee Service Awards

Employee Service Awards recognize employees who have reached significant career milestones — commonly referred to as service anniversaries. Each award typically includes a meaningful gift paired with a personalized letter or certificate that expresses genuine appreciation for the employee's loyalty and years of contribution.

You may know them as milestone awards, service anniversary awards, years-of-service awards, tenure awards, retirement awards, or **Service Recognition Awards**. Whatever the name, these awards are a cornerstone of any meaningful culture of recognition within your organization.

The Importance of Employee Service Recognition Programs



A Service Award Program is one of the most foundational, and most underutilized, components of a comprehensive employee engagement strategy.

When organizations acknowledge service milestones with intention - not just with a card in the mail, but a genuine, personalized recognition moment, they send a clear message: your time here matters, your contributions are seen, and we're glad you're part of this team.

The most effective organizations connect their recognition programs directly to their core values, making every service award not just a gift, but a visible expression of what the company stands for.

Linking Employee Recognition to Your Organizational Values

When your employee recognition programs consistently reflect your organization's core values, recognition becomes more than a moment - it becomes a cultural signal. Employees see that the company doesn't just talk about its values; it acts on them. That alignment deepens engagement, strengthens loyalty, and reinforces exactly the behaviors you want to see more of.

Every recognition touchpoint is an opportunity to reinforce your organization's identity and demonstrate that employees' contributions are valued, seen, and connected to something larger.

Maximizing the Impact of Service Recognition

A service milestone is one of the most natural opportunities you have to recognize an employee publicly and meaningfully. For the greatest impact, have the employee's direct manager personally lead the presentation of the **Gift-of-Choice Awards Catalog Package**.

A few specific, personal words from a manager - about the employee's actual contributions, their impact on the team, and what their service means to the organization - can make a recognition moment far more powerful than any gift alone.

Today's workforce is distributed — and your recognition program needs to work just as well for remote and hybrid employees as for those in the office. When in-person ceremonies aren't possible, mail a personalized Service Award catalog packet directly to the employee's home, or deliver recognition virtually through a thoughtfully written email with a digital gift of choice award.

Either approach can create a genuinely celebratory experience. What matters most is that the recognition feels personal, timely, and specific to that employee - wherever they work.

Early-Service and Retirement Recognition

As you design or refresh your Service Recognition Program, think beyond the traditional 5-year starting point. Consider incorporating early-service milestones, including 1-year and 3-year anniversaries and onboarding completion - as well as enhanced recognition for retirement. These bookends of an employee's career are among the most powerful recognition opportunities you have.

Award values should scale with each milestone, reinforcing the significance of each anniversary. Select-Your-Gift's tier-level **employee gift catalog packages** make it simple to control your budget while ensuring every milestone receives an appropriately meaningful award.

Benefits of Service Milestone Recognition

Ask almost any employee how long they've been with your company - most can tell you to the month. Recognizing those anniversaries - formally, thoughtfully, and consistently - improves morale, engagement, productivity, loyalty, and retention.

A structured service milestone recognition program is one of the most impactful investments you can make in your people and your culture. Research consistently shows that organizations with formal recognition programs outperform those without, in retention, productivity, and employee satisfaction. The programs detailed in this guide help you build that foundation.

Benefits Include:

- **Enhanced Employee Engagement:** Employees who feel genuinely valued are more engaged, more productive, and more motivated to go above and beyond. Service milestone recognition is one of the most consistent drivers of that engagement.
- **Improved Retention Rates:** Companies with structured service recognition programs see significantly lower voluntary turnover rates than those without. Retaining experienced employees saves the organization real money - in recruiting, onboarding, and institutional knowledge.
- **Boosted Morale and Team Spirit:** Service awards create shared moments of pride. When an employee is recognized in front of their peers, it reinforces a culture of appreciation - and reminds the entire team that dedication and loyalty are noticed and celebrated here.
- **Strengthened Employer-Employee Relationship:** When managers personally present service awards and speak to an employee's specific contributions, it deepens the relationship between leadership and staff. That personal connection is one of the most powerful retention tools available.
- **Positive Impact on Company Culture:** A recognition program that runs consistently and fairly becomes part of your company's identity - a visible expression of the values you talk about. It builds a workplace where trust, pride, and long-term commitment naturally flourish.

History of Recognizing Employee Service

Understanding where Service Recognition came from helps explain why it works and why it continues to evolve. The history is both older and more universal than most people realize.

