

REPORT

Optimizing your talent strategy:

Increasing your Total Rewards impact



Table of contents

Introduction	3
Culture and talent strategy drive success	5
A powerful EVP charts your talent course	10
Reward components target key outcomes	14
Consistent communication amplifies impact	21
It's time to take action	27
Appendix	28



Introduction

In an evolving talent market, forward-thinking companies recognize that a well-crafted talent strategy is essential for business success. Integral to this strategy is a powerful tool: Total Rewards.

Far more than just a combination of salary and benefits, an effective Total Rewards program is a strategic asset that top-performing companies leverage to attract, retain, and motivate the best talent.

But what sets these high achievers apart in their approach to Total Rewards?

How do they integrate these programs into their broader talent strategy to drive exceptional business outcomes?

To answer these questions, Insperity partnered with the Incentive Research Foundation to survey 1,200 executives. Our goal? To uncover how top-performing companies are using their Total Rewards programs to support their talent objectives and drive organizational success.

In our study, we identified top performers based on their self-reported results across key outcomes, including talent acquisition and retention, customer growth, and overall business performance. This allowed us to isolate and analyze the Total Rewards strategies of companies that are truly excelling in a challenging business environment. See the Appendix for more details about our study methodology.

Our findings reveal that while high-achieving organizations offer similar Total Rewards components as their counterparts, they distinguish themselves through strategic implementation and alignment with broader talent goals.

Here are the key insights from our research:



Culture and talent strategy drive success.

Top performers cultivate a people-first culture that creates an atmosphere where Total Rewards can truly flourish and support overall talent objectives.



A powerful EVP charts your talent course.

Leading companies craft and consistently communicate their unique employee value proposition (EVP), with Total Rewards playing a starring role.



Reward components target key outcomes.

Companies generally agree on the business impact of Total Reward components, but high achievers excel in execution.



Consistent communication amplifies impact.

Top performers excel at conveying the value of their Total Rewards package throughout the employee journey.



In the following pages, we'll dive deeper into these insights, providing actionable strategies to elevate your Total Rewards approach and drive business success through strategic talent management. Whether you're looking to fine-tune your existing program or build a new one from the ground up, this playbook will equip you with the tools to win the talent game.



**Culture and talent
strategy drive success.**



Culture and talent strategy drive success.

In the high-stakes arena of business, success hinges on more than just smart products or savvy marketing. It's about people—attracting them, retaining them, and inspiring them to bring their best selves to work every day.

Our research reveals that top-performing companies have cracked this code by excelling in two critical areas, company culture and talent strategy.

The numbers tell the tale

Top performers are more likely to rate their company culture as “excellent” (51%) compared to standard performers (43%). This cultural foundation, combined with a robust talent strategy, creates an environment where the organization can truly flourish and drive higher levels of success.

So what sets these high-flyers apart? How do they cultivate cultures that inspire and talent strategies that deliver? Let's pull back the curtain on the practices that separate the leaders from the pack and explore how you can harness these insights to elevate your own organization's performance.

Powerhouse cultures put people first

What distinguishes top performers in cultivating their company culture? Let's explore the key ingredients:

- **Prioritize people over short-term results.** When push comes to shove, top performers are twice as likely to emphasize people over results (23%) compared to standard performers (11%). They're playing the long game, and it's paying off. This people-first approach creates fertile ground for a Total Rewards program that resonates with employees and reinforces cultural values.

- **Cultivate career growth.** Leading companies aren't just filling seats; they're actively fostering career advancement. As a result, they report higher levels of employee engagement and performance (39%) compared to standard performers (28%). This focus on development aligns perfectly with a talent strategy that emphasizes professional growth and learning opportunities.
- **Invest in wellbeing.** Top performers are more likely to prioritize employee wellbeing programs (68%) compared to standard performers (60%), recognizing that a healthy, balanced workforce is a productive one. These programs often support employees' physical, mental, and financial health, showcasing how top performers emphasize holistic wellness within their Total Rewards programs.

This people-first approach lays the groundwork for a robust talent strategy, which top performers leverage to drive their business forward.



Culture and talent strategy drive success.

CASE STUDY

Living the company culture through Total Rewards

An outdoor apparel company weaves its environmental ethos into every aspect of its Total Rewards program. Employees can take paid time off to work with conservation groups restoring habitats or cleaning up beaches. The flexible schedule policy isn't just about work-life balance—it's designed so staff can catch that perfect wave or hit the trails when conditions are prime. Even the on-site perks, from organic cafés to yoga classes, reinforce the brand's commitment to health and sustainability.

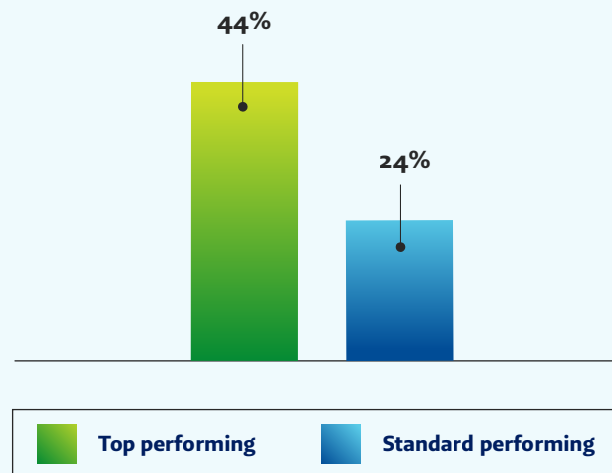
The result?

A workforce that doesn't just sell outdoor gear, but lives and breathes the company's values. It's a powerful example of aligning rewards with purpose, turning employees into passionate brand ambassadors both on and off the clock.

Talent strategy is the framework for success

While culture sets the tone, a well-crafted talent strategy provides the framework for organizational success. Our research reveals a striking difference in this area: top-performing companies are nearly twice as likely to rate their talent strategy as “excellent” (44%) compared to standard performers (24%). This isn't just about hiring—it's a comprehensive blueprint for attracting, retaining, and motivating their ideal team throughout the employee journey.

Talent strategy maturity (Excellent)





Culture and talent strategy drive success.

