



The perfect gift for your employees

Survey results
Spring 2021



Intro

Employees are the most important asset of any business, and they deserve to be cherished. After all, it won't surprise you that your finest employee is a happy employee. But as an employer, how do you contribute to your team's happiness?

To answer this question, we sent out a survey to over 1,000 employees in Belgium, and 1,000 employees in the Netherlands, in close collaboration with market research agency InSites Consulting. Here's what we learned: workplace happiness is closely related to receiving personal appreciation. And these moments of appreciation aren't limited to the holiday season.

According to our research, employees also like to blow out birthday cake candles, receive words of appreciation when they retire, or celebrate their work anniversaries. Being rewarded for exceptional performance scores high on the list as well. We also asked employees about their favourite gifts. A bottle of wine or snack box are not quite as popular, as these usually just

end up in the pantry forever. But, what do they like then? Gifts that allow them to choose freely!

These are the general insights that emerged from the study. Of course, there are also differences between the regions surveyed. Below, we'll take you through the insights per region. What is the current situation and gift experience of employees? What would their ideal situation be, and which moments truly matter most to them? For Belgium, we'll also address the results for Flanders and Wallonia separately, when they differ significantly.



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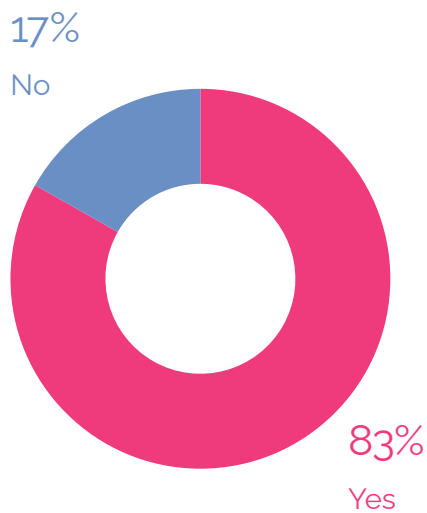
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The Netherlands

1. Current situation

To find out what the ideal gift and time are to appreciate, motivate, thank and reward co-workers, we first had a look at the current situation.

Did you receive a gift from your employer in the past year?



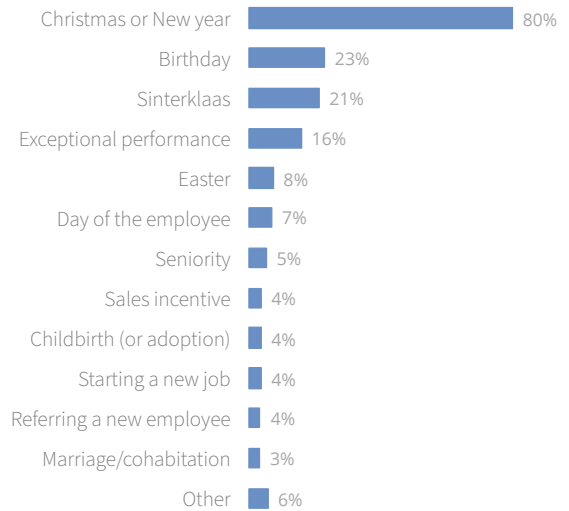
Number of gifts

Last year, 83% of employees received a gift from their employer. This percentage was even higher for young employees (18-34 years old): no less than 91% received a gift. On average, a Dutch employee received 1,8 gifts. Those under the age of 35 even received two on a yearly basis.

Occasions

The holiday season proved to be the perfect time for employers to give back to their employees. As many as 80% of Dutch employees received a gift for Christmas or New Year, and 21% received one for Sinterklaas. Other occasions that prompted employers to reward their employees include their birthday, exceptional performance and Easter.

For which occasions did you receive a gift from your employer last year?



