



the **80s**
CALLERS

They Want
Their Recognition
Programs Back



*Avoid Traditional Recognition
Program Problems &
Bring your Programs
Back to the Future*

awardco

WE'VE COME A LONG WAY SINCE THE 1980s

The 80s were awesome. Big hair, power ballads, and personal computers changed our lives forever. Who can forget the first time they played Pong, their first mix tape, or the first time they permed their hair? Truly priceless memories. However, technology, music, culture, and fashion changes quickly (thank goodness we left parachute pants behind, amiright?), each one leading to new and different fads, ideas, and technology.

So why hasn't employee recognition and engagement changed along with everything else?

In the 80s, employee recognition often consisted of a pat on the back, a thank you card, and if you were lucky, a printed certificate thanking you for your years of service. Maybe you were taken to lunch for achieving employee of the month. If you were *really lucky*, you might have won a snazzy desk knick-knack for exceeding yearly goals. All pretty standard stuff. Employee engagement, if it was even thought of, was usually an annual all-hands meeting and a

holiday party. If that all sounds suspiciously familiar, you might want to take a hard look at your engagement and recognition programs. ***Your organization might be stuck in the 80s, sporting the employee engagement equivalent of a mullet.*** Bummer, dude.

Come with us on a journey as we take a look at the old way of doing things, appreciate it for what it was, and then never speak of those times again. Let's trim that scraggly employee engagement mullet and bring your recognition programs into the new and wonderful world of today, where things called memes, millennials, and stylishly slick metaphorical haircuts rule the day.

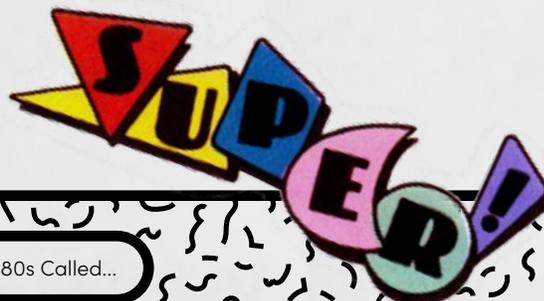


Traditional Recognition Programs



Employee recognition is critical for success. That much is clear—and companies the world over know that, too. **So, what's the problem with traditional recognition programs?** Well, traditional recognition programs fit squarely in the 80s, with antiquated product sourcing and exorbitant pricing. These outdated practices devalue the rewards employees are given and ultimately defeat the purpose of recognition in the first place.

Think of it this way: while you might want your employee engagement programs to be sleek and stylish like Rob Lowe or Zack from *Saved by the Bell* (swoon!), if you have an old, outdated recognition program it might actually be like Zack's friend Screech instead—out of touch, clueless, and all sorts of uncool.



"Put him in a bodybag, Johnny. Yeah!"

Recognition hasn't changed in decades, and it shows. Companies are trying to recognize and engage with their employees more than ever, spending more money than ever, but the percentage of disengaged employees remains unacceptably high. Why?

Redemption Inflation is Killing Employee Morale

If your reward network is limited and you have high markups, the rewards you offer won't have the same impact. It's like spending countless hours and quarters at the arcade winning thousands of tickets to redeem for that rad Super Soaker only to find your tickets afford you a couple gumballs and a stretchy-sticky hand. Talk about a Karate Kid crane kick to the gut! You would have spent far less money if you had bought that Super Soaker outright instead of using tickets. **Inflating the price of rewards is exactly what most current rewards and recognition programs are doing, and it's killing employee morale.** Employees inevitably end up feeling like the rewards they receive aren't worth much, which can lead to employees feeling like they aren't worth much, either.

One example we came across from a **traditional rewards and recognition vendor included a 300% markup on a 3 year old item!** That's like paying 3x more money for a rental at Blockbuster when you could just stream a new release at home (and watch something you actually want to watch).

Limited Catalogs Demotivate Employees

If you wanted to buy something in the 80s, there were pretty much three ways to get it: go to the mall, order by phone, or send for it by mail. Even then you were limited by availability, because not every single issue of *Nintendo Power* magazine included all the awesome Nintendo merch you could get, right?

Current recognition programs suffer the same fate with limited catalogs of items for employees to choose from. With a workforce as diverse as it's ever been, can you really guess what will truly make each employee feel rewarded? If you're offering a choice between a branded windbreaker or a ceramic mug, you're really sending a certain message of value to your employees. **People in today's workforce are used to near limitless choices for their needs and wants.** Why should recognition programs offer anything different?

BOTTOM LINE:
if the value your
recognition program
provides is limited,
employee engagement
will be limited, too.

Are you letting your employees down *time after time*?