Here's how some top performers are building winning talent strategies:

- **Align HR with business objectives.** A substantial number of the top-performing companies identified in our study (42%) report that their HR efforts directly drive key business outcomes, compared to standard performers (32%). This integration elevates HR programs, including Total Rewards, from support functions to active catalysts for organizational success. By ensuring HR initiatives are tightly coupled with business goals, these companies create a more cohesive and effective organizational strategy.
- **Prioritize skill readiness.** Top performers are more confident that their employees have the skills needed to deliver results (39% vs. 31% for standard performers). High-performing cultures emphasize continuous learning and development, including robust training programs and educational benefits. By investing in their employees' growth, these companies not only support current performance but also cultivate a workforce prepared to drive innovation and seize emerging opportunities.

By integrating these elements into their talent strategy, top performers create a framework that supports current business needs as well as preparing the company for future challenges and opportunities.

Indeed, our research reveals that top performers have a significant edge when it comes to strategic agility, with more expressing confidence in their talent's ability to deploy against new strategies (38%) compared to standard performers (24%). This capability to pivot quickly and execute new strategies is a key differentiator in a competitive market. But how can companies develop this critical capability in their workforce?

Preparing talent for strategic agility



Natalie Trabert, Senior Strategy Consultant at Insperity, offers insights into how companies can intentionally cultivate adaptable talent:

- **Hire for adaptability:** Focus on hiring people who demonstrate competency in dealing with complexity and adapting to change. Resourcefulness is key—these are the individuals who can truly thrive in a dynamic environment.
- **Set expectations early:** Building resilience starts from day one. It's crucial to weave the expectation of change into how leadership and managers discuss vision and strategy with employees from the very beginning.
- **Plan regular strategy reviews:** Implement a disciplined approach to strategy iteration. A 90-day cycle of reviewing the current state, scanning the environment, and adjusting course keeps your team agile and aligned.
- **Communicate consistently:** Leadership plays a critical role in setting the right expectations. Consistently communicating that we're on an iterative journey helps employees understand and adapt to changes more readily.



Culture and talent strategy drive success.

Ready to level up your culture and talent strategy?

Here are some actionable tips:

1. **Conduct regular culture checks.** Use employee surveys and focus groups to gauge how well your culture aligns with your stated values. Are you walking the talk?
2. **Develop a comprehensive talent strategy.** This should cover the entire employee lifecycle, from recruitment to retirement. Ensure it aligns closely with your business goals and cultural values, and that your Total Rewards program actively supports these objectives.
3. **Invest in career development.** Create clear career paths and provide resources for skill development. This could include mentorship programs, training budgets, or time allocated for learning—all of which can be key components of a robust Total Rewards package.
4. **Prioritize wellbeing.** Implement programs that support physical, mental, and financial health. This could range from fitness subsidies to financial planning workshops to enhance the benefits within your Total Rewards program.
5. **Align HR initiatives with business goals.** Regularly review your HR programs, including Total Rewards, to ensure they're driving key business outcomes. This might involve collaborative planning sessions between HR and other departments.
6. **Encourage two-way conversation.** Create channels for employees to share ideas and feedback. This could be through regular town halls, suggestion boxes, or an open-door policy with leadership.
7. **Foster adaptability.** Encourage continuous learning by providing opportunities for employees to learn new skills and work on diverse projects. This builds the agility needed to respond quickly to changing business needs.

By focusing on these areas, you're not just improving your culture and talent strategy—you're laying the groundwork for a more engaged, productive, and loyal workforce. And in today's competitive business landscape, that's an advantage you can't afford to ignore. A well-aligned Total Rewards program can be your secret weapon in this effort, helping to attract top talent, drive desired behaviors, and reinforce a culture that sets your company apart.





**A powerful EVP charts
your talent course.**



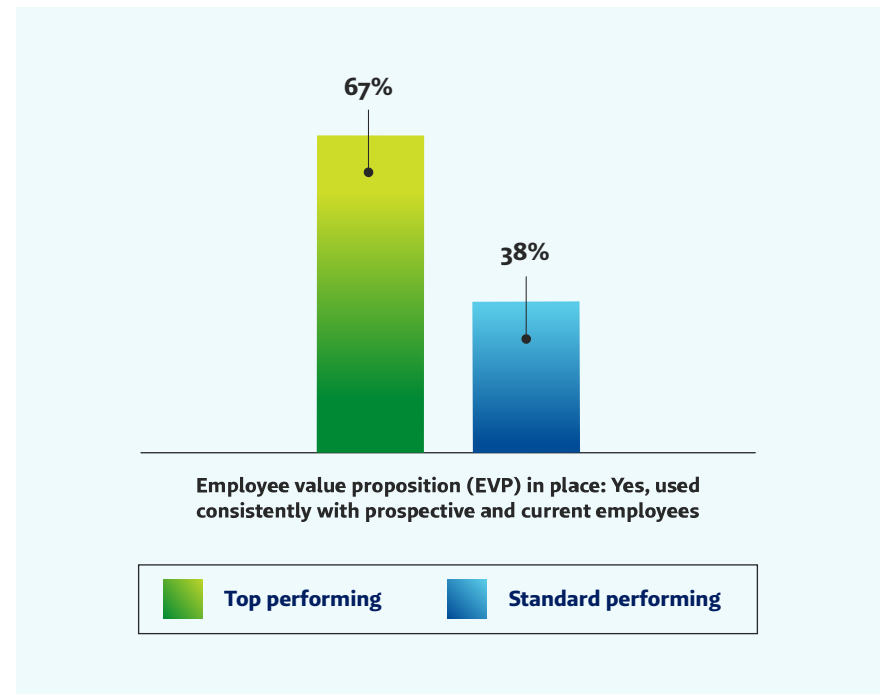
A powerful EVP charts your talent course.

Our research reveals a stark contrast in [employee value proposition](#) (EVP) implementation between top-performing companies and others. **A significant majority of high achievers (67%) have a consistently used EVP, compared to only a minority of standard performers (38%).**

This substantial gap underscores the critical role a well-crafted and consistently implemented EVP plays in driving organizational success through effective talent management.

In fact, this disparity represents one of the most significant differences between top performers and their peers across all aspects of our study, highlighting just how crucial a strong EVP is to overall business performance.

