



# ALIGNING STRATEGY AND CULTURE FOR SUCCESS

Leverage the power of cloud-based recognition and engagement, and unlock your people's potential.

# WHITE PAPER

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# CONTENTS

Aligning organisational strategy and culture	2
A purpose-built recognition and engagement platform	4
A systematic approach to program design	9
Putting your recognition and engagement program to work	11
Partnering with Achievement Awards Group	13

# ALIGNING ORGANISATIONAL STRATEGY AND CULTURE

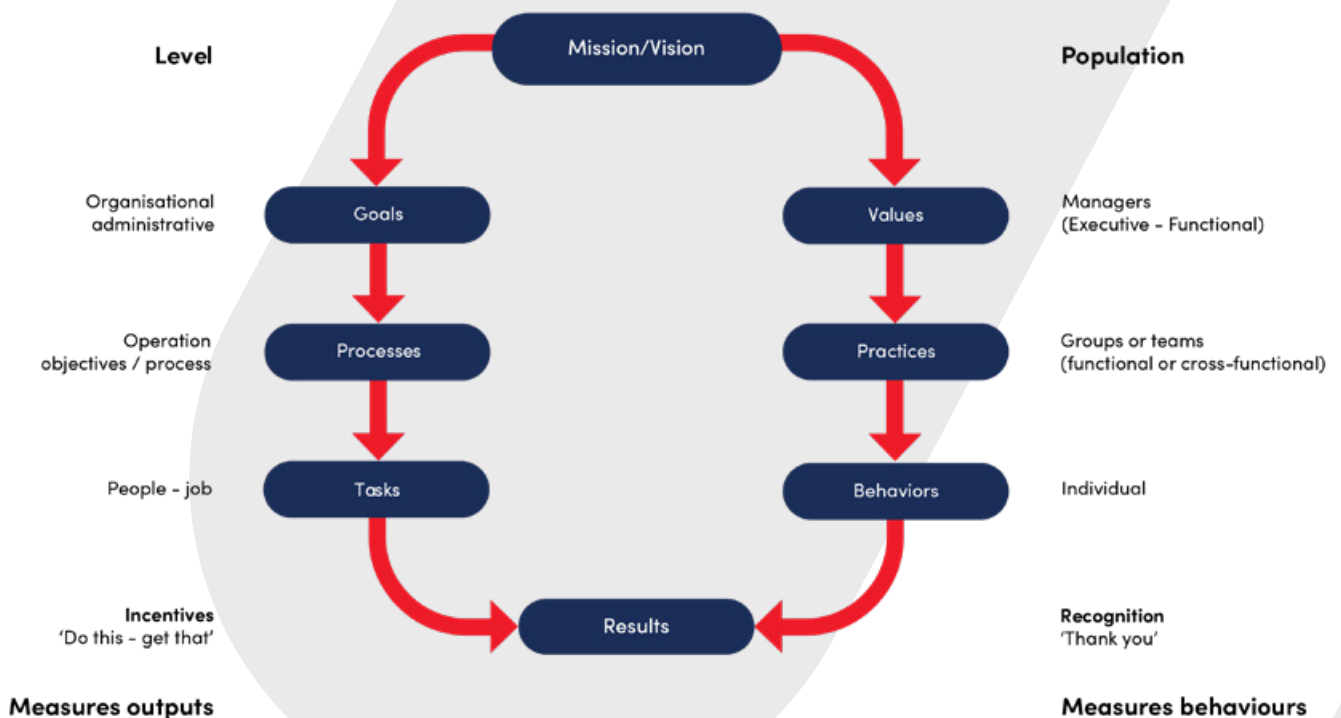
Engage. Motivate. Reward.

Traditionally, organisations have always put strategy first. Strategic goals, objectives and priorities – these have long been thought to be the building blocks of organisational success. And, of course, strategy is important. It's what guides a business forward. But it is not what drives a business forward.

Only culture can do that.

Management guru, Peter Drucker is famously quoted for saying, 'Culture eats strategy for breakfast' because Drucker understood that it is people who implement strategic plans. People put strategy into action.

Formal, scientific studies prove again and again that aligned organisations – where strategy and culture are in synergy – produce better results.



*Acknowledgement: Aligning the human Performance System, D. Tosti & J. Amarant hpt hHandbook, 2006*

*Organisational alignment model*

At Achievement Awards Group (AAGroup), we design, develop and implement recognition and engagement programs that achieve real alignment – where strategy and culture reinforce one another in a virtuous cycle.

