AN EFFORT WORTH THE REWARDS

Abstract

Kate James, Head of Rewards and Benefits at a £25 Bn British food service company, needed to overhaul her firm's rewards mechanism because it was sorely underutilized and inefficient. This case study details how Infosys BPM helped her with creating a new rewards nominations process covering tens of thousands of employees, while minimizing complexity and administrative burdens, to deliver a 1000% increase in incoming nominations.

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When the rewards don't seem worth it

Kate James is the head of rewards and benefits for a £25 Bn British food service company, responsible for managing its staff incentives. The company has a very large scale of operations, with over 500,000 employees serving across 55,000 locations in 40 countries. The firm partnered with Infosys BPM in August 2018, when it acquired a shared service center within the UK, establishing an operational model for delivering finance and accounting, human resources, and payroll as managed services.

A few years ago, the top management of the firm had felt the need for additional steps to boost employee morale through suitably rewarding employees. The firm did have an existing rewards program, but it was under-utilized and inefficient to administer. With all nominations having to be filled up manually, the time-consuming process saw a low number of nominations and was in any case not easily scalable. Another issue this raised was the limited ability the process offered to properly report and administer the volume of nominations.

With all this, the scheme needed a major overhaul and Kate was soon in a meeting with Shanti Kanwar, who headed Infosys BPM's offshore team. Kate tasked her with creating a new and holistic employee rewards program that covered all aspects of recognizing and rewarding the best employees across the board. However, it was imperative that such a program should not put an unnecessary administrative burden on the company's core operations.

A new, simplified, and streamlined scheme

As a first step, Shanti and her team brainstormed on a basic structure needed to support a comprehensive rewards program, designed to receive nominations from a wide range of client teams. They began by listing down the major challenges to be resolved.

First, to ensure that the rewards program received an adequate number of nominations, the nominations process needed to be greatly simplified.

Another major need of the company was to keep the reward costs down, especially in the wake of the financial damage caused by the COVID-19 crisis. Yet, it was also important to ensure that the new program had a fair mechanism to keep employees motivated, and engaged, and continue working with the company in spite of the fierce fight for talent in the marketplace.

Kate also wanted to encourage peer-to-peer nominations by rewarding the people who nominated the eventual winners. So, with over 40,000 employees across the UK, this meant that the team needed to create easy to administer mechanisms to identify who was being nominated and by whom.

Approach summary

Online links and Excel based new nominations process

Minimized paper usage

Incorporation of mandatory employee code fields

Creating clear rules and FAQs
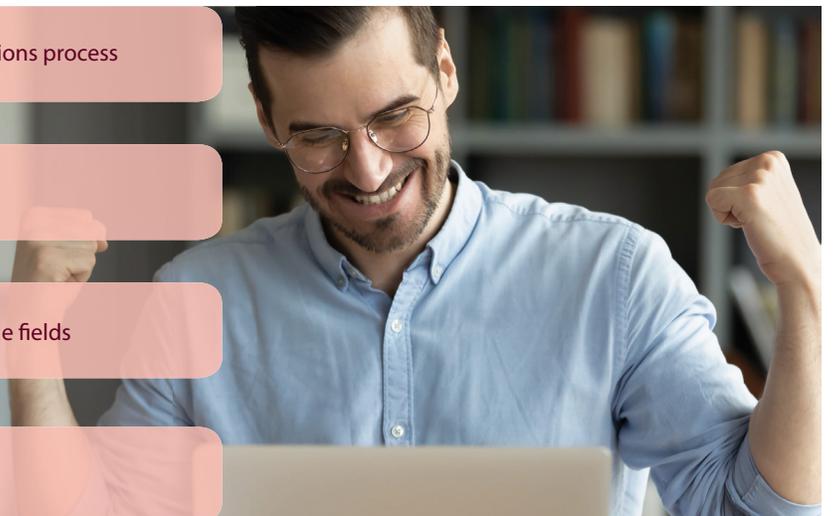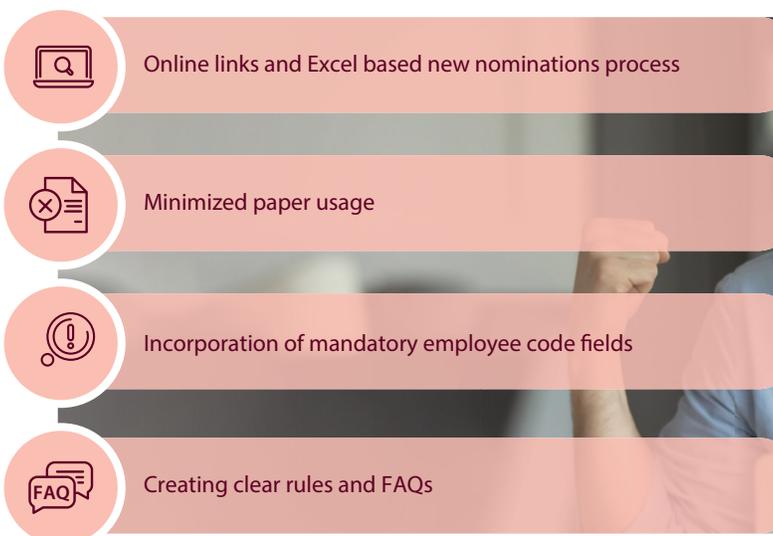
Shanti and her team then worked on an entirely new solution that was was much simpler yet met all the above-mentioned goals of the program. After reviewing all the earlier processes, the team created a new process for nominations that involved using online links and Microsoft Excel, which ensured uniformity of input and automatic logging. Also, the new process enabled the receiving of numerous nominations with minimum administration, while facilitating easier reporting.