An EVP isn't just a hiring pitch—it's the very essence of what an organization offers its employees. It encompasses the entire employee experience, including compensation, benefits, culture, career development opportunities, work environment, and the company's mission and values. For top performers, the EVP charts the course for their comprehensive talent strategy, with Total Rewards playing a crucial role in bringing that EVP to life.





A powerful EVP charts your talent course.

The power of consistency

Top performers don't let their EVP drift off course—they use it to navigate consistently throughout the employee lifecycle:

- **Recruitment:** They use their EVP to craft authentic job descriptions and employer branding materials, steering candidates who are a great fit for their culture and values towards their organization.
- **Onboarding:** New hires are immersed in the company's EVP from day one, setting clear expectations and helping them understand how their role contributes to the bigger picture.
- **Ongoing engagement:** Regular reinforcement of the EVP through internal communications, leadership behaviors, and recognition programs keeps employees on course, boosting engagement and reducing turnover.
- **Career development:** The EVP informs career pathing and development opportunities, ensuring employees can chart a future for themselves within the organization.

Ready to chart a powerful course with your EVP?

Here are key steps to ensure it guides your talent strategy:

1. **Align with your unique identity:** Assess your current organizational culture and future goals. Ask yourself, "What kind of company do we need to become to achieve our objectives?" Your EVP should reflect both your present strengths and your future vision.
2. **Define clear expectations:** Articulate exactly what you need from employees to navigate towards success. Be specific about the skills, behaviors, and contributions that keep your organization on course.

3. **Outline the employee experience:** Clearly communicate what employees can expect on their journey with your organization, both professionally and personally. This includes growth opportunities, work-life balance, and other key aspects of your Total Rewards package.
4. **Ensure authenticity:** Conduct a reality check. Does your EVP accurately reflect the day-to-day experience of current employees? Avoid the pitfall of overpromising and underdelivering.
5. **Tailor to your talent pool:** Research the needs and desires of the talent you aim to attract, engage, and retain. Your EVP should resonate with this target audience at all organizational levels, guiding them towards your company.
6. **Bridge perception and reality:** Create consistency between your external employer brand and the internal employee experience. This alignment builds trust and enhances engagement, keeping everyone moving in the same direction.
7. **Regularly reassess and refine:** As your organization evolves, so should your EVP. Schedule periodic reviews to ensure it remains relevant and compelling, adjusting course as needed.

By following these steps, you can craft an EVP that serves as a powerful navigational tool in your talent strategy arsenal, helping you attract, engage, and retain the right talent to drive your business forward.



A powerful EVP charts your talent course.

CASE STUDY

Engineering an EVP for the future

A traditional technology manufacturer found itself struggling to attract top tech talent against Silicon Valley competitors. Their solution? A strategic EVP overhaul. They assembled a diverse team, including their own tech professionals, to craft a compelling new message: “Create a better tomorrow with us.”

This wasn't just clever marketing. the company backed it up by highlighting opportunities to work on world-changing projects, emphasizing innovation, and offering clear paths for personal growth. The results were impressive: applications from top tech talent surged, and the company's employer rankings got a significant boost.

By aligning their EVP with both talent aspirations and business goals, this tech giant transformed its reputation in the job market. It's a powerful example of how a well-crafted EVP can turn the tables in the competitive world of tech recruitment.



“

Top-performing companies don't just offer rewards, they strategically design them to align with their EVP, reinforce their culture, and meet the diverse needs of their workforce.

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Rebecca Messina
Director, Compensation Services
Insperity



**Reward components
target key outcomes.**



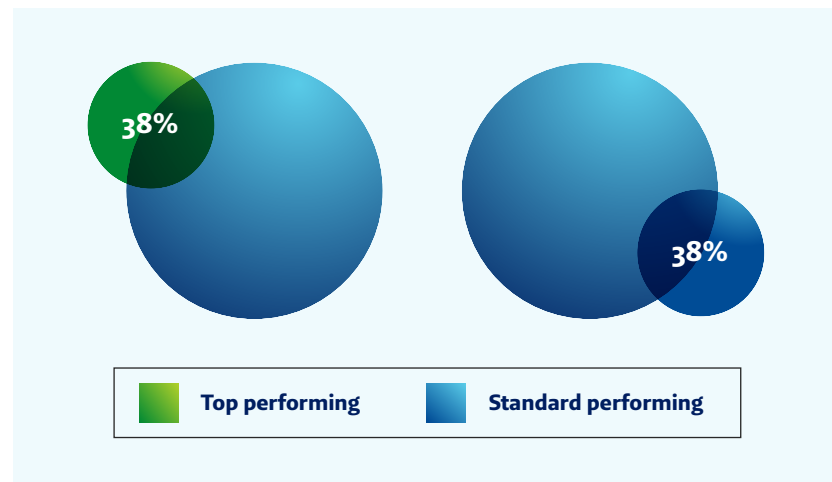
Reward components target key outcomes.

Our study reveals that both top-performing and standard companies recognize the importance of aligning Total Rewards components with specific business outcomes. However, high achievers demonstrate nuanced differences in their approach that yield outsized results.

Let's explore how companies in our survey think about and structure their rewards to support overarching talent objectives, with a focus on where top performers distinguish themselves:

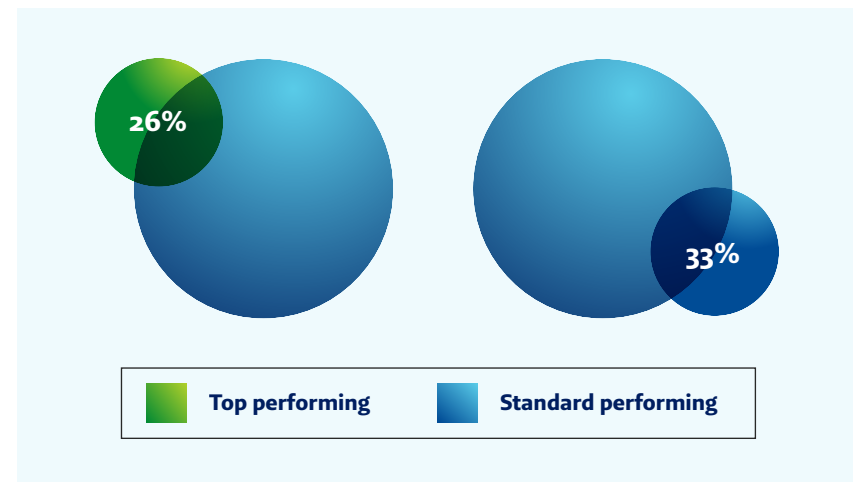
Base compensation:

A critical tool in the talent tug-of-war. Both top and standard performers (38%) view base pay as essential for attracting and retaining talent, using it as their primary lever for recruitment and retention. While not part of our study, it's worth noting that forward-looking companies typically don't rest on their laurels—they regularly use benchmarking tools to ensure their salaries remain competitive.