The Industrial Revolution: The Birth of Employee Recognition

The Industrial Revolution fundamentally changed the relationship between employers and workers. With factories replacing farms and craftsmen's shops, new challenges emerged: how do you retain skilled workers, motivate a large workforce, and build loyalty in an era of rapid change?

Forward-thinking employers began experimenting beyond wages - and researchers confirmed what many instinctively understood: positive acknowledgment and tangible rewards had a profound effect on behavior, productivity, and loyalty. The formalization of employee recognition programs followed naturally.

Early Stage of Service Milestones: Limited But Impactful

Early recognition programs were narrow by today's standards - reserved for only the longest-tenured employees. Acknowledging 25 years of service or retirement was the norm. While limited in scope, this approach reflected an early but genuine understanding of recognition's motivational power. Over time, organizations learned that waiting 25 years to say "thank you" was far too long, and today's programs reflect that evolution dramatically.

Historical Examples of the use of Recognition



The impulse to recognize service stretches back more than 2,600 years - to Cyrus the Great, who motivated workers through personal acknowledgments: a hand on the shoulder, a refreshing drink, a coin bearing his likeness. These gestures seem simple by modern standards, yet they demonstrate something timeless: people perform better, stay longer, and remain more loyal when their efforts are personally acknowledged.

That instinct, that a person's effort deserves to be personally acknowledged, is as relevant in today's workplace as it was in ancient Persia.

Celebrating Service - Benefits the employee and the company!



In the Industrial Revolution era, recognizing an employee's 25-year milestone was significant for both the worker and the company. It signaled not just personal achievement, but organizational stability. Proof that this was a place where careers were built, not just jobs held.

That reputation had real recruiting value. In manufacturing sectors especially, training new workers was expensive. Retaining experienced employees was a genuine competitive advantage, and recognition programs were part of the strategy that made retention possible.

Service and retirement awards were among the earliest tools companies used to communicate long-term commitment to their workforce and to earn that commitment in return.

Modern Recognition: More Frequent and Diverse

Today's recognition landscape looks very different from its Industrial Revolution origins. Milestones are now celebrated as early as the first year, sometimes at onboarding completion. This reflects a workforce that has changed: people move between roles more frequently, and organizations that wait five or ten years to say "thank you" often find those employees are already gone. Recognizing people at every meaningful stage of their career, from onboarding to retirement, is now both best practice and business imperative.

Conclusion: The Lasting Impact of Service Recognition

The arc of Service Recognition history reveals something consistent: the methods change, the medium evolves, and the milestones shift, but the core truth never does. People who feel genuinely recognized for their service give more, stay longer, and care more deeply about the organization they're part of.

That principle is as true today as it was in Cyrus's time - and it's the foundation of every recommendation in this guide.

Service Recognition is a Powerful Tool

Service Recognition is more than a nice gesture. It's a strategic tool for driving retention, engagement, and morale. When employees feel genuinely recognized, not just compensated, they develop a deeper sense of belonging, perform at a higher level, and stay longer.

The Business Case for Employee Service Recognition: A thoughtfully designed employee recognition program creates a ripple effect across your entire organization, reinforcing team spirit, building trust in leadership, and creating a workplace where people genuinely want to contribute. The return on investment is real, measurable, and lasting.

Impact on Employee Retention

The data is clear. According to SHRM (Society for Human Resource Management), companies with structured service recognition programs see up to 31% lower voluntary turnover compared to those without. That's not a marginal difference, it represents a significant reduction in recruiting costs, onboarding time, and institutional knowledge loss.

Enhancing Employee Morale and Engagement

Service Award Programs give management a structured, meaningful opportunity to recognize not just tenure, but the experience, institutional knowledge, and lasting contributions that come with it. Formal presentations, especially when conducted in front of peers, amplify the recognition significantly. Public acknowledgment satisfies a deep human need for belonging and validation, and it sets a visible standard for the entire team.

The Fundamental Need for Recognition

People need to feel seen. The desire for acknowledgment is fundamental. It shows up at every stage of life, from childhood through professional careers. In the workplace, feeling genuinely valued often matters more to employees than many other aspects of their compensation or benefits package.

A Randstad study found that more than 75% of employees identify feeling appreciated as one of the most important factors in their job satisfaction. Recognition isn't a luxury add-on, it's a fundamental driver of the employee experience, and service milestone recognition is one of the most powerful forms it can take.

Evolving Trends in Service Awards and Service Recognition



Service Recognition Programs have become one of the most widely adopted and impactful forms of employee recognition in use today.