Further, both the nominator's and the nominee's employee codes were to be mandatorily submitted with each nomination form mandatorily, thereby increasing enhancing traceability and making it possible for nominators to also be rewarded if their nominees won any awards. Shanti also created a system wherein paper-based communications were minimized, and email messages was encouraged for fast, cost-effective, and more environmentally sound communications with winners, their nominators, and managers. Finally, the team created a clear set of rules/FAQs about the scheme – to minimize incoming queries and ineligible nominations.


Rewarding all around

The new rewards scheme was launched in November 2021 and Kate realized major benefits through Shanti and her team's complete overhaul of the reward scheme's nomination processes. There have been 2,221 award nominations in total since then, which equates to more than a 1000% increase on previous volumes. But more importantly, over 96% of these nominations were eligible for consideration.

Key benefits

- 1000% increase in nomination volumes
- 6% eligibility of nominations
- Over 75% of communications sent electronically
- Weekly volume reports generated
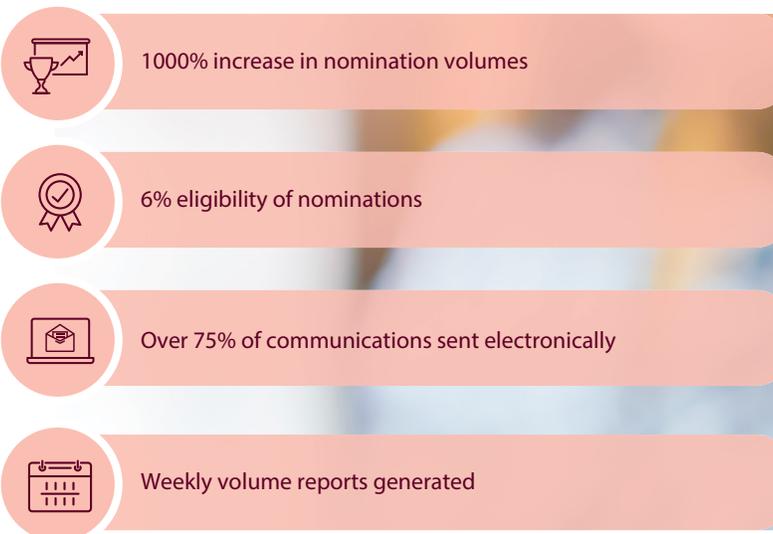
Further, more than 1,000 individual communications were sent to winners, nominators, and managers, around 75% of which were sent electronically.

In the end, the rewards from the new system were not just limited to the company's nominated employees. Its simplicity also greatly minimized Kate's administrative burdens, with only

minimal queries received about the process and with weekly volume reports seamlessly generated for sharing with top management.

Names have been altered to preserve the identities of the people involved.

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