Variable compensation:

This category includes performance-based financial rewards such as bonuses, commissions, and stock awards. Surprisingly, high-achieving organizations in our survey rely less on these traditional monetary motivators to spur performance (26%) compared to their standard performing counterparts (33%). This suggests top performers are taking a more holistic view of motivating performance within their talent strategy.

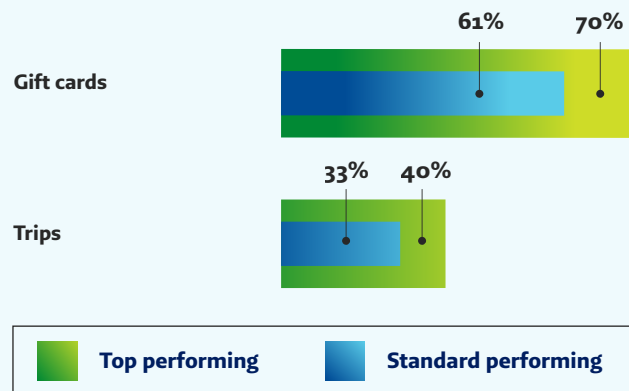




Reward components target key outcomes.

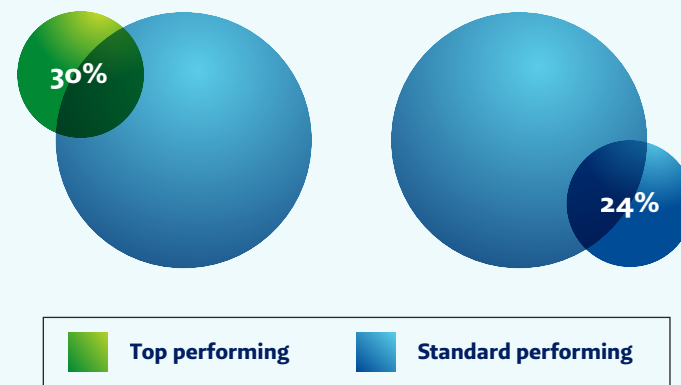
Non-cash rewards and recognition:

Here's an area where top performers differentiate themselves in supporting their talent objectives. They show a greater tendency to use non-cash motivational tools, with more offering gift cards (70% vs. 61%) and trips (40% vs. 33%) to keep their teams engaged. This emphasis on incentives such as merchandise, gift cards, and experiential rewards appears to be a key strategy for driving employee performance and fostering a positive company culture.



Benefits:

Companies that excel are more attuned to the retention power of benefits like health insurance, PTO, and wellbeing programs (30%) compared to standard performers (24%). This suggests a more sophisticated understanding of how these offerings contribute to long-term employee satisfaction and loyalty—key goals of any comprehensive talent strategy.



By making these subtle yet important distinctions in how they leverage common Total Rewards components, top performers create a more purposefully aligned and impactful rewards program that supports their overall talent objectives.

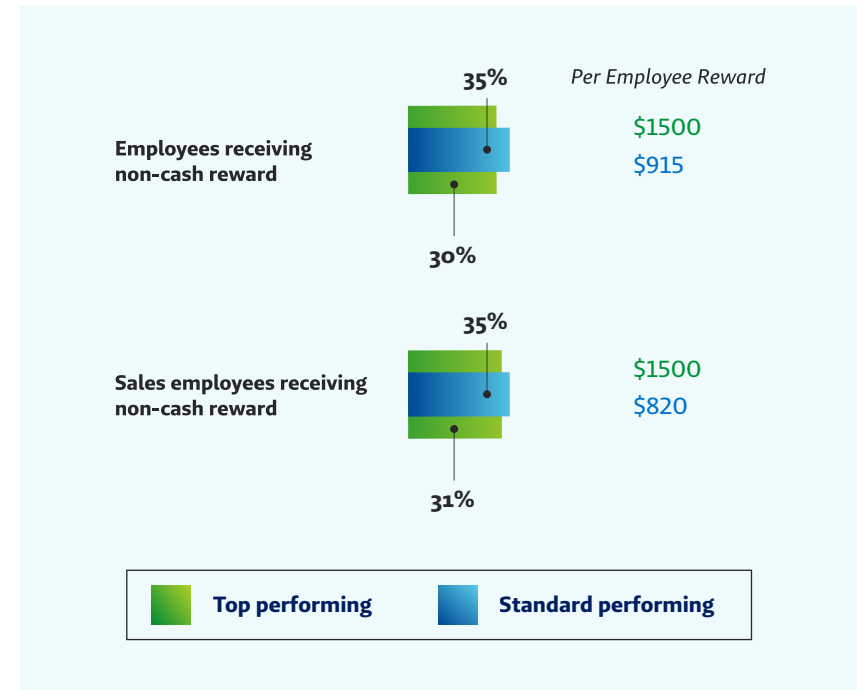


Reward components target key outcomes.

Mastering the art of non-cash rewards

When it comes to non-cash rewards, top performers in our study show a level of finesse that sets them apart. Their approach to budget allocation reveals some intriguing insights:

- 1. Departmental autonomy:** High-performing firms trust department leaders to know what's best, allowing them to determine their own non-cash rewards budgets. This decentralized approach ensures rewards are laser-focused on departmental goals and employee preferences, increasing their impact and relevance. Nearly half of these organizations (49%) give their departments this budgetary freedom, compared to standard performers (37%).
- 2. Targeted distribution:** Here's a plot twist—top performers actually reward fewer employees (30% vs. 35% for standard performers), but they make it count. The median award value for these companies is a whopping 64% higher than standard performers (\$1,500 vs. \$915).