Gifts

Traditional Christmas presents are still far from obsolete. The vast majority of respondents indicated they mostly received food and drinks during the holiday season. For other occasions, they usually received a physical gift or, in rare cases, cash. Gift vouchers (for one or multiple stores) were also given, but mostly for weddings, birthdays or when starting a new job.

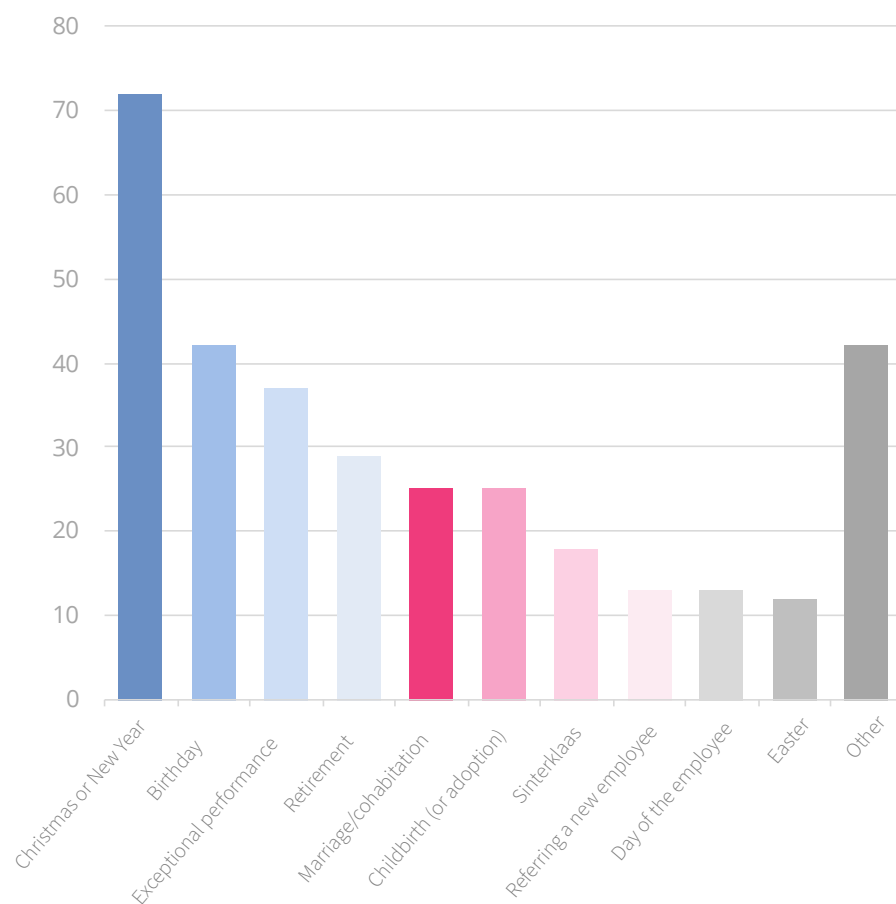
This is remarkable, as most respondents - about 70% - were most satisfied with a gift card or cash. The primary reason for this, as indicated by employees, is that gift cards or cash allow them to freely choose their gifts.

2. Ideal situation

Christmas and New Year are mentioned most in terms of when employees received gifts last year. But which occasions do they value most? And which gift do they prefer? We asked them for their ideal employee gift situation.

Ideal occasion

At what time(s) would you like to receive a gift from your employer?



Aside from the holiday season, personal moments score high on the list of occasions mentioned by Dutch employees.

The holiday season

In ideal situations, the holidays are head and shoulders above other occasions as well. A whopping 72% of employees indicate they'd like to receive a gift for Christmas or New Year. Sinterklaas plays a slightly smaller role, yet 18% of those surveyed still indicate they'd like to receive a gift from the holy man.

Birthdays

After the holidays, birthdays are the perfect occasion to put your employees in the spotlight. No less than 42% of Dutch employees would like to receive gifts from their employers on this festive day. Although all recipients indicate they'd like to receive a birthday present, it's mainly the younger employees (over 50%) who like to celebrate at work.