WORKFORCE...ENGAGE!

Employee engagement is a much-loved buzzword in the industry. It's tossed around at conference tables, in lunch meetings, and at massive annual conferences. **But what is it?**

Employee engagement is the process of turning disconnected employees into champions that innovate, explore, and improve the culture and processes around them. Engaged employees are, you might say, like the intrepid crew of the Starship Enterprise. (Though their journeys took them through nearly 4 decades of pop culture,

the original crew was perhaps no more popular than in the 80s. Remember the whales? Yep. We thought so.) Every crewmember knew their job and was invested in their projects. Even Commander Spock, who was a seemingly emotionless employee, was an engaged member of the crew. Star Trek is an idealized interpretation of the future, sure, but it's easy to see what engaged employees look like by observing two original Enterprise crewmembers in particular:

DISENGAGED EMPLOYEES



Leonard McCoy

"I'M A DOCTOR, JIM, NOT AN EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT EXPERT!"

- Not invested
- Only does the minimum
- Focuses only on daily tasks
- There for the paycheck
- Might cause you to lose out on vital away missions

CLASS: ENGAGED//DISENGAGED

ENGAGED EMPLOYEES



Montgomery Scott

"AYE CAPTAIN, I'M GIVING HER ALL SHE'S GOT!"

- Looks to improve themselves and their role
- Reaches beyond their responsibilities to help
- Asks for feedback
- Always gives maximum effort
- Can fix your Warp Core with a screwdriver and a plucky attitude

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

When it comes to engagement of your employees, you can't afford NOT to make it a vital part of your organization. Can you put a number on the value of having your very own Enterprise crew boldly tackling problems where no one has tackled problems before?

Now that we've got the basics, let's get down to brass tacks. **We're here to tell you that employee engagement is SUCH a big deal. Bigger than Whitney Houston's hair in 1986 big.** Seriously. Why, then, is it such a big deal?

Well, disengaged employees are costing the U.S. economy over 550 billion dollars annually. Let us say that one more time in a larger font (for effect)....

DISENGAGED EMPLOYEES COST U.S. EMPLOYERS OVER \$550 BILLION ON AN ANNUAL BASIS.

That is a truly huge number. It's definitely bigger than the 1.21 gigawatts Doc Brown needed to power the DeLorean, and it should be every bit as shocking.

This astronomically high number means that employees who aren't invested, aren't looking for ways to improve, and aren't giving their best effort are actually costing you valuable resources that could be better directed to productivity. In fact, a recent Gallup poll suggested that **over 85% of employees show up to work disengaged on a regular basis.** If 85% of employees show up to work disengaged on a regular basis it's no wonder it's costing U.S. employers so much money! If 85% of your starship crew showed up disengaged, you definitely wouldn't be exploring strange new worlds. Just sayin'!

While in reality it may not be possible to expect every employee to be engaged every second of every day, you can help your employees be more engaged on a more regular basis. Doing so will have a direct impact on culture, productivity, and your organization's bottom line. **But how does one do that...**

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PRESS START

Employee engagement can sometimes seem as scary as a chorus line of zombies dancing to Thriller, but it doesn't need to be.

It can actually be a simple part of your overall employee strategy; and since **engaged employees are about 17% more productive than their peers**, it can have a massive impact on your bottom line, too. The best employee engagement programs consist of three key components:

1. Feedback

Looking at the *Man in the Mirror*

You might not think this rings true, but a recent study found that **over 90% of employees actually want to hear good quality feedback**—and they would prefer to hear it as frequently as once a week. **43% of highly engaged employees receive feedback at least once a week**, and you can bet that's because they're asking.

Feedback is like looking at the man in the mirror. Without the ability to look objectively at yourself and those who look to you for leadership, you may not be able to give the kind—or quality—of feedback that will get people to change their ways and become more engaged.

2. Performance Management

It's Not All *Black and White*

Performance management isn't about seeing things in black and white and telling people "who's bad" (sorry, not sorry). It's about encouragement and closing that feedback loop. If you have value-driven feedback mechanisms for employees, managers, and the company as a whole, your engagement program will skyrocket.

If you offer feedback but don't follow up and provide employees the necessary tools to improve, such feedback becomes irrelevant. Conversely, if your company doesn't act on the feedback they receive from employees, you'll face feedback fatigue, and your employees will feel like their voice doesn't matter.