Untapped potential

36-38%

Both high-achieving organizations and standard performers are using only about a third of their allocated non-cash rewards budget (36-38%). This suggests there's room for everyone to more effectively leverage and optimize their programs.



Reward components target key outcomes.

CASE STUDY

Points with a purpose

A global financial firm revitalized its recognition culture with a clever points system. Managers receive monthly “appreciation points” to reward team members, with a reminder if points go unused after three weeks. This prompts timely recognition: Brandon’s stellar customer service or Anastasia’s project leadership gets its due. The use-it-or-lose-it policy fosters a vibrant culture where great work is consistently acknowledged, driving engagement throughout the organization.

Harnessing the power of gift cards: strategic recognition in action

Gift cards are a versatile tool in your Total Rewards arsenal, offering immediate impact and personal choice while remaining simple to manage. Let’s explore how top-performing companies leverage these benefits to drive specific outcomes:

Reinforce key behaviors: Gift cards serve as powerful motivators, shaping employee actions across various departments.

- Call centers use gift cards to reward agents who consistently follow new scripts, providing immediate reinforcement of desired behaviors.
- Manufacturing firms recognize adherence to safety protocols, making employees feel seen and appreciated for prioritizing workplace safety.
- Sales teams incentivize CRM tool adoption, offering personalized rewards that feel like a special treat for embracing new technologies.

Boost operational excellence: Strategic use of gift cards can drive performance improvements in critical business areas.

- IT departments celebrate on-time project deployments with gift cards, instantly recognizing team efforts and fostering a culture of timeliness.

- Retail organizations reward inventory management excellence, providing a tangible and appreciated token of recognition for behind-the-scenes work.
- Healthcare providers motivate staff to improve patient satisfaction, using easily managed gift card programs to drive critical performance metrics.

Strengthen company culture: Gift cards can reinforce core values and foster a positive work environment.

- Cross-departmental collaboration is encouraged through peer-to-peer gift card recognition, reinforcing the value of teamwork in real-time.
- Employees who effectively mentor new hires receive gift cards, nurturing an environment of collaborative support and growth.
- Behaviors exemplifying company values like integrity or innovation are rewarded, providing immediate, personalized recognition that aligns with corporate culture.

By strategically employing gift cards across these areas, companies leverage their simplicity and perceived value to reinforce key behaviors, drive operational goals, and foster a culture of appreciation. This approach aligns Total Rewards with broader talent strategy, ensuring every recognition dollar delivers maximum impact while offering the flexibility and personal touch that employees value.



Reward components target key outcomes.

Non-cash rewards: Expert strategies for success



Stephanie Harris
President
Incentive Research Foundation

Q: Our study suggests more top-performing companies favor non-cash rewards over traditional incentives. What do you think is behind this trend?

A: It seems high achievers have discovered that non-cash rewards pack a bigger punch than their price tag suggests. Also, these programs are easier to change than variable comp structures, which can be painful and demotivating for employees when altered. Top companies are using non-cash rewards strategically to sculpt company culture, align service delivery, and boost compliance—all while keeping budgets in check. They're crucial for guiding consistency across the organization.

Q: Given all those advantages, why are companies leaving non-cash reward budgets on the table?

A: It's concerning to see those hard-fought reward budgets go unused. Often, the primary issue is insufficient guidance and preparation for managers. Those uncertain about these rewards are likely to avoid using them, completely defeating the program's purpose. There's typically a knowledge gap after launch, leaving managers unsure about how much to give or when. The key step companies miss is cultivating a manager culture that truly understands and can effectively execute recognition. Without that foundation, even the best-designed programs can fall flat.

Without proper guidance and support for managers, even the best non-cash rewards programs can fall flat.

Q: What steps can companies take to ensure their non-cash reward programs are fully utilized and effective?

A: To bridge the gap between having a solid rewards program on paper and seeing it thrive in practice, companies should focus on five key areas:

Provide clear guidelines: Give managers specific criteria for when and how to use rewards. Take the guesswork out of it.

- 1. Offer ongoing training:** Don't just train at launch—make recognition a regular part of leadership development.
- 2. Share success stories:** Highlight examples of effective recognition to inspire and guide other managers.
- 3. Hold managers accountable:** Make recognition a part of performance evaluations for leaders at all levels.
- 4. Simplify the process:** Ensure your reward system is user-friendly and easily accessible.

By addressing these areas, companies can transform their reward programs from untapped potential to powerful tools for driving engagement and performance. It's about making sure these programs work as well in practice as they do in theory.



Reward components target key outcomes.

Mapping business success through Total Rewards

Just as a skilled navigator plots their course before setting sail, successful companies map out how their Total Rewards will drive business results. **Here's your quick-start guide:**

1

Plot your destination: Identify key business goals (e.g., innovation, market expansion, customer satisfaction).

2

Choose your route: Determine which employee behaviors will drive those goals.

3

Pack the right gear: Select and emphasize the reward components that best encourage those behaviors.

4

Navigate and recalibrate: Regularly review and adjust the strategy to ensure you stay on course.





**Consistent
communication
amplifies impact.**



Consistent communication amplifies impact.

In the realm of talent strategy, effective communication of Total Rewards isn't just a nice-to-have—it's a critical tool for attracting, engaging, and retaining top talent. Our study reveals a significant communication gap between leading companies and the rest.

The message is clear: it's not just what you offer in your Total Rewards package, but how you convey its value throughout the employee lifecycle that can set your talent strategy apart.

Mind the gap

The numbers tell a compelling story—there's a clear communication divide in how companies integrate Total Rewards into their broader talent strategy:

- **During recruiting:** First impressions matter, and top performers make them count. They're more likely to effectively communicate their Total Rewards package as part of their talent acquisition strategy (31%) compared to standard performers (22%). This approach can give top performers an edge in attracting candidates by clearly outlining the concrete benefits of joining their organization.
- **During onboarding:** The trend continues as new hires come aboard, with high-achieving organizations (50%) significantly outpacing standard performers (39%) in conveying Total Rewards information. This reinforces the new hire's decision and sets the stage for long-term engagement.
- **Throughout employment:** Companies that excel keep the conversation going by consistently discussing Total Rewards as part of their retention strategy (45%), compared to standard performers (31%). This ongoing dialogue helps employees understand and appreciate the full value of their employment package.

