

How to Unite Employees After a Merger and Acquisition Through an Employer-Branded Platform

EG Australia brings 4,500 dispersed employees together using technology to communicate purpose, values and 'The way we work together'



RewardGateway
the employee engagement people





Industry:

Fuel, convenience
and food services



Number of employees:

4,500



Number of locations:

540+



Platform features:

Employee benefits,
employee communication,
reward and recognition,
employee wellbeing

About the company

EG Australia is part of the global Euro Garages (EG) Group, which has over 6,000 fuel, convenience and food services sites around the world. In 2019, EG Australia acquired the Woolworths Fuel and Convenience Business, and has worked to establish a strong, nationwide brand presence and best-in-class retail experience with its 4,500 employees working across over 540 fuel and convenience sites.



The challenge:

The transition of ownership of over 540 fuel and convenience sites from Woolworths Group to EG Australia took a number of years; a process that left many employees feeling disconnected and uncertain about their new employer. EG Australia faced the challenge of getting their 4,500 employees familiar and comfortable with a new brand and to be involved in creating a company culture that was markedly different from that of the previous owners.

For Peter Fotheringham, the Chief People Officer at EG Australia, the immediate priority after the acquisition was uniting a dispersed and disenfranchised workforce under a clear purpose, company values and culture - simply put, the way the team all work together as one team.



Even though we have a large workforce and store network, it feels like we're a start-up business," Peter explains. **"We're setting up our own systems and creating our own culture so we can be a strong differentiator in this market."**

This was no easy feat, seeing as the majority of EG's workforce consists of part-time employees that work independently in fuel and convenience sites all over the country.

In addition to overcoming distance and disconnect, employees were also concerned that the transition from Woolworths Group meant losing access to their exclusive employee discount. Peter knew this was a heavily used benefit that employees would miss, and was keen to find another offering that would strengthen EG Australia's Employee Value Proposition while providing its workforce practical financial support.

Several months after the acquisition was finalised, COVID-19 was announced as a global pandemic and travel in and around Australia decreased significantly. Many of the EG sites were negatively impacted by nation-wide restrictions, leaving employees

feeling isolated and uncertain. EG Australia needed a way to keep both its Support Office staff and its remote employees informed, connected and motivated through a long period of lockdown and beyond.