But the programs that work best today look very different from those of even a decade ago. Understanding the key trends shaping modern Service Recognition helps you build a program that resonates with today's workforce.

Trend Change: Type of Awards Given

The most significant shift in Service Recognition over the past 30 years has been in the type of award given. The gold watch and the plaque have given way to something far more valued: choice. Rather than receiving a pre-selected item that may or may not reflect their interests, today's employees receive an employee gift catalog and select the award that's personally meaningful to them.

The gift-of-choice model is now the gold standard for employee recognition awards, and for good reason: employees receive something they actually want, from a selection the company provides. The result is higher satisfaction, stronger trophy value, and lasting memories tied to the recognition moment.

Trend Change: Service Award Frequency

For most of the 20th century, formal recognition didn't begin until an employee reached 25 years of service, or retired. Today's standard starts at five years, with growing momentum to recognize even earlier.

Today, it is standard practice to recognize employee milestones starting at the 5th service anniversary and at every five-year increment thereafter, with enhanced recognition at retirement.

Trend Change: Adding Earlier Service Recognition

The five-year milestone worked well as a starting point for decades, until workforce demographics shifted. Millennials (born 1981–1996) average fewer than five years at any one employer, according to the US Department of Labor. With recognition traditionally beginning at year five, entire segments of the workforce were passing through organizations without ever being formally acknowledged.

The response has been a meaningful expansion of recognition, adding formal milestones at 1, 2, and 3 years, and sometimes at onboarding completion. This shift isn't just about Millennials. It reflects a broader truth about employee engagement. SHRM data shows that 28% of companies now formally celebrate first-year anniversaries. Starting recognition early helps reduce early-tenure turnover, builds a sense of belonging from day one, and establishes a pattern of appreciation that employees carry throughout their careers at your organization.

Recognizing employees early signals something important: you noticed they showed up. You noticed they stayed. And you're glad they did.

Why Trend Changes in Service Recognition Matter



The companies that adapt their recognition programs to reflect these trends will find themselves better positioned to attract, engage, and retain the talent they need. Those that don't will keep losing good people, often without ever knowing recognition was a factor.

These evolving practices ensure that all employees, regardless of tenure, feel valued and appreciated.

As the workforce of today continues to change, so too must the strategies for employee recognition.

Service Milestones to Include in Your Program

Incorporate the following types of Service Milestones to create a comprehensive and engaging recognition program



1. Early Service Recognition:

- **Onboarding Recognition:** Acknowledges the successful completion of a new hire's onboarding process. This initial recognition helps to foster a sense of belonging and commitment from the start.
- **1, 2, and 3-Year Anniversaries:** Celebrate these early milestones of your newer employees. These corporate service awards help reinforce a culture of appreciation and motivate employees to continue their journey with your company.

2. Standard Service Milestone Awards:

- **5-Year Intervals:** Traditionally, service recognition starts at the 5-year mark and continues in 5-year increments. These corporate employee service awards celebrate ongoing loyalty and contributions.

3. Quarter Century Recognition:

- **25-Year Milestone:** Honor employees who reach the significant 25-year milestone with a special event and a unique corporate service award gift. This quarter-century recognition showcases deep appreciation for long-term dedication and commitment.

4. Retirement Recognition:

- **Celebrating Retirement:** Retirement marks a major transition for both the employee and the company. Make this moment memorable with significant retirement awards and events that celebrate the employee's career and contributions.

Embracing Earlier Service Recognition



What is Earlier Service Recognition

In today's dynamic workforce, recognizing earlier service milestones has become increasingly important. Early Service Recognition acknowledges milestones occurring before their five-year anniversary, catering to the evolving demographics and expectations of employees.



The Shift Toward Earlier Recognition

Demographic shifts and evolving job tenure patterns indicate a trend where few expect to stay in a single role for more than three years. Due to this trend, early service recognition is not just a nice-to-have but a strategic necessity and is now a critical component of a comprehensive Employee Service Award Program.

Should Your Organization Recognize Earlier Milestones?

Determine whether you should include earlier milestone recognition in your program by gathering and analyzing data on employee tenure at your company. By calculating the average tenure, you can identify the critical milestones that should be celebrated to maximize employee retention and satisfaction. Recognizing these early milestones not only demonstrates your commitment to valuing employees' contributions from the start but also helps to create a positive and motivating workplace culture.

Recognition When Onboarding New Hires



Celebrating the completion of the onboarding process with a reward lets employees know they are valued right from the start. Even low-cost awards can make a significant impact, demonstrating appreciation and reinforcing their value to the company.