This communication gap isn't just about information flow— it's a key differentiator in how companies execute their talent strategy, influencing everything from employee engagement to retention rates.

Communication of Total Rewards package





Consistent communication amplifies impact.

Harnessing the power of Total Rewards statements

A powerful tool in your communication arsenal is the Total Rewards Statement. This comprehensive, personalized overview of an employee's entire package can be a game-changer in your talent strategy. When done well, it transforms the perception of compensation from a simple paycheck to a multifaceted investment in the employee's present and future.

Here are some best practices to make your Total Rewards Statements shine:

- **Personalize it:** Tailor each statement to the individual, showing them exactly what their package is worth. Consider segmenting your audience based on career stage or position for even more relevant messaging. For instance, highlight wellness programs and work-life balance benefits for millennials, or emphasize career development opportunities and mentorship programs for early-career professionals.
- **Show the big picture:** Include both monetary and non-monetary rewards. That flexible work arrangement? It's not just convenient, it's cash in your employees' pockets. Call out the value of company-provided meals or fitness classes. Consider using comparisons to industry benchmarks to demonstrate your package's full value.
- **Make it accessible:** Provide a centralized portal for 24/7 access. Use simple terms and visual aids to make complex information digestible, ensuring employees can easily understand how their Total Rewards package supports their career goals.
- **Break it down into categories:** Organize benefits into clear categories like financial rewards, health and wellness, work-life balance, and career development. This approach helps employees see how their Total Rewards package supports various aspects of their professional and personal lives.

Total Rewards categories	Examples of included benefits
Financial rewards	• Base salary • Annual bonuses • Commissions • Stock options • Profit sharing • 401(k) matching • Performance incentives • Sign-on bonuses
Health and wellness	• Medical insurance • Dental insurance • Vision insurance • HSA • FSA • EAP • Gym memberships • Wellness programs
Work-life balance	• PTO • Vacation days • Sick leave • Parental leave • Flexible work arrangements • Remote work options • Sabbaticals • Company-sponsored social events
Career development	• Professional training programs • Tuition reimbursement • Conference attendance • Mentorship programs • Leadership development • Career pathing • Skills workshops • Professional certification support
Retirement and financial planning	• Pension plans • Retirement planning services • Financial advisors • Life insurance • Disability insurance • Long-term care insurance
Perks and lifestyle benefits	• Company car or car allowance • Parking benefits • Commuter benefits • Employee discounts • Childcare support • Pet insurance • Legal services • Identity theft protection
Recognition and rewards	• Service awards • Spot bonuses • Gift cards • Peer recognition programs • Employee of the month/year awards • Team celebration budgets



Consistent communication amplifies impact.

Ready to amplify your Total Rewards communication as part of your talent strategy?

Here are some approaches to consider:

1. **Leverage multiple channels:** Use a mix of communication methods to reach all employees effectively. This could include face-to-face meetings, digital platforms, and even printed materials for those who prefer tangible resources.
2. **Train your managers:** Equip your leadership team with the knowledge to guide employees to the right resources. They don't need to be benefits gurus, but they should know where to point team members when questions arise.
3. **Include family members:** Create materials that can be easily shared and understood by employees' family members. This approach recognizes that employment decisions often involve the whole family unit.
4. **Dedicate focused time:** Consider implementing a "Total Rewards Week" annually. During this time, managers receive detailed Total Rewards Statements for their team members along with talking points that tie rewards to broader career development and company goals.
5. **Create a communication calendar:** Plan regular touchpoints throughout the year to discuss different aspects of your Total Rewards package. This keeps benefits top of mind and helps employees appreciate the full value of their rewards package.

Developing your communication strategy

While an annual Total Rewards Week can be impactful, consistent messaging throughout the year is key to reinforcing your talent strategy. Here are some ideas for keeping your Total Rewards top of mind and aligned with broader organizational goals:

Seasonal focus

Remind employees of relevant benefits when they are most likely to use and appreciate them.

- **Winter:** Launch a "financial fitness" campaign. Showcase financial wellness benefits like budgeting tools, financial advisors, and employee stock purchase plans. This aligns with the new year when many employees reassess their finances and consider adjustments to retirement contributions, HSA/FSA elections, etc.
- **Spring:** Spotlight wellness and fitness benefits to coincide with warmer weather and increased outdoor activities. Feature gym membership discounts, wellness challenges, or ergonomic assessments for remote workers. Emphasize how these benefits support work-life balance and long-term career sustainability.
- **Summer:** Highlight employee discount programs for travel and attractions. Launch a "Don't leave PTO on the table" campaign, encouraging employees to plan their summer getaways and recharge their batteries.
- **Fall:** Launch a "back to learning" campaign highlighting professional development resources. Showcase how training programs, tuition reimbursement benefits, and internal mentorship programs support career growth and the company's future talent needs. Who says only kids get to enjoy that back-to-school excitement?



Consistent communication amplifies impact.

Life event focus

Showcase benefits relevant to major milestones, demonstrating how your Total Rewards package supports employees throughout their career journey:

- **New parent:** Guide expecting and new parents through leave policies and childcare support. Highlight how these benefits allow employees to balance career progression with family responsibilities.
- **Buying a home:** Offer financial planning workshops and mortgage assistance information, positioning these as ways the company supports employees' long-term financial stability.
- **Caring for aging parents:** Outline elder care benefits, caregiver support groups, and long-term care insurance options. Emphasize how these benefits allow employees to manage personal responsibilities without sacrificing their career advancement.
- **Planning for retirement:** Educate employees on retirement savings options and financial planning tools, framing this as part of the company's commitment to supporting employees' entire career lifecycle.

Remember, effective communication about your Total Rewards package isn't just a nice-to-have—it's a megaphone for your talent strategy. By closing the communication gap, you're not just sharing information—you're reinforcing your company's commitment to employee growth, wellbeing, and long-term success. So don't be shy—let your Total Rewards package shine as a key player in attracting and retaining top talent!





Consistent communication amplifies impact.