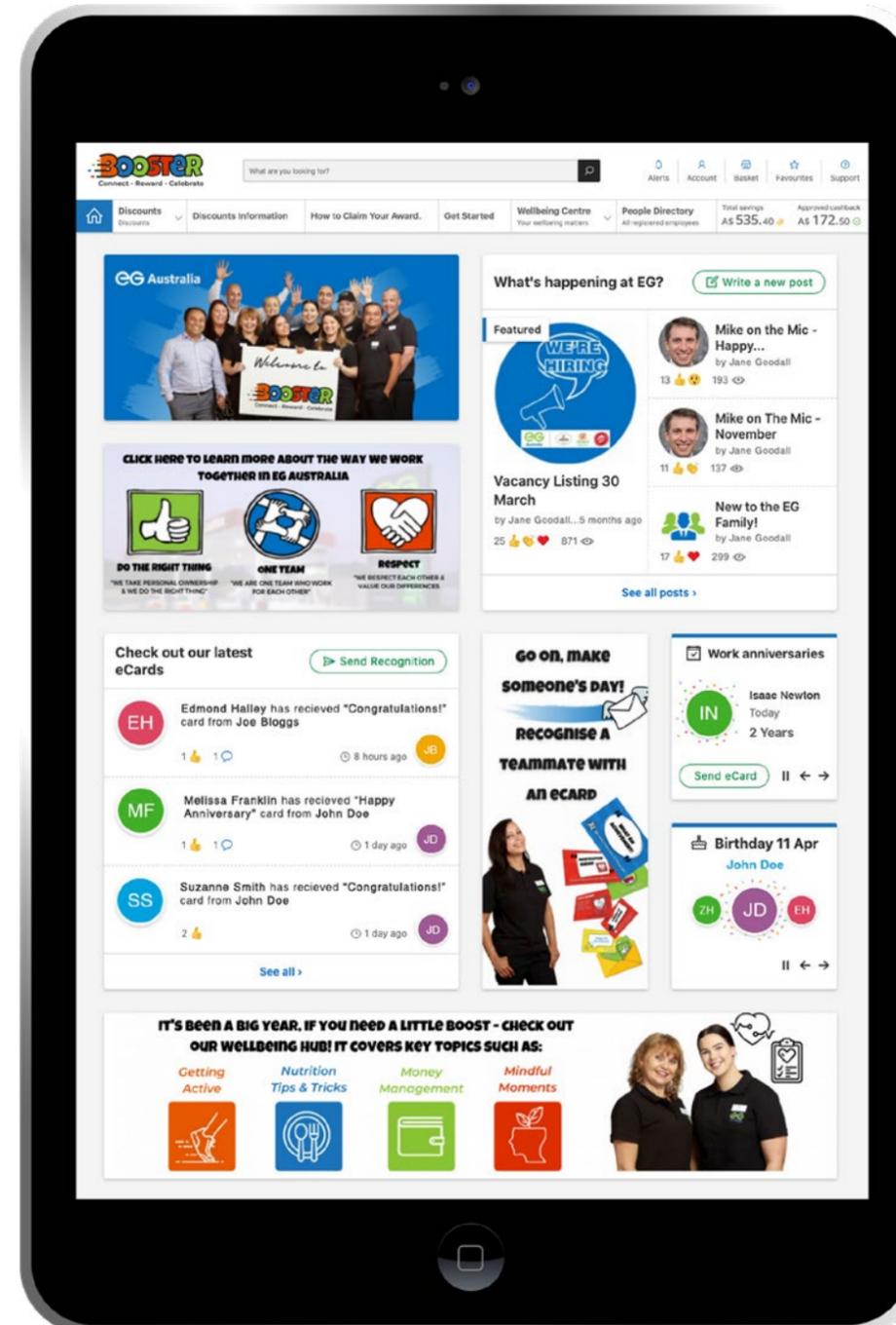


Challenges:

- Uniting 4,500 employees under a central brand after acquisition
- Moving from the previous Woolworths ownership and culture to establish a unique EG Australia identity and culture
- Providing tangible financial support by expanding employees' access to a wide range of exclusive discounts
- Supporting employee connection, motivation and wellbeing at a time when many sites were negatively impacted by nationwide travel restrictions

The approach:

EG Australia knew that in order to successfully bring all its employees on a change journey, it needed to reach and engage all employees no matter where they were working. Luckily, there was support from the leaders in the business to ensure the new EG Australia brand and culture were clearly established, communicated and embedded across the entire business. Peter immediately mobilised his team to start a 'top-down, bottom-up' approach, running workshops across the country over a 4-month period, to help employees identify and define the new culture and company values



We started with asking simple questions like, 'What's important to you,' 'What do you want to see when you're at work?' and 'What don't you want to see?' Peter explained. "Engaging different teams and asking our people those simple questions was the first step in creating our EG culture."

Peter and his team worked to identify themes from the thousands of responses garnered from employees across the country. Instead of calling them company values, they decided to use simpler, more relatable language, launching them as the 'the way we work together.'



After we communicated these, the next part was asking our people 'How do you bring these to life in your store?' Peter said, "We know that each of our different sites have a different focus and what it looks like and how we bring it to life at a Fuel and Convenience site is going to look very different, as an example, to how it looks day-to-day in the Finance Team in our Support Office."

After the workshops were complete and they had a clear understanding of the values and behaviours that would drive EG Australia's success, the design team created graphics and posters to help communicate them across different sites.

They intentionally adopted a more casual style motif, as a deliberate step away from their previous owners's corporate brand. 'We wanted something that showed that we are different, and that we are focussed on the team and the customer,' Peter said. 'This really resonated with employees in the field: it was personal and people-focussed.'

Peter started to look for ways to help bring the 'Way We Work Together' and the new employer brand to life, and also address the need for employees to receive the level of financial support and connection that they were used to. 'When we went to

market, we were looking for something that would provide an immediate benefit for our people,' Peter explained. 'Not only did Reward Gateway's benefits suite provide the Woolworths discount that our people thought they were going to miss out on, it opened up access to so many more retailers, and so many more savings.'