The result is a unified, aligned and engaged workforce, moving in the same direction, executing strategy, and achieving desired business outcomes.

All of our employee recognition and engagement programs are underpinned by our cloud-based platform. The platform is unique in the way that it focusses people's productivity by linking their actions and behaviours with organisational goals and values.

We call it dual-purpose recognition.

## Dual-purpose recognition

Every message of recognition created on our platform requires that employees link it, either with a relevant strategic goal, or with an organisational value that resonates with meaning.

These messages of recognition and appreciation appear on the platform's newsfeed, drawing people's attention to the actions and behaviours that support the organisation's strategy.

Essentially, strategy in action.

Values-linked messages, on the other hand, serve to activate culture by operationalising the organisation's values.

When employees are recognised by their managers and peers for living the values, what this means really, is that the organisation's values have come to life – either through human action or human interaction.

Soon, values-based recognition flows up, down and across the organisation. And before long, it manifests in a new-found culture of collaboration, co-operation and innovation.

By combining the power of goal-based and values-based recognition, our recognition and engagement platform aligns strategy and culture for success.

# A PURPOSE-BUILT RECOGNITION AND ENGAGEMENT PLATFORM

Holistic, by design.

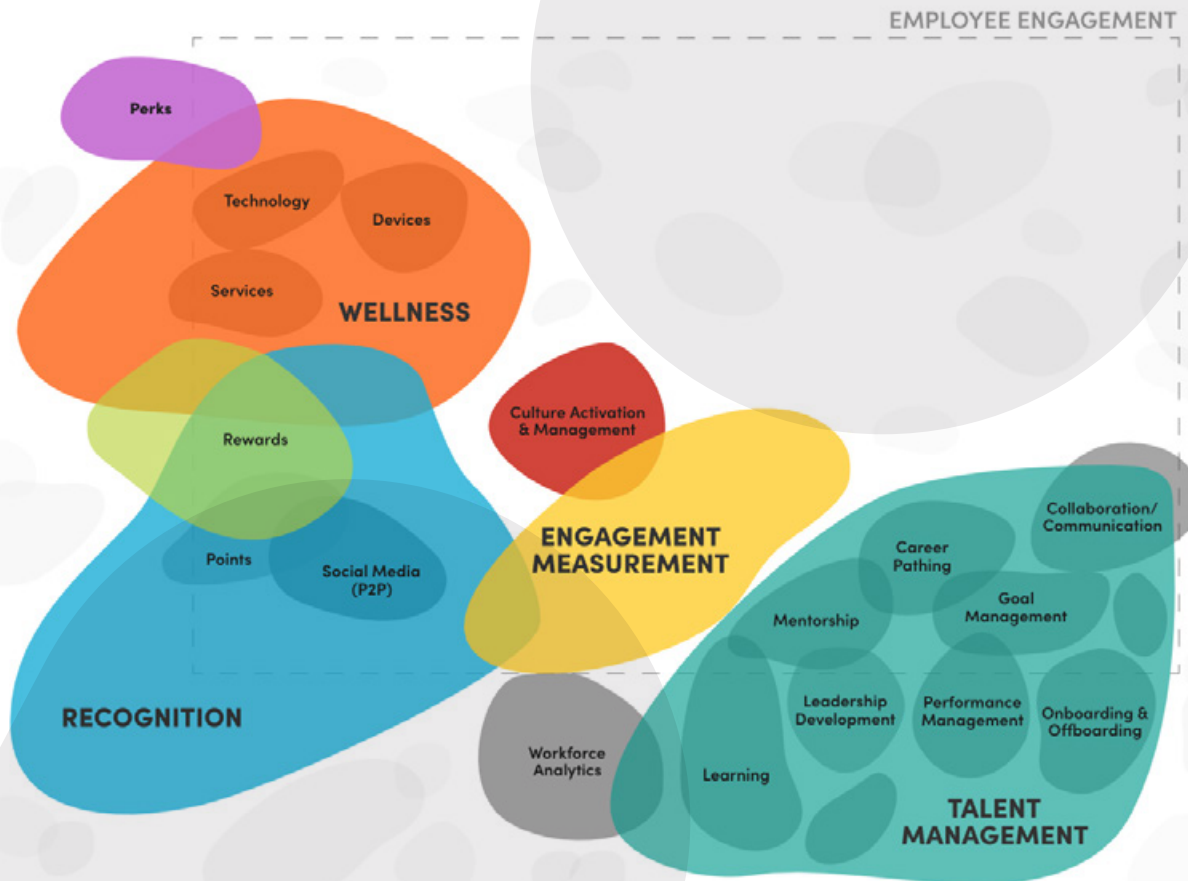
Our cloud-based platform represents over 40 years of thought leadership in employee recognition and engagement. It was built with the intention of combining key components of the total rewards strategy:

- Recognition
- Compensation (inclusive of local, regional and international reward fulfilment capabilities)
- Continuous performance management
- Talent development



Total rewards matrix Source: World at Work, 2018

Our platform's ever-expanding functionality encompasses additional components of the employee experience, including online learning, leadership development, strategic communication, culture management, and feedback.



Employee engagement ecosystem Source: Starr Conspiracy Report, 2019

As a single destination for employee recognition and engagement, our platform is a rich repository of employee data. Pulled into live dashboards and reports, business leaders have access to actionable insights, enabling faster, smarter decision-making.

Seven applications to optimise the employee experience

Our platform has seven distinct, yet interconnected, applications:

- Dual-purpose recognition
- Ongoing communication and engagement
- Survey-driven insights and feedback
- Online learning
- Meaningful rewards
- Behavioural analytics, performance measurement and reporting
- A gamified experience

# 1 Dual-purpose recognition

Our purposeful recognition application fosters the practice of day-to-day, social recognition, as well as more formal, performance-based recognition. Combining the power of goal-based and values-based recognition, the platform aligns strategy and culture for improved performance.

The platform supports three recognition types:

## **Peer-to-peer social recognition (Thanks)**

Enables everyone in the organisation to send and receive messages of thanks, praise, appreciation and support.

## **Peer-to-peer performance recognition (Nomination)**

Empowers everyone to nominate a colleague or team to receive a points reward for the value they add to the organisation. A manager / budget controller is responsible for approval of the reward and, if needs be, the reversion of the nomination to a 'Thanks'.

## **Leader-driven recognition (Appreciation)**

Allows managers (or points budget controllers) to recognise and reward employees, reinforcing the link between strategy, culture and success.

A unique 'boost' function enables budget controllers to elevate an existing recognition event with additional bonus points. This function supports a key tenet of effective recognition – the collective commitment of leaders to demonstrable recognition and appreciation.

Working with our clients, we create custom recognition processes that are role or event specific. Tailoring recognition and engagement around an organisation's unique structure and strategy ensures better program take-up and traction.

# 2 Ongoing engagement and communication

Connecting our clients' employees to the company's strategy, mission and values requires communication that reaches the right people at the right time and with the right message.

Our platform has several communication tools to achieve this:

## **Company newsfeed**

Employees can view recognition in real time and join in the celebration as messages of gratitude are shared across the organisation. Employees can show their support by 'liking' contributions and leaving comments.

## **Company page builder**

Platform administrators can create custom pages to communicate key messages across the business.

## **Interactive profiles and personal dashboards**

Employees can monitor their personal performance and engagement levels. They can also learn more about their colleagues and track their progress.

## **Direct chat**

A direct chat feature facilitates information flow and idea-sharing between individuals.

## **Emails and in-app notifications**

The platform automatically keeps individuals informed of relevant messages that they may have missed.



#### **Custom communication schedules**

Program coordinators can drive strategic communications using the platform's communication tools, which support rich media content, such as videos, slide shows and presentations. They can also setup communication proactively, and the platform will distribute the messages according to schedule.

### **3 On the pulse, with questions that matter**

Staying on the pulse of employee sentiment is key to effective engagement. Our platform enables clients to gather fast feedback using pulse surveys. Surveys can be pre-scheduled or created spontaneously, and clients can choose from pre-set surveys or customise their own.

### **4 Integrated online learning and assessment**

Our platform's learning application provides training opportunities for managers, leaders and employees who want to positively influence the people around them through recognition and appreciation.

#### **Best-in-class recognition training**

Our platform has a recognition training program tailored for each user group: employees, administrators, managers and executive leaders. The manager program, particularly, equips managers in best practice recognition, which is vital given their role in driving performance-based results.