Traditional 5-Year Milestone Recognition



Recognizing 5-Year Service Milestones has long been a cornerstone of service award programs. These “standard” or “traditional” milestones start at the fifth year of service and continue in 5-year increments thereafter.

This form of recognition has been fundamental in acknowledging the long-term dedication and contributions of employees.

Service Awards for 25 Years / Quarter Century

Recognizing 25 years of service is a significant milestone in a person’s career and deserves special attention. Companies often celebrate this important milestone with unique events and awards to honor the dedication and loyalty of long-term employees.



Making 25-Year Recognition Special

To ensure this milestone is memorable, integrate a special event into your service recognition program. This could include a luncheon with senior management, a framed "Quarter Century of Service" certificate presented in a formal box, and a higher-value award.

The recognition award for 25 years of service may have the same incrementally increased value as with regular service milestone awards, or you may choose to give a higher value. Most important is to include **additional** recognition and celebration!

Consider these Exclusive 25-Year Recognition Ideas:

- **Quarter Century Club:** Establish a club for employees who reach this milestone, offering exclusive membership and benefits.
- **Special Events:** Invite Quarter Century employees to an annual event with senior management or provide periodic special mailings to acknowledge their commitment.
- **Enhanced Awards:** Consider increasing the value of the award for this milestone to show extra appreciation.

Retirement Recognition Gifts

Retirement is a significant milestone in an employee's career, marking the culmination of years of dedication and service. Recognizing this achievement with meaningful gifts and celebrations not only honors the retiree but also reinforces the values of loyalty and commitment within your organization.



Make Employee Retirement Recognition memorable:

- **Celebrate and Reflect:** Host a retirement event where colleagues can honor the retiree's achievements and significant contributions. Take the opportunity to reflect on their relationships and the impact they made within your organization.
- **Express Appreciation:** Show your sincere gratitude with a special Thank You gift of their choice. This thoughtful gesture conveys respect and appreciation for the retiree's years of dedicated service. Your gift will serve as a lasting reminder of their career.
- **Retirement Celebration Luncheon:** If feasible, organize a luncheon in the retiree's honor, attended by peers and senior management. This celebration not only honors the retiree but also demonstrates the value placed on employee contributions and dedicated service.

Enhancing Retirement Recognition Awards

Select-Your-Gift offers Enhanced Service Award Presentations, with **Gift-of-Choice Award Packets**. We make it easy to create the perfect retirement recognition award package, regardless of your budget.



What to Spend for Employee Service Awards

Before determining the amount to spend on each of your milestones, you should decide which of the following milestones you will include:

- **On-Boarding New Hires**
- **Earlier Service Recognition** (before 5 years, typically 1, 2 and 3 years)
- **Standard Service Milestones** (starting at 5 years)
- **Quarter Century Recognition** (with a special event and gift at 25 Years)
- **Retirement Recognition** (special recognition for this major milestone)

Amount to Spend for Each Service Milestone

The amount to spend for each milestone will be based on which tier-level Gift-of-Choice Award Package you assign to each of your included milestones.

For this step, obtain the price list for all tier-levels. ([click here for the Order-form PDF](#)) Use this price list for the following:



- Assign one of the tier-level award packages to each of your included service milestones, beginning at On-Boarding, 1-3 Years, and on through retirement.
- The typical company spend in 2024, ranges from \$25-35 per year of service. This means a 5-year award would typically range from \$120 to \$180, based on our tier-package levels. Make the amount you spend for each service anniversary award as consistent and fair as possible, while being appropriate for your demographics and budget.
- Your award assignments may result in a slightly higher or lower cost per year of service than your ideal amount per year. Calculated: Award-Level-Cost divided by the Milestone-year; for example: \$120 level for a 5-year award = \$24 per year.
- **Earlier Milestones:** For On-Boarding, 1, 2 and 3-years, use lower cost tier levels.
- **For 25-Years and Retirement, consider the cost of any Special Recognition:** In addition to the tier-level award packages assigned to these milestones, consider any special events to help celebrate this important stage in the employee's career.

Strategy for Recently Missed Service Milestones

The Importance of Addressing Missed Service Milestones

Introducing a new Service Awards Program in your organization comes with unique challenges, particularly in how you handle service anniversaries that have been missed before the program's initiation.

Recognizing recently missed milestones is crucial for maintaining fairness and boosting employee morale. Failing to acknowledge these milestones can lead to feelings of undervaluation among employees, undermining the effectiveness of your new program.