3. Recognition

Employees Will Love *The Way You Make Them Feel*

Of the three keys to employee engagement, recognition is the most important. Feedback and performance management without recognition can be a heavy-handed tool to force engagement rather than encourage it. Kinda like having Arnold Schwarzenegger's Terminator be in charge of your engagement programs. *Shudder*

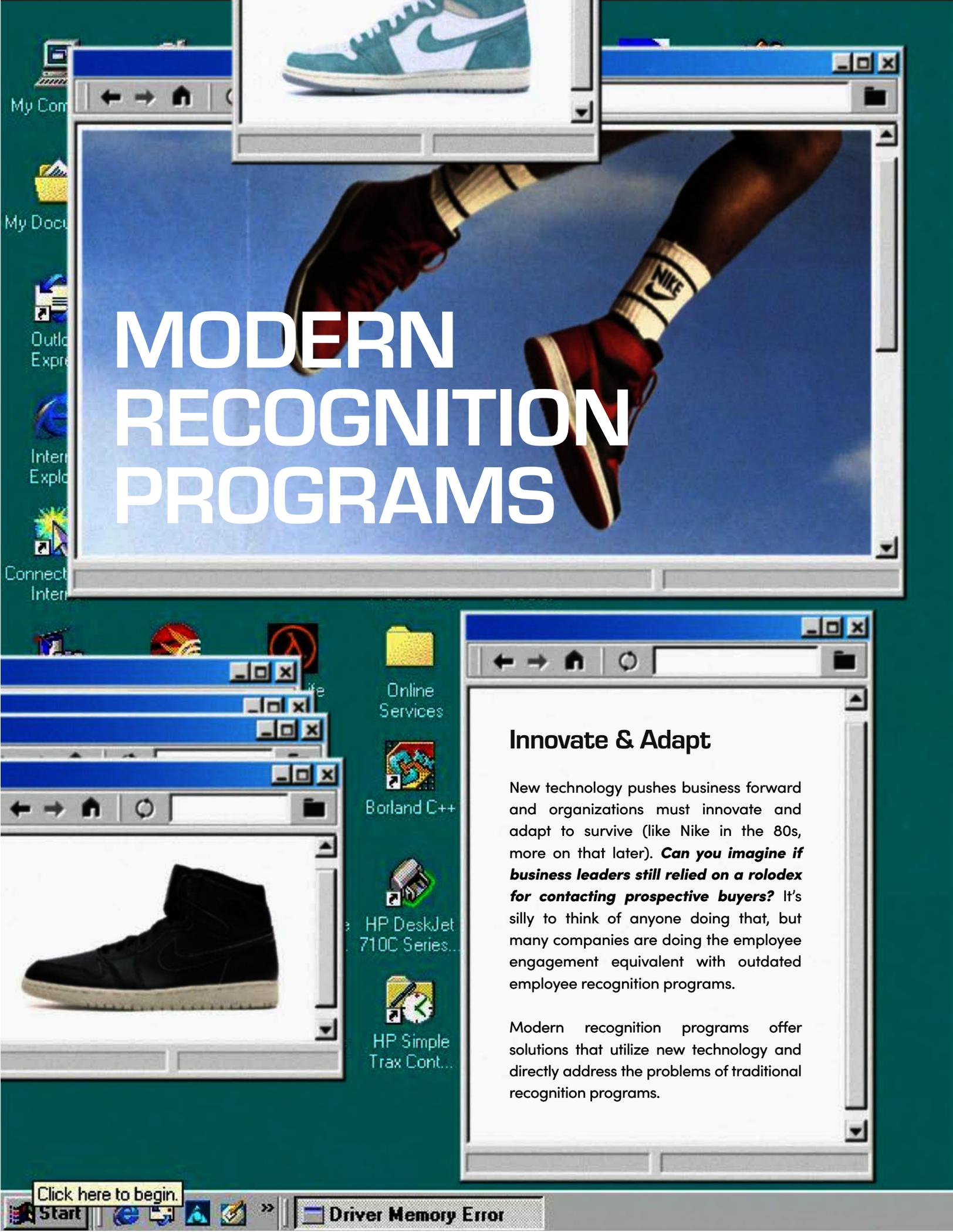
Recognition has an impact on turnover, happiness, productivity, and the bottom line of your organization. In fact, **recognition can improve engagement by 2x, reduce turnover by 31%, and improve productivity by 17%**. While that's a lot of percentages at once, think of it this way: a 17% productivity boost would recoup U.S.

companies over \$93 billion a year from that \$550 billion lost annually as a result of disengaged employees. It's really quite simple—recognition ties organizational values to positive emotions, positive emotions drive behavior, and improving behavior becomes powerful engagement. Recognition makes your employees rave about the way you make them feel instead of lament about being struck by a smooth criminal.

A 17% productivity boost would save U.S. companies over \$93 billion a year!!!



Ahh, the 80s...a simpler time of MTV, killer dance moves, and terrible makeup.