CASE STUDY

How one manager turned benefits into a treasure hunt

A manager challenged her geographically dispersed team to explore and use one overlooked company benefit. What started as a simple task turned into a benefit bonanza and a powerful retention strategy. Employees unearthed hidden gems like legal services, caregiving support, and online learning opportunities they hadn't tapped into before.

The real magic? Team members started swapping their discoveries, creating a culture of appreciation for the company's comprehensive Total Rewards package. This exercise not only increased benefit utilization but also fostered a sense of belonging and loyalty. Many team members reported feeling more connected to the company and its values, strengthening the overall talent retention strategy.

Conclusion

Throughout this paper, we've examined how top-performing companies leverage Total Rewards as an integral part of their talent strategy. Our research revealed **four key areas** where leaders distinguish themselves:

1. Cultivating a people-first culture that provides fertile ground for Total Rewards
2. Crafting and consistently communicating a compelling employee value proposition (EVP)
3. Strategically targeting reward components to drive specific business outcomes
4. Amplifying impact through consistent, multi-channel communication

What ties these elements together is a holistic approach—viewing Total Rewards not in isolation, but as a thread woven seamlessly into the fabric of the entire employee experience.

From the moment a potential hire encounters your employer brand, through their onboarding journey, daily work life, and career progression, Total Rewards play a crucial role. They're not just perks or compensation—they're tangible expressions of your company's values, culture, and commitment to employee success.

As you reflect on your own Total Rewards approach, consider:

- How well does it support your overall business strategy?
- Does it resonate with the diverse needs of your workforce?
- Are you effectively communicating its value at every stage of the employee lifecycle?

Remember, the most successful companies don't just offer rewards—they create an ecosystem where employees thrive. What opportunities do you see to use Total Rewards to enhance your overall talent strategy?

It's time to take action

Your Total Rewards strategy playbook

Assess

Start by taking stock of where you stand. Rate your organization's current state in these key areas:

Culture & talent readiness

- Do we have a documented talent strategy that aligns with business goals?
- Are our people-focused initiatives driving measurable outcomes?
- How confident are we in our workforce's ability to adapt to change?

EVP effectiveness

- Is our EVP consistently communicated throughout the employee lifecycle?
- Do employees understand and value our Total Rewards offering?
- Can our managers clearly articulate our EVP to their teams?

Rewards alignment

- Have we mapped our Total Rewards components to specific business outcomes?
- Are we using non-cash rewards strategically to drive desired behaviors?
- What percentage of our rewards budget goes unused?

Communication reach

- Do we discuss Total Rewards during recruitment, onboarding, and reviews?
- Are we leveraging multiple channels to communicate our Total Rewards value?
- How often do we remind employees about available benefits and programs?

Take action

Once you've identified your organization's strengths and opportunities, focus on making meaningful progress in one area at a time.

1. Choose your highest-impact opportunity from the assessment above
2. Set one clear goal for improvement in that area
3. Identify the easiest change you can make to start progress
4. Implement and measure over 90 days
5. Build on your success with the next priority area

Remember: Even small improvements in how you leverage Total Rewards can yield significant talent advantages. Start where you'll have the most impact, and let your strategy evolve based on results.

Appendix: Key data insights

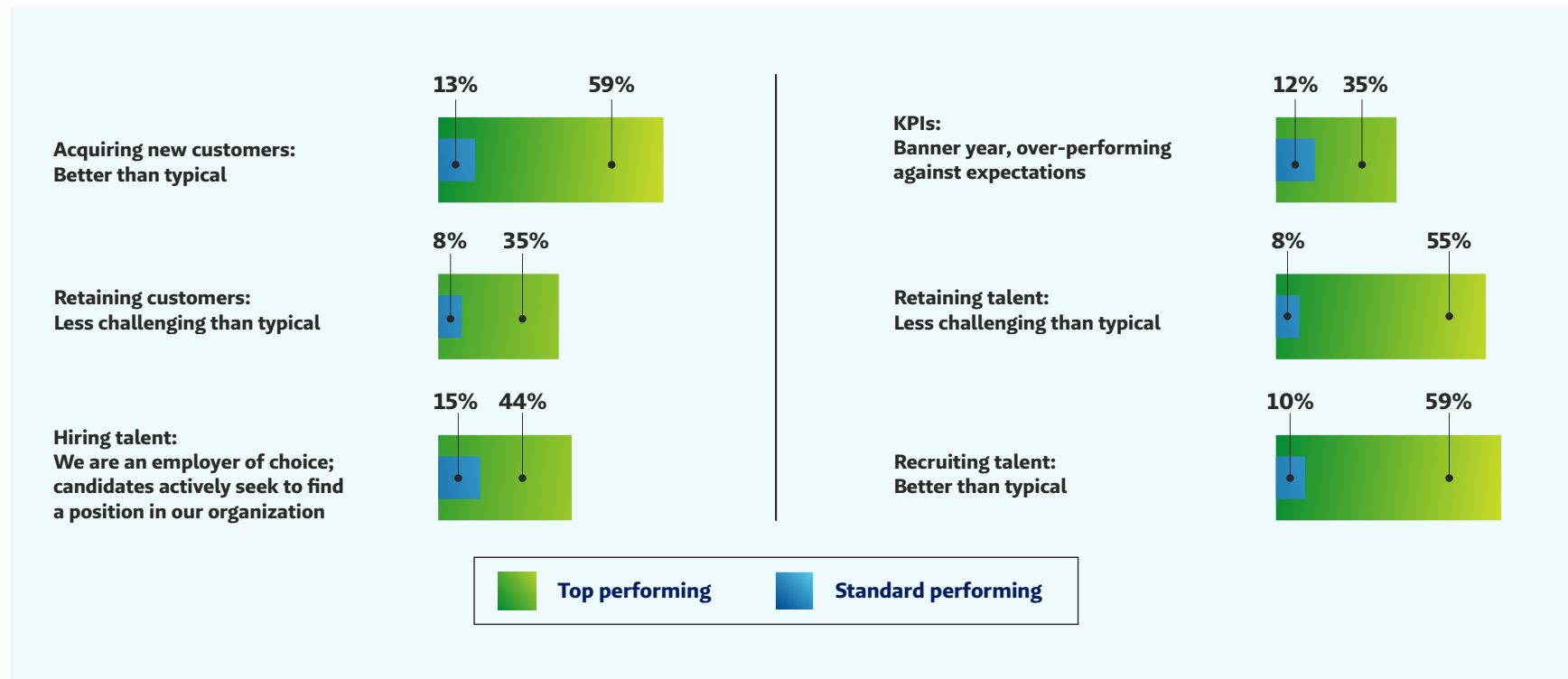
In this appendix, we present two critical data visualizations from our study that provide deeper context for our findings. These charts illuminate the methodology behind our research and offer a broader perspective on Total Rewards practices across organizations.