All service anniversaries represent significant career achievements for employees. Ignoring these recently missed milestones can negatively affect employee engagement and loyalty. Having a strategy that recognizes these milestones ensures all employees feel appreciated and valued, which is essential for maintaining a positive and motivated workforce.

Proposed Solution for Catch-Up Service Awards

To maintain fairness and positivity as you launch your new program, consider implementing a catch-up policy for recently missed service milestones:

- **Catch-Up Awards:** Identify employees who have passed a significant service milestone shortly before the program's start and provide them with a catch-up award. This gesture shows that the organization values their long-standing service, regardless of timing.
- **Exclusion Policy:** To manage expectations and budget, exclude any employees who are due to reach a new milestone within the first year of the program. This helps maintain focus while still honoring recent achievements.
- **Presentation Matters:** Organize a special ceremony where these catch-up awards are presented alongside regular awards. Having management personally acknowledge these milestones reinforces their importance and integrates them into the overall culture of recognition.
- **Budget Considerations:** Be mindful of the additional one-time expenses for these catch-up awards. Incorporate these costs into your first-year budget for the Service Award Program to avoid financial surprises.

Budgeting Employee Service Award Programs

An Effective Budget for Your new Service Program is Essential



One of the crucial initial steps in defining your new Employee Service Recognition Program is estimating the budget requirements for both the first and second years. A well-planned budget not only helps in outlining the scope of your program but also plays a pivotal role in gaining management approval.

Before setting your budget, first determine which service milestones, or service anniversaries your program will include and the tier-level of the recognition packages for each anniversary. (Refer to the previous section for guidance on defining **Service Milestone Categories**.)

First-Year Service Recognition Budget Calculation

Step 1: Identify Milestone Categories

Start by listing all the service milestone categories you plan to include, as defined above.

Step 2: Assign Award Levels

List the assigned tier-level award packages for each milestone.

Step 3: Determine if you will be including any Catchup Recognition

See the preceding section for details.

Step 4: Calculate First-Year Costs

With data from Human Resources, calculate the first-year's budget by multiplying the number of employees reaching each of your milestones during your first year, by the cost of each assigned award package. Then, optionally, include any catch-up awards for recently missed milestones.

Step 5: Evaluate and Adjust

During the budgeting phase, re-evaluate all elements of your plan. Adjust the assigned award package levels as needed to align with your budget constraints.

Projecting Future Year Budgets

Step 1: Estimate Second-Year Costs

Project the budget needs for the second year based on the number of employees who will reach milestones during the following year. This projection will provide a clearer picture of the ongoing costs of the program.

Step 2: Plan for Subsequent Years

Use the second-year budget estimate as a baseline for future years. This estimate will help you anticipate the typical annual budget needed to sustain your Employee Service Recognition Program.

Key Budget Considerations

Approval Process: Present a detailed budget to management, highlighting the benefits of the program and the importance of recognizing employee service.

Setting a realistic and well-structured budget is fundamental to the success of your Employee Service Recognition Program. By carefully planning and adjusting your budget, you can ensure that your program is both effective and sustainable, ultimately contributing to higher employee satisfaction and retention.

Service Award Presentation Tips



The award itself matters - but the presentation matters just as much.

A well-executed presentation turns a recognition moment into a memory. It reinforces a culture of appreciation, strengthens the bond between the company and its people, and signals to everyone present that loyalty and dedication are genuinely valued here.

Whether you're honoring a first-year milestone or a 25-year career, how you present the award shapes how it's remembered. The following best practices apply across all milestone levels.

Presenting Service Awards - Options

Adapting Recognition for In-Person and Remote Teams: The format of your presentation should fit your workforce, not the other way around. In-person ceremonies remain the gold standard, but remote and hybrid teams can be recognized just as meaningfully with mailed award packets sent directly to the employee's home, or a virtual award delivered by email. What matters most is that the recognition happens on or near the anniversary date, and that it feels personal.

Solution: When you can, use team meetings, all-hands gatherings, or department events to acknowledge recent service milestones publicly. Peer recognition amplifies the impact — colleagues witness that the organization keeps its promises and values long-term commitment.

Make It Personal: The most impactful recognition comes from the employee's direct manager, not from HR or a generic company email. Have the manager present or send the award personally and include specific, genuine comments about what that employee has contributed and why their service matters. Specificity is what separates memorable recognition from forgettable routine.

