

O.C. Tanner

O.C. TANNER appreciate.

Company Profile

INDUSTRY

Goods and Services

HEADQUARTERS

Salt Lake City, UT

EMPLOYEES

1,500

WEBSITE

www.octanner.com

About

O.C. Tanner helps companies around the world recognize and appreciate employees who do great work. Committed to leading the recognition industry through research, insights and innovation, O.C. Tanner equips thousands of clients in 150 countries with powerful ways to value and appreciate their people. Currently, O.C. Tanner delivers over 4.2 million awards each year to its clients, enabling these companies to experience measurable growth in their people, brands and bottom lines.

Empowering Employees Leads to Significant Gains for O.C. Tanner



Twenty-five years ago, O.C. Tanner decided to focus on building a high-trust corporate culture. During this time, the company moved from an authoritative culture to one of trust and employee empowerment. As a result of their transformed culture, they have seen dramatic improvements to their business performance.

The Challenge

O.C. Tanner is the world's largest recognition company, providing career achievement, performance and recognition solutions for many of the world's most admired companies, including 29 of the [Fortune 100 Best Companies to Work For](#)®. "While we were very successful and the dominant leader in our industry, we weren't necessarily a great place to work," said Gary Peterson, Executive Vice President of Supply Chain at O.C. Tanner.

According to Peterson, the company had an established culture that was characterized by a top-down, controlling and autocratic approach. Rather than glean valuable input from employees, O.C. Tanner's leaders simply solved people's problems for them, a practice that ignored the positive impact people can have on a company's processes and performance.



"I think one of the most important steps we took was training every employee in the company to treat each other with respect. **We changed our mindset to one where we're working to help other people be successful**, instead of always thinking about how other people can help 'me' be successful."

-Gary Peterson, Executive Vice President of Supply Chain

O.C. Tanner

By The Numbers

At O.C. Tanner:

92%

of employees are proud to tell others where they work

91%

of employees feel proud of their accomplishments

87%

of employees want to work here for a long time

86%

of employees feel they make a difference here

Source: Great Place to Work® Trust Index® Employee Survey

The Solution

The transition to becoming a more employee-focused organization began with a three-pronged strategy.

First, leadership embraced a philosophy that those who are closest to the work have the greatest potential to influence and improve its processes. Next, leaders made sure team members understood how their work contributes to the company's goals and success. Finally, the company invested in ongoing training and learning, believing that if they focused on equipping employees with the knowledge they needed to do their jobs, great results would follow.

A couple of the best practices O.C. Tanner initiated in order to enable employees to understand how their work impacted company goals included providing on-site English as a Second Language (ESL) classes for their many international employees, and forming a Strategy Deployment Program (SDP) for all employees. O.C. Tanner's ESL classes helped foster better communication, collaboration and confidence within teams, and led to numerous improvements to both processes and performance. The SDP meets every five months and during these

meetings leaders empower employees to take ownership of the company's success by having teams choose and plan their performance goals.

As part of their ongoing training initiatives, O.C. Tanner offers classes in everything from problem-solving to leadership development. "By doing a lot of training, we help employees understand that saving two seconds here or three pennies there is a very big deal," said Peterson. It is also important to create an environment where people can learn and grow. "I believe that focusing on learning and improvement leads to better results than focusing on results," he shared.

O.C. Tanner has also launched a Quality, Efficiency, and Delivery (QED) program that allows employees to track team goals. This program fosters camaraderie amongst team members and creates a close-knit, trust-based atmosphere where everyone cheers each other on to achieve daily goals. A company that understands first-hand the value of rewarding good work, O.C. Tanner pays a semi-annual profit-sharing bonus to all team members that contribute to QED achievements.

The Results

"The most impressive result we've achieved in the last 25 years is the empowerment of our people."

—Gary Peterson, Executive VP of Supply Chain

Since beginning their journey to become a better workplace, O.C. Tanner has experienced numerous measurable benefits from creating a high-trust culture that empowers employees. A few of their achievements include:

- ★ Order production times dropped from 26 days to 20 minutes.
- ★ Efficiency tripled enterprise-wide.
- ★ Quality reached six-sigma certification levels.
- ★ Inventory turns quadrupled.
- ★ Employee turnover dropped to low single digits.

All of these metrics have led to a much more profitable business, and their trust-based culture has landed O.C. Tanner a spot on *Fortune's* 100 Best Companies to Work For® list. Peterson credits the company's appreciation-focused strategy for fueling employees' desire to continually make improvements. "Our mission, internally and externally, is to appreciate people who do great work, because celebrating great work inspires people to invent, to create and to discover. When people are inspired, companies grow. We teach every person that they're part of something really powerful — they're helping companies be better with their people."