#### **Customised online learning**

Clients can load their own learning content and engage their employees in interactive learning experiences. From quick quizzes to full-scale, certificated courses, employees are empowered to become life-long learners. Real-time tracking and progress reports improve training efficacy.

### **5 Reward with meaning**

Clients can reinforce the behaviours that drive their organisational success with reward experiences that are meaningful, memorable and personal. Our platform boasts the world's largest range of employee-centric rewards.

#### **Reward cloud**

Our cloud-based reward platform offers over 800 000 rewards with delivery in 185 countries. Merchandise, digital rewards, gift cards and charitable rewards: They all come together in a single, customisable, AI-powered reward platform.

#### **awardscard®**

From pre-paid, digital debit cards for online spend to physical cards with adjustable spend limits, our **awardscard®** range is available in multiple currencies, and is securely backed by Visa and Mastercard.

#### **Digital vouchers**

From airtime and data to in-store shopping and unforgettable experiences, digital vouchers are the ideal way to reward with instant gratification. Our ever-expanding range means there's something for everyone.

#### **Experiences**

Experience rewards create positive memories and brand associations. Our experience rewards span the worlds of nature, sports, adventure, hobbies, skills and learning, and romance.

### **Incentive travel**

Our IATA-accredited incentive travel experts have travelled the world to bring our clients the best travel destinations and deals. Every trip is planned and executed to perfection, giving our clients' top performers everything they deserve.

## **6 Measure success**

To validate the connection between employee behaviour and business performance, we combine in-depth program knowledge with a data-driven approach.

Drawing on hundreds of individual user data points, our platform generates easy-to-interpret people analytics and talent data, displayed in dashboards that help to enhance program effectiveness. These value-adding insights are available in real-time, 24/7.

Our dashboards cover the following aspects of program activity:

1. Participant registration
2. Usage and sign in
3. Social activity
4. Recognition activity
5. Points activity (corporate account; program budgets; participant earn, spend and account balances)

Moving beyond the analysis of recognition and engagement data, our behavioural analytics provide profound insight into workforce dynamics. From gaining a better understanding of which talent dimensions drive performance to analysing the behaviour of high-performing teams, these deep-dive analytics help organisations make better talent management decisions. Decisions that lead to better performance, and results.

## **7 A gamified experience**

### **Behaviour change is fun**

Once a program's core metrics have been entrenched, and with an expansive database of performance and behavioural insights generated by the platform during the first year of operation, we highly recommend that clients consider gamifying their program.

Using motivational nudges, performance triggers and feedback loops, our gamification application draws players into a fun world of learning and performance. The effect is deeper engagement and measurable behavioural change.

### **Immersive motivation**

Players participate in missions linked to platform and program engagement, essentially advancing individuals within their respective roles through five stages of proficiency, from novice to master.

### **XP: Experience points**

Experience points are awarded for accomplishing unique missions and tasks. Points, badges and leaderboards serve as powerful motivators, triggering the drives to acquire and defend status and awards, while advancing in skills and proficiency.