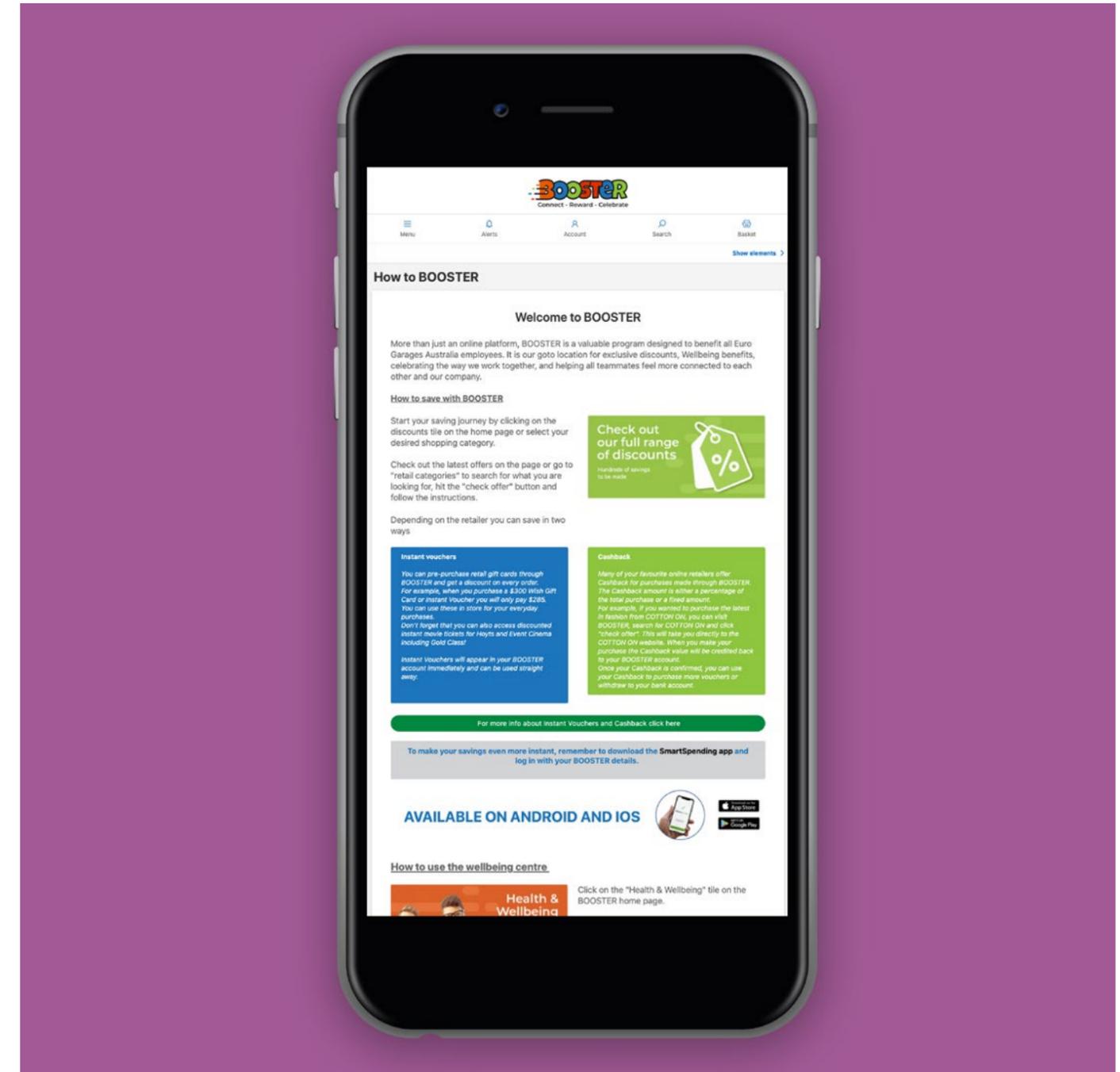
In addition to offering discounts at hundreds of online and bricks and mortar retailers through an employee benefits hub, Peter was also pleased to see Reward Gateway's engagement platform could also provide an easy way to communicate with and recognise and reward EG employees, any time and anywhere.



EG Australia partnered with Reward Gateway to design and launch its own employee engagement platform 'Booster' in a phased approach. Booster's bright colours, employee photographs and approachable branding were central to its design, as it was created to connect all employees, irrespective of their role in the company.