In other words: birthdays are important moments to employees. And yet, only 23% of employees said they received a birthday gift from their employer last year. A great opportunity for you as an employer to act on this data, and show your appreciation!

Retirement and seniority

In the workplace, there's a time to come and a time to go. These moments deserve special attention, according to the employees surveyed. When they retire, 29% of respondents would like to receive a gift. And unsurprisingly, this wish is more present with older employees (50+) than their younger peers. In contrast, 17% of younger employees would love to receive a gift when starting a new job. Anniversaries are also a popular occasion: 20% of employees consider their work anniversaries worthy of a gift.

Marriage and childbirth

Weddings and childbirth are described by most people as the best day of their lives. A great occasion then, as an employer, to congratulate and shower them with gifts! Employees will certainly appreciate the gesture: 25% would like to receive a gift from their employer for these memorable highlights.

Exceptional performance

Employees who've gone the extra mile and delivered exceptional performance should be rewarded, right? At least that's what the surveyed employees believe: 37% indicate they'd like to receive a gift as reward for the work they've done.

Improve work happiness

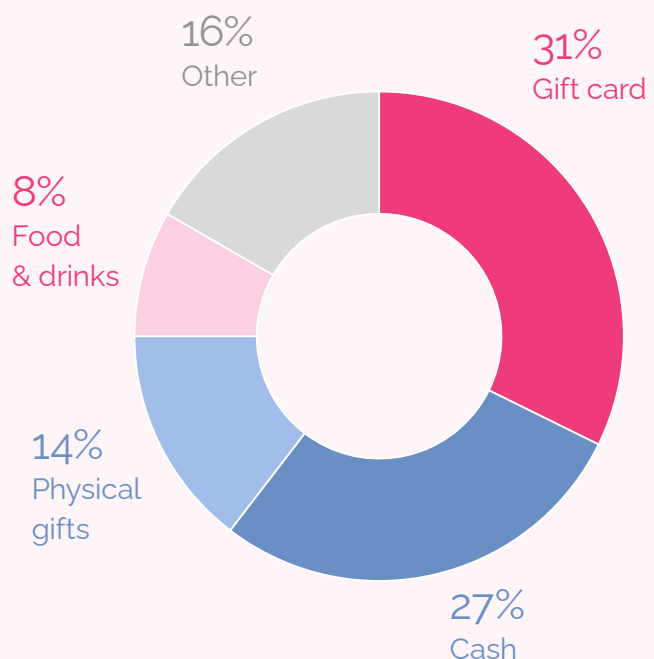
By now, you know that employees are the most important asset of your organisation. Each day, they put in the effort to keep the business up and running. So it definitely pays off to appreciate, reward and thank them regularly. Surprising them with gifts every now and then actively contributes to their happiness at work. Needless to say, this is extremely important - because a happy employee is a motivated employee.

When receiving a gift, an employee feels motivated, respected, involved and connected. Their sense of appreciation skyrockets. To seven out of ten Dutch employees, receiving a gift from their employer feels like a token of appreciation and truly makes them happy.

Which gift would you like to receive from your employer?

What to give?

The survey revealed that food and drinks are the big favourites in the current situation. For employers, at least. After all, you can't go wrong with a bottle of wine or good food, right? Wrong. In fact, food often doesn't fit into someone's diet, simply doesn't appeal to them, or the employee doesn't drink alcohol. Their gift then disappears into the pantry - or worse: the trash. Such a pity. But what can you give that will make all your employees happy?



The top 3

1. Gift cards

In first place: gift cards. Nearly one in three respondents indicate a gift voucher would be the ideal gift. Why? A gift card grants them the freedom to choose what they like. That way, you really can't go wrong, not for young nor slightly older employees. Nearly 40% of older employees prefer receiving a gift card. Which makes sense, as this age group has accumulated quite a few unwanted presents over the years.