MODERN RECOGNITION PROGRAMS

Innovate & Adapt

New technology pushes business forward and organizations must innovate and adapt to survive (like Nike in the 80s, more on that later). ***Can you imagine if business leaders still relied on a rolodex for contacting prospective buyers?*** It's silly to think of anyone doing that, but many companies are doing the employee engagement equivalent with outdated employee recognition programs.

Modern recognition programs offer solutions that utilize new technology and directly address the problems of traditional recognition programs.

Click here to begin.

Driver Memory Error



The Perfect Fit

As we saw earlier, if employee rewards aren't dollar-for-dollar, redemption inflation eats away at your budget faster than a Ninja Turtle eats pizza. If you offer employees 100 cereal box tops that are really only worth 50 box tops when they redeem something, that dissuades employees from earning and redeeming rewards. High markups are one culprit of this, but shipping and processing fees factor in as well. Wouldn't it be rad if your recognition program fit and complemented your efforts perfectly, like that one Tetris piece that fits just so?

Modern recognition is like that perfect Tetris piece. (You know, the long skinny one that clears four rows at once!) ***It's simple: employee engagement and recognition programs must eliminate markups and have dollar-for-dollar point redemptions.*** When employees feel their efforts are not only recognized, but adequately rewarded, the true value of your recognition programs can be realized. A program that offers this level of transparency into the value of points and for what they can be redeemed will naturally increase program adoption. And guess what comes with increased adoption? Increased engagement, baby!

A Rewards Buffet

The modern shopper is accustomed to choosing from millions of options online, and modern recognition programs embrace that trend. However, most current employers still offer a limited catalog of items that often can't be redeemed virtually. Offering choice, and a familiar shopping experience (*cough cough* ONLINE), shows employees you care about meeting their needs and you care about their opinions and preferences. Not only that, offering employees near limitless redemption choices ensures they will find something of value to them, reinforcing the value of their recognition. Now THAT is truly powerful.

In the early 80s, shoes typically came in one style and brands copied each other with safe, utilitarian designs. In 1984 Nike revolutionized the industry with the Air Jordan. Nike consulted with Micheal Jordan to offer dynamic new styles and innovative construction. Shoes became a status symbol of choice and individuality. Now you can get Air Jordan's in literally thousands of color and style combinations. Is it any coincidence the Air Jordan is the most popular Nike shoe of all time? It's all about choice.

THE POWER OF CHOICE

When considering employee engagement and recognition programs, think about the people you work with. Would they appreciate more choice? Would YOU appreciate more choice in your life? The last 20 years have been defined by an explosion of freedom to choose: how we get information, how and where we shop, and how we entertain ourselves to name a few. Streaming services, ecommerce, and social networks have all tapped into this human desire for freedom. This has led to the success of the largest retailer of them all...

AMAZON

Amazon thrives because it offers millions of choices. You want a set of dice for your Dungeons and Dragons game that's been going since '84? You got it. You want a documentary about the Berlin Wall coming down? Say no more! Do you

want a replica of the track suit you wore to that Guns N' Roses concert in 1987? Yep. Amazon has that, too. Think about what you could do with the power of Amazon in your recognition programs. Surely there's a recognition platform out there that understands this need, right? Right...

Awardco is the only employee engagement and recognition platform to offer millions of choices for redemption through a partnership with Amazon Business—all with zero markups and inexpensive shipping right to your door. Let's see here...no markups and zero redemption inflation? Check. Near limitless choices and a familiar shopping experience to encourage adoption of the program? Check. Increased retention and improved workplace culture? Check. We could go on and on...

Be excellent to your employees, and party on, dudes!



WHO YA GONNA CALL?



There is no redemption inflation. Only Awardco.

As we've seen, traditional recognition programs are a well-intentioned mess from the 80s, and just like blow-out perms no one likes them. Modern recognition programs that offer near limitless choice, zero redemption inflation (i.e. markups), increased adoption and engagement, and a familiar experience are the only way we'll be able to bring engagement and recognition programs into the present day.

BACK TO THE FUTURE

It's time to put down that Rubik's Cube and bring your recognition programs into the modern age. Make recognition your competitive edge by providing millions of choices, eliminating markups and shipping fees, and giving employees a familiar, yet unique, redemption experience.

With Awardco you're not only providing the best experience possible, you're giving employees the chance to choose something they truly value—even if that's a super rare Ghostbusters action figure with action zapping ray, nutrona blaster, and proton pack. When your employee engagement and recognition programs need a boost, who ya gonna call?...

awardco

Let us help take your recognition and rewards programs from huge bummer to totally rad.

Schedule a demo at awardco/start or call 800.320.0893.



NEW



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