Peter's team started by announcing their continued access to existing and new employee discounts (a good-news story that got everyone excited), then showed employees how to access 'Booster' as their primary channel for receiving important announcements and company blog posts.

Plus, employees can access Booster from any store location from the convenience of their smartphones, since the platform is responsive in design. The team has taught employees how to access the platform via phones by saving Booster to their home screen as a shortcut so they can access it anywhere, anytime.



Instant peer-to-peer recognition for all employees

Shortly after launching the benefits and blog features, EG Australia introduced the first phase of its recognition and reward program: peer-to-peer eCards. These allow employees to recognise anyone else in the business with an eCard, which then appears on a social recognition feed.



“

I've seen other recognition programs that can be clunky, unintuitive and create a big administrative burden. You may get recognised but it would happen months later, when you've already forgotten what it was for," Peter said. "What I love about what we've created here is that it's instant recognition. Our people and our stores operate 24/7 but now they can send each other an eCard that says 'Thanks for coming in and helping me out, 'Thanks for being a great part of our team', or 'You're a great manager' at any time. This works at all levels and it helps cement what matters to us and the 'Way We Work Together.'"

Because eCards and awards are visible on the social recognition wall, everyone across the business – from employees to managers – can 'like' or react to a moment of recognition, comment on it and tag others. 'It's quite infectious,' Peter said. 'They might log in to get a discount from their next Woolies shop but they notice the feed, have a scroll, click on a few and add comments. It takes a few seconds for that ripple effect and it's tremendous.'

EG Australia then introduced reward, which attaches a monetary value to specific types of recognition such as service milestones or meeting sales targets. This gives managers the ability to reward exceptional achievements, and also enables EG Australia to distribute multiple awards with different denominations across their entire workforce in a streamlined,

efficient way. Employees can redeem their rewards against hundreds of retailers immediately from the Booster platform, which provides a straightforward reward and redemption process for both the HR team and the rewardee!



The results:

Booster is now available to all EG Australia employees via any laptop, tablet or mobile phone, at any work site, at a time that suits them. They can read the latest company and CEO updates, send and receive thank yous via their peer-to-peer eCards, and access their rewards all in one place.

The People Team and CEO, Mike McMenamin, keep the content on Booster up-to-date and exciting, so people always have a reason to explore the platform. They refresh the images and layout on a regular basis to reflect seasonal events and company celebrations and publish a monthly newsletter, 'Mike on the Mic' to shine a spotlight on company news. They include a short video message that is normally shot on a smartphone, and print the newsletter so employees have an option of how they prefer to stay informed and connected to the greater business.



We're a customer-facing retail business, so it's no surprise that the majority of our store teams prefer having the option to get their information on their mobile phone," Peter said. **"The recognition and reward element has also helped connect our field teams with leaders across the organisation because they can do it from anywhere. We added birthday and wedding eCards too, to remind people it's not all about work and that social connection outside work matters is something we celebrate here as well.'** Peter said. **'And on top of that, it's not all corporate-looking, it's fun and bright and it looks like us. It's ours.'**

In response to the growing need for physical, nutritional, financial and mental health support for employees, EG Australia also introduced a Wellbeing Centre on the Booster platform. This gives all employees instant, on-the-go access to recipes, exercise videos and hundreds of wellbeing resources from the palm of their hand.

Since launching, **89%** of EG's employees actively use Booster – an outstanding result for a predominantly remote and part-time or casual workforce. Within the first 10 months of launching the platform, EG Australia has delivered over **\$288,000 worth of savings** through its benefits hub and **distributed \$268,000 worth of rewards** to its employees, which amounts to over half a million dollars of financial support straight into the pockets to hard-working Australians all around the country!

EG employees are also embracing instant, peer-to-peer recognition, with **over 11,700 eCards** flowing through the social wall. The participation and excitement this has created across the company has helped keep them informed, connected and motivated through time of transition and unforeseen challenges.