2. Cash

Number two among the ideal gifts is cash. Money is less personal, but again allows employees to decide for themselves what they wish to spend it on. Money as a reward is particularly appreciated for a work-related situation. Did someone deliver an exceptional performance, close a big deal or bring in a new colleague? Cash is always a good answer. **But beware:** it's not the most fiscally attractive option - not for you as an employer, nor for your employee.

3. Physical gifts

In third place, by a wide margin: physical gifts. Approximately one in ten employees considers a physical gift to be the ideal present.

Bonus tip: make it personal

Want to score extra points with your employees? Make sure you turn gifts into personal moments! The vast majority of respondents indicate they want gifts to be personally addressed to them.

Also, gifts should be original, and should demonstrate that their employer takes their wishes into account. A personal message (text or video) tops it all off!

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We're happy to help!

Belgium

1. Current situation

We first looked at the current situation: what gifts did employees receive in the past year, for which occasions and when? We then analysed the ideal moments and gifts, at least according to employees.

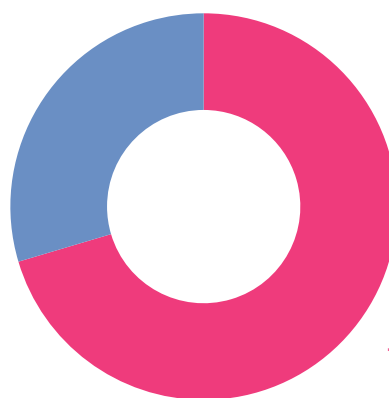
Number of gifts

Over the past year, approximately seven out of ten employees received gifts from their employers. In Flanders, this was 74%. This number was higher for young Belgian employees (18-34 years old): no less than 82% of them received gifts. On average, employees received 1.8 gifts. Strikingly enough, white-collar workers receive gifts from their employers far more often than blue-collar workers.

Did you receive a gift from your employer in the past year?

30%

No



70%

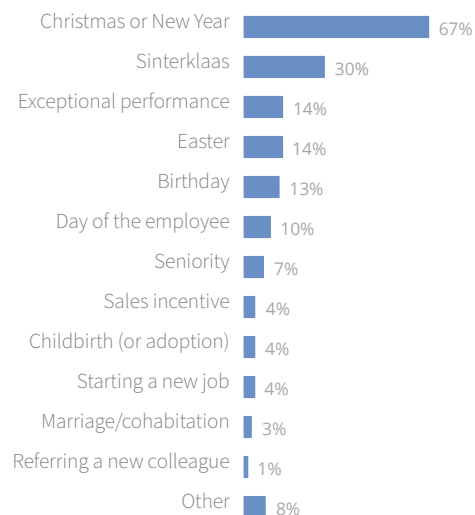
Yes

Moments

Christmas and New Year proved to be the ideal time for employers to give back to their employees. In Belgium, 67% received gifts at the end of the year. In Flanders this even rises to 73%. We see no distinction between different ages or status. Other gift occasions include Sinterklaas, exceptional performance and Easter.

It's worth noting that in small businesses, birthdays are in the top 3 moments employees receive gifts. Small businesses directly respond to an important personal moment to their employees. But more on this later when we look at the ideal situation.

For which occasions did you receive a gift from your employer in the past year?



Gifts

For times like Sinterklaas and Easter, people stick to gifting food. This gift is not really as popular at other times throughout the year.

For important private moments in the life of their employees, such as childbirth, adoption, marriage and cohabitation, cash or physical gifts are the most common tokens of appreciation.