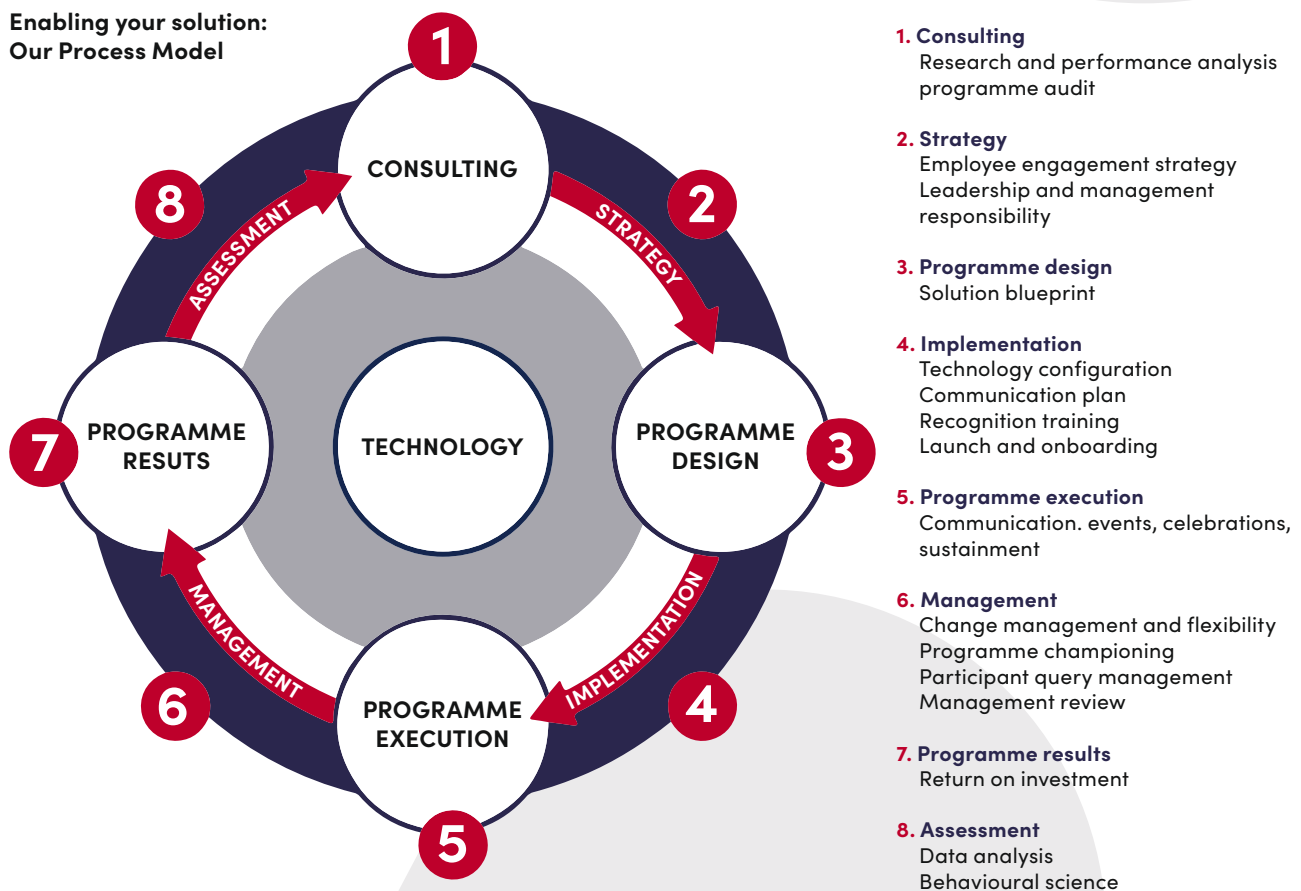
# A SYSTEMATIC APPROACH TO PROGRAM DESIGN

## Our systems-based design framework

From initial consultation, through to research and design, platform configuration, program launch and reward fulfilment, we provide our clients with expert, end-to-end support.

To operationalise our clients' programs, we have developed a unique, systems-based design framework proven to deliver results.

### Enabling your solution: Our Process Model



## Design rooted in research

### Executive one-on-one interviews

Using Gap and 5Qs methodology, we conduct a needs analysis to define a client's recognition and engagement requirement.

### Group facilitated workshops and focus groups

We cross-validate executive findings with middle management to ensure alignment and to validate current and desired states.

### Engagement survey

To establish a baseline for engagement, we use our thought leadership-driven employee engagement survey, powered by eValue. This survey provides evidence-based data that informs performance targets and ROI calculations.

# Human-centred design

## **Persona development, user journeys and workflows**

Our persona-based journey maps serve as important design tools to understand users' current experience, and to identify opportunities for deeper engagement.

## **Conceptualisation and design**

Drawing on research findings and leveraging human-centred design, we develop a unique strategic positioning for the client's engagement program.

To operationalise engagement, we work through each sub-system of our framework towards the achievement of truly customised and co-created solution.

## **Goal setting**

We determine the performance-based program goals and agree on the SLA operational goals.

## **Program metrics**

We define the program metrics, align them with the program goals and link them with the performance feedback systems.

## **Pre-launch, launch, registration and onboarding**

We co-ordinate all the components of a successful launch, from program and platform branding, communication and configuration to in-person and online training.

## **Communication, collaboration and dialogue**

Our in-house creative agency develops a comprehensive communications plan and content that triggers behavioural change.

## **Learning and talent leadership**

Our train-the-trainer, face-to-face courses cover best-practice program and platform training, supported by a robust repository of online learning content, with the capability to load customised content, and to link to third-party learning providers.

## **Enabling technology**

We configure our points-based platform and activate the applications required for successful engagement, including dual-purpose recognition, rewards, learning, communications, feedback and reporting.