Give Employees a Choice: The most meaningful award is one the employee chose themselves. Empower employees to select from a curated employee gift catalog. This ensures they receive something they genuinely want, while giving the presentation a structured, professional quality that elevates the entire experience.

Share the Story Broadly: Don't limit recognition to the recipient alone. Communicate service milestones to the broader team - in a meeting, a company newsletter, or an internal message. This reinforces the organization's commitment to recognizing loyalty, sets a standard others can aspire to, and builds a culture where recognition is visible and valued by everyone.

Gift-of-Choice Awards for Service Recognition



The Gift-of-Choice Model: Putting the Employee at the Center of Recognition

One of the most important decisions in designing your Service Award Program is choosing the type of award to give at each service milestone. The answer directly affects how meaningful the recognition feels and whether employees will remember it.

Research and real-world experience consistently point to the same conclusion: employees find gift-of-choice awards more meaningful than pre-selected items, more motivating than cash, and more memorable than plaques or pins alone.

The gift-of-choice model is straightforward: as part of the formal recognition, present employees with a curated employee gift catalog, plus a link to an expanded version online, and let them choose the award that's right for them. The result is an award they actually want, selected from a collection the company has approved and funded.

Employees consistently rank this model highly - and appreciate the opportunity to choose something that reflects their personal interests. Select-Your-Gift's tier-level gift catalog collections are available at multiple price points, making it easy to match award value to each milestone while staying within your program budget.

Every gift-of-choice package includes extensive customization options. There are no minimum orders and no contracts required. Order exactly what you need, when you need it.

Select-Your-Gift handles fulfillment and shipping (within the lower 48 U.S.), with 100% employee satisfaction guaranteed on every award.

Tailor-Made Recognition Awards

Tailor Your Service Recognition Awards with these popular options:

- **Service Award Package level choices:** With many available tier-level award packages, you can control your budget by selecting a tier-level gift collection for each of your service milestones, making them perfect for on-boarding gifts, 1, 2 and 3-years, traditional 5-year increments, and retirement gifts. **(see all levels)**
- **Awards Catalog Covers:** Use our standard Service Award cover, or select another **(see all choices)**
- **Award Certificate Stationery:** use our standard Years of Service stationery, or **see available options.**
- **Certificate Printing:** Choose a printing option for your personalized employee award certificates: you can print them, or we can print for you - with your logo, message and each employees' name. Many stationery options are available.
- **Award Package Closing Seals:** Select the anniversary milestone (5, 10, etc) for each package closing seal. Included Service Award closing seals are gold stamped.
- **Award Packet Delivery:** We normally ship all employee award packets to you for distribution. If needed, we offer a service to optionally mail individual award packets to your employees' homes, using your provided excel files of names / addresses. If a completely virtual solution is preferred, you can Email your gift of choice Service Awards to employees **(see Emailed Solution details)**
- **Award Presentation Enhancement options:** Certificate holders, framed certificates and presentation boxes.



- **Optional customized award redemption site:** With your company's logo and message that employees will see when they redeem their award.

Getting Started - Service Award Programs



Your employees are ready to be recognized. Here's how to get started.

A well-designed Service Award Program improves morale, increases engagement, reduces turnover, and builds the kind of culture that attracts and retains the people you need. The best part? It doesn't have to be complicated. **At Select-Your-Gift,**

we've made it simple to build and run a professional, meaningful Service Award Program — regardless of your organization's size or budget.

Why Choose Select-Your-Gift for Your Service Awards Program?

- **Tailored Solutions:** We understand that every company is different. Our flexible and customizable award solutions ensure that your service recognition program fits perfectly with your company culture and goals. (**Service Award Program Options**)
- **Wide Range of Awards:** From **tier-level gift-of-choice award packages** to **points-based** engagement platforms, we offer a variety of programs and award options that are sure to delight your employees and make them feel valued.
- **Expert Guidance:** With years of experience in employee recognition, our team of experts will guide you through every step of setting up your service awards program, from planning to implementation.

Contact Select-Your-Gift Today

Ready to build a recognition program your employees will remember? Contact Select-Your-Gift today. Our recognition specialists will walk you through your options, help you define your program, and make the entire process straightforward from day one.



Call us today at 630-954-1287, or visit

www.select-your-gift.com/service-awards

and we'll send you a complete sample package — including an actual Service Award Presentation Packet, sample gift catalog, stationery and seals, customization options, and pricing. Everything you need to see exactly what your employees will receive and get your program started with confidence.