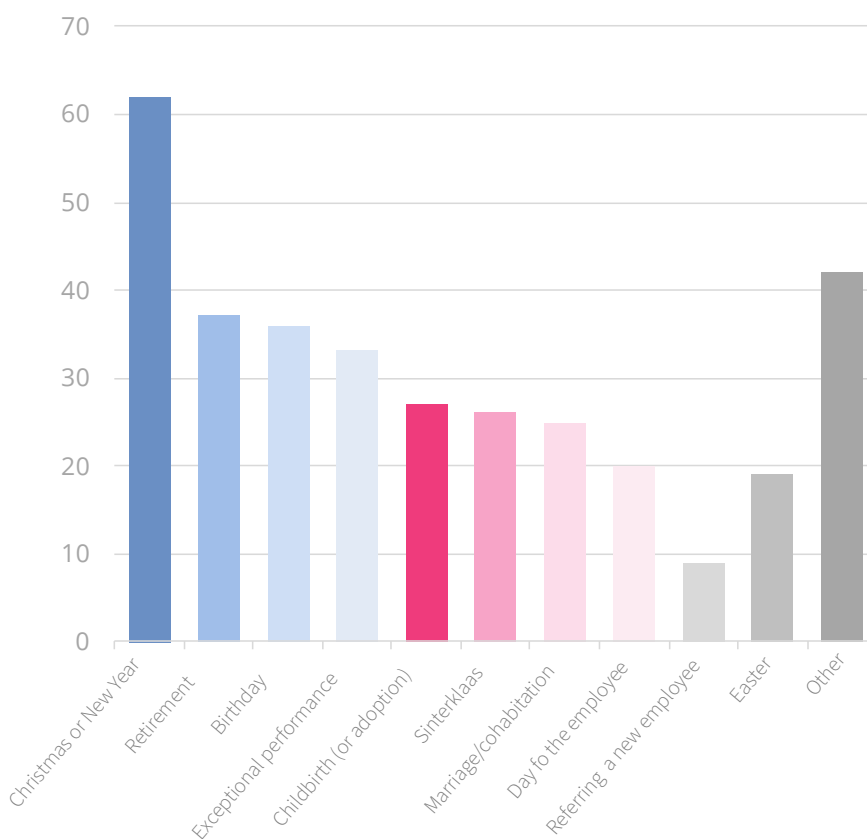
Gift cards are appreciated at just about every moment and especially for birthdays, seniority and referring new colleagues. The freedom employees experience when choosing their gift is most appreciated. In general, seven in ten employees are (very) satisfied with receiving gift cards.

2. Ideal situation

Christmas and New Year are the most popular moments to shower employees with gifts. But what about the ideal situation? At what times would employees wish to receive gifts? And which gifts? We asked employees for their ideal situation.

The ideal moment

For which occasion(s) would you like to receive a gift from your employer?



In general, personal moments score high on the list among Belgian employees, in addition to the holiday season. Flemings wish to receive gifts on more occasions than Walloons. This also goes for women and the youngest group of employees (under 35s).

The holiday season

In ideal situations, the holiday season is head and shoulders above other occasions as well. 62% of Belgian respondents indicate they'd like to receive a gift for Christmas or New Year. A classic that continues to score well with employees, even in an ideal world. In the present situation, Sinterklaas has to give up its second place to other, more personal moments such as birthdays, anniversaries and retirement.

Retirement

Belgian employees are clear: retiring calls for a gift. 37% of Belgian employees want to receive gifts for this precious occasion. In Flanders, this rises to 44%. Among older employees, even up to 46%. Retiring is the second most important moment to this group.

Birthdays and anniversaries

Birthdays are a notably important moment to employees, in terms of receiving gifts from their employers. Roughly one in three employees (or four out of ten -35 year olds) would like to receive gifts in the workplace for this personal occasion. To 43% of employees, birthdays even rank second as the ideal occasion to receive employee gifts. If you know that only 13% of Belgian employees actually received gifts last year, you know this is a great opportunity to focus on making your employees happier.

Aside from birthdays, anniversaries score high as well. In Flanders, 44% of employees would like to receive a token of appreciation for this occasion. In Wallonia this is 26%. Unsurprisingly, this occasion becomes even more important among employees over the age of 50.