Identifying top performers

Our study's foundation rests on a nuanced approach to identifying top-performing companies. Rather than asking companies to simply self-categorize as top or standard performers, we assessed performance across several key indicators. This method allowed us to categorize companies based on their self-reported business outcomes and talent management effectiveness.

As illustrated, companies identified as top performers consistently reported better results across various metrics. For instance, these companies were significantly more likely to report being an employer of choice (44% vs. 15%) and to have better than typical success acquiring new customers (59% vs. 13%).

While these responses are self-reported, the consistency across multiple performance indicators provides a structured framework for identifying high-performing companies. This multifaceted approach ensures that our insights are drawn from organizations reporting strong results across various aspects of their business, from talent management to overall performance. By using specific, measurable criteria rather than subjective self-categorization, we've aimed to create a more robust basis for comparison.



Total Rewards mix: A level playing field

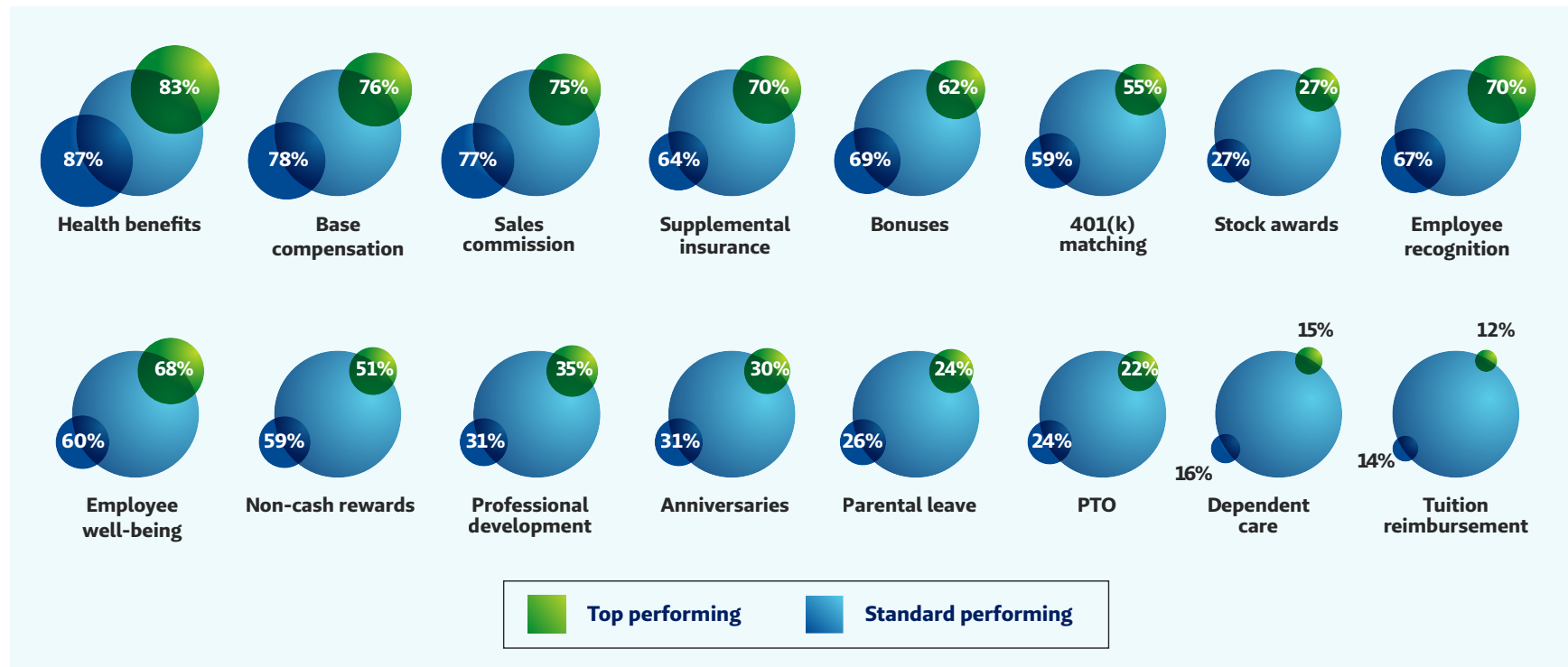
One of the most intriguing findings of our study is the remarkable similarity in Total Rewards offerings across both top-performing and standard-performing companies.

The graph below reveals that the components of Total Rewards packages are strikingly consistent across the board. From health benefits and base compensation to non-cash and stock awards, the differences between top performers and others are minimal.

This data challenges the notion that success is simply about offering more perks or higher compensation. Instead, it suggests that the true differentiator lies in how companies strategically implement and communicate their Total Rewards within the broader context of their talent strategy.

As we've explored throughout this report, top performers distinguish themselves through their approach to culture, EVP, strategic alignment of rewards, and consistent communication, not through a radically different mix of Total Rewards components

The nearly identical mix of rewards underscores a crucial point we've emphasized throughout this white paper: It's not just what you offer, but how you leverage these offerings to attract, engage, and retain top talent that sets high-performing companies apart. This insight reinforces the importance of viewing Total Rewards not as a standalone program, but as an integral part of a comprehensive talent strategy.



About Insperity

At Insperity, it's not just HR outsourcing, it's HR that makes a difference.® Our comprehensive, scalable HR solutions offer an optimal blend of service and technology to facilitate growth by streamlining processes related to payroll, benefits, talent management and HR compliance. We provide the tools to help you lighten your administrative load, maximize productivity and manage HR-related risks so you can focus on growth. Because that's what it means to have a true HR partner.

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