We're a very engaged community, but this added value," Peter said. **"When you deliver a program like this, it raises the spirit and before you know it, people are using it and they realise that the organisation is making an effort to deliver something that adds value to themselves and their family. They feel valued, and that's very important."**

+\$288K

In employee savings in less than 10 months of launch

89%

employees actively using platform

+11.7K

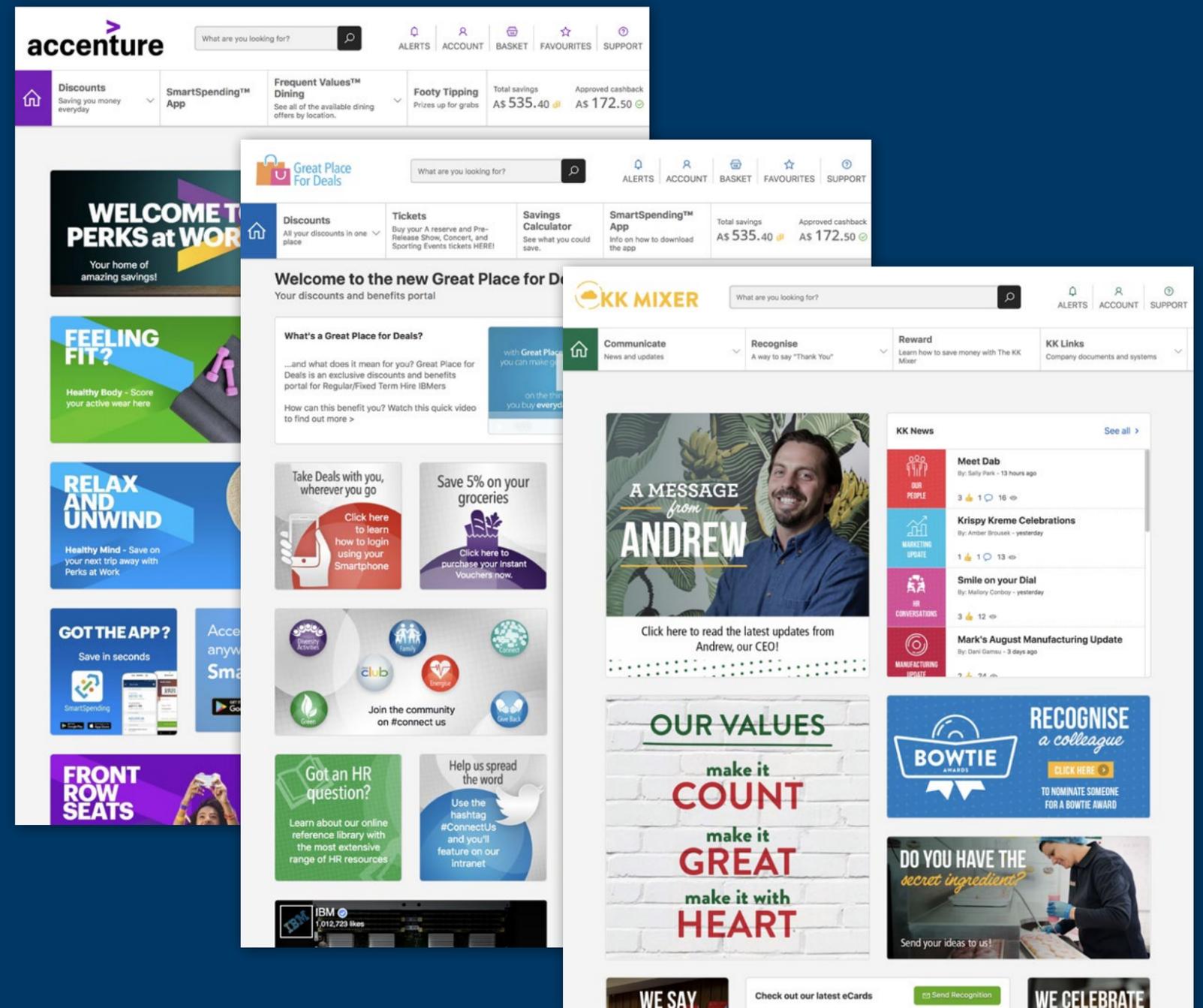
eCards sent

Interested in your own employee engagement solution?

Reward Gateway delivers the only platform that centralises employee benefits, discounts, reward and recognition, employee wellbeing and employee communication tools all in one place.

Email: engage@rewardgateway.com

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Reward Gateway delivers employee engagement solutions to more than 1,900 clients worldwide.