Exceptional performance

Employees that showed extra commitment, made an extra effort or delivered exceptional performance should be rewarded, right? In any case, this is what employees believe: about 33% indicate they'd like to receive a gift as a reward for the work they did. In Flanders, as well as among younger employees, this percentage rises to 39% and 37% respectively.

Marriage and childbirth

Wedding days or the birth of their children are usually the most beautiful days in one's life, so it's a good time for employers to congratulate their employees with a gift. Employees will definitely appreciate the effort: one out of four would like to receive gifts for these unique occasions.

Improve work happiness

Employees are the most important asset of your organisation. Each day, they put in the effort to keep the business up and running. So it definitely pays off to appreciate, reward and thank them regularly. Surprising them with gifts every now and then actively contributes to their happiness at work. And happy employees are productive employees.

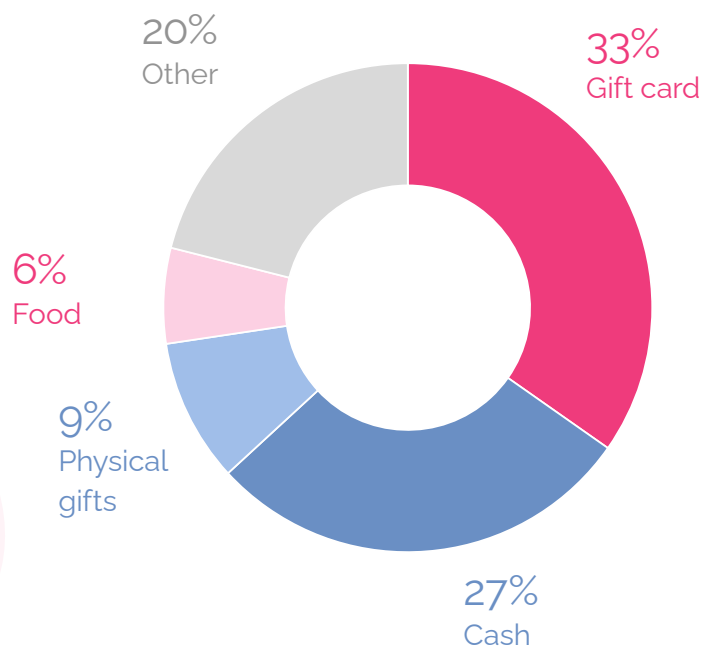
The survey revealed that employees feel appreciated, respected, involved and connected to the business when they receive a gift. More than seven out of ten Belgian employees feel receiving gifts from their employers is a token of appreciation and truly makes them happy.

What to give?

Now that we know the ideal timings to reward employees, it's time to consider what gifts to give. Food and drinks are still very popular among employers, but not so much among employees.

Oftentimes, food doesn't fit into someone's diet, simply doesn't appeal to them, or they don't drink alcohol. That gift then disappears into the pantry - or worse: the trash. Pity. But what can you give them that will make all your employees happy?

What gift would you like to receive from your employer?



The top 3

1. Gift cards

In first place: gift cards. Nearly one in three respondents indicate a gift card would be their ideal gift. In Flanders, this rises to almost four in ten. Why? Gift cards give employees the freedom to choose what they like. That's how you give your employees the biggest smile.

2. Cash

Number two among ideal gifts is cash. Money is less personal, but again allows employees to decide for themselves what they wish to spend it on. **Important side note: cash usually isn't the most fiscally attractive option - not for you as an employer, nor for your employee.**

3. Physical gifts

Physical gifts complete the top 3, but definitely aren't the most popular among employees. Only 9% consider this to be the ideal gift.

Bonus tip: make it personal

Turn gift giving into personal moments. Receiving gifts is fun on its own, but gifts with a personal touch are even more appealing. Tell your employees you appreciate them and think about them using a (video) message. This is bound to put a smile on their face!



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