## **Rewards**

Our rewards team curates a bespoke reward offering drawn from our extensive range of rewards, including merchandise, digital vouchers, **awardscards**<sup>®</sup>, experience rewards and travel. The offering is then integrated with the client's corporate points trust system and retailer settlement accounts.

## **Feedback systems**

Our platform provides dashboards with real-time views and analysis of key indicators, such as registration, login rates, social activity, recognition and engagement performance, rewards and fulfilment, survey participation rates, and leaderboards.

For program administrators, reports cover member database, corporate points, points banking activity and budget control reports. We can also create custom dashboards with client-specified ROI measures and behavioural insights.

## **Leadership & program management responsibilities**

Following a strong, partner-led approach, we host executive report-back meetings and regular operational check-ins to ensure that our management performance maintains the highest standards.

# PUTTING YOUR RECOGNITION AND ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM TO WORK

## Expert management support

In delivering world-class engagement solutions, we offer our clients a full implementation and support infrastructure.

### **BUSINESS DIRECTOR**

Owns and maintains the strategic relationship with the client, providing program oversight, consultancy, design and directional input.

### **ACCOUNT MANAGER**

Maintains primary relationship with the client's recognition and engagement team and is responsible for program implementation and day-to-day management, including budgeting and invoicing.

### **PROGRAM CO-ORDINATOR**

Provides operational and administrative support and works with data team to manage program data infrastructure and report preparation.

### **DATA ANALYST**

Informs, organises and analyses program and platform data. Presents analytic services and insights to clients, emphasising data-driven strategic insights to drive business performance.

### **CREATIVE SERVICES**

Award-winning content creators and developers provide communication strategy, planning and execution, as well as ongoing campaign development and deployment across multiple channels and platforms.

### **REWARD & FULFILMENT SERVICES**

Sources, supplies and delivers the world's widest range of rewards using the latest thinking in behavioural science to ensure that every experience is personal, meaningful and memorable.

### **HELPDESK SUPPORT**

Manages the participant interface and resolves platform queries via built-in, interactive helpdesk function and via phone. Also provides engagement data for analysis and review.

### **CONTACT CENTRE SUPPORT**

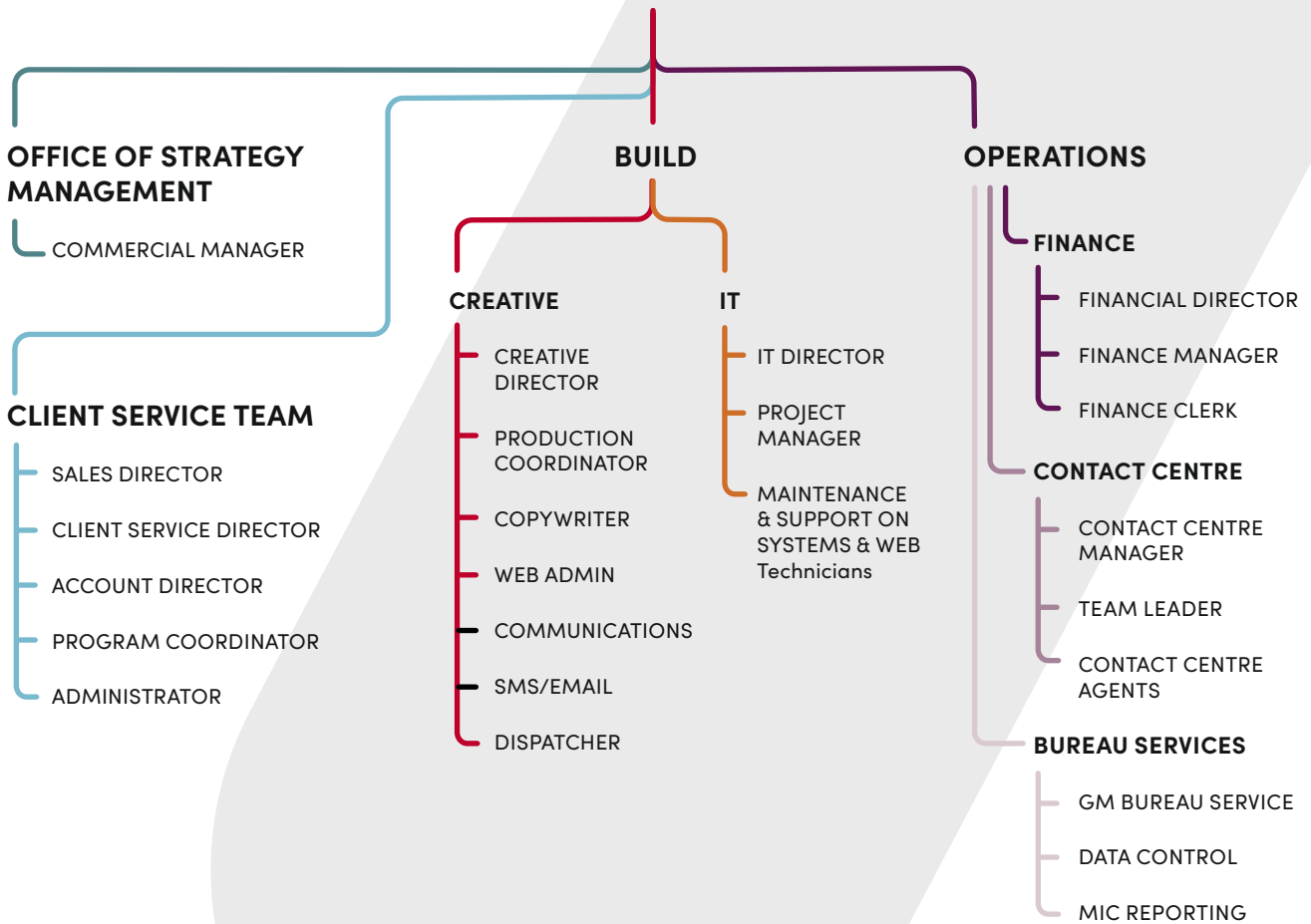
Access to dedicated call centre agents who deliver aftersales support for reward fulfilment and fast resolution of participant queries.

## FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SUPPORT

Assists in the area of forecasting, financial analysis, financial reporting and pre- and post-program closing analysis to ensure effective ROI.

It is useful to see the structure of our recognition and engagement support services within our larger organisational ecosystem.

## AAGroup support Team Organisational Chart



AAGroup project team structure

## The people who understand people

To understand what motivates people, we work with our academic partners and thought leaders, applying the latest behavioral science and psychology to positively influence employee behaviour.

# THE ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS GROUP CONTRIBUTORS



*Dr Preeya Daya, PhD  
Academic & Executive  
Director*

Dr Preeya Daya is an experienced human resource practitioner, academic and consultant with a demonstrated history of working across a range of industries, both in South Africa and abroad. She is skilled in leadership, creating high performance organisations and teams, enabling diverse and inclusive work environments, facilitating employee engagement, driving culture change, and utilising performance management as a key business tool.



*Prof Kurt April, PhD  
Executive Consultant*

Professor Kurt April is the resident chair and director of the Allan Gray Centre for Values-Based Leadership, a Sainsbury Fellow and tenured professor of leadership, diversity and inclusion at the Graduate School of Business at UCT. He is also a lecturer for Saïd Business School at Oxford University in the UK, and a faculty member of Duke Corporate Education at Duke University in the US.



*Dane Amyot, BCom  
Director of Product*

In his role as DIP, Dane Amyot is a leading thinker and adviser on innovation-led growth. He is the group's foremost expert on new-product development and new business model creation. Dane led the team that created bountiXP, a cloud-based platform that provides a 360-degree, employee-centric experience of recognition and engagement. He also spearheaded the project to design South Africa's best-practice employee recognition and engagement program guide. Today, he is regarded as a thought leader in the space.

# AAGROUP AT A GLANCE

**40 YEARS**

at the forefront of the industry

**1 000 000+  
PARTICIPANTS**

across various AAGroup  
engagement programs

**15 MILLION**

people in data holding

**300 MILLION**

data transactions processed  
every month

**14.5 BILLION**

program points issued

**13 MILLION**

**awardscard®** transactions

**3.5 MILLION**

rewards delivered





#### CONTACT US

Achievement Awards Group (Pty) Ltd  
14 Stibitz Street, Westlake, 7945  
Cape Town, South Africa

PO Box 234, Plumstead, 7801  
Cape Town, South Africa

+27 21 700 2300  
enquiries@awards.co.za  
www.awards.co.za

We specialise in end-to-end engagement solutions using a holistic approach that connects employees, sales and channel partners, and customers.

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