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# Ubay Builds Exceptional Culture with Kudos

Kudos® Case Study

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## The Goal:

### Build a Powerful Culture and Prepare for Growth

The leadership team at United Bay Community Credit Union (Ubay) has always valued positive workplace culture. They know that the right culture will drive Ubay to fulfill its mission to build and foster the financial well-being of the community it serves.

With an updated company mission and vision in place, along with new core values that resonate with and support the company's growth plans, Ubay is all-in on building a culture that will drive its success.

#### NAME

United Bay Community Credit Union

#### LOCATION

Bay City, Michigan

#### INDUSTRY

Financial Services (Credit Union)

Ubay is a member-owned, not-for-profit financial institution.

#### SIZE

51 – 200 Employees

#### KUDOS PROGRAM

Recognition + Rewards

**Ubay's culture is founded on three key principles:**

1. Belonging
2. Value
3. Mutual commitment

On top of Ubay's goal of building an exceptional culture, it needs a solid recruitment and retention strategy. The reality is, the company isn't immune to today's tough labor market, and the employee retention challenges many leaders face.



Culture is important because it provides the foundation, along with your core values, on which your company is built. Many companies misunderstand engagement to mean a healthy culture, but you can, in fact, have engaged employees individually, who don't contribute to a culture of belonging, value and mutual commitment."

**Michelle LaClair-Ziembo**  
*Human Resources Manager,  
United Bay Community Credit Union*





Kudos became a part of who we are very quickly because it allows us to showcase how we demonstrate belonging, value and mutual commitment through our core values and daily interactions”

**Leslie Webb**

*Vice President, People & Strategy,  
United Bay Community Credit Union*



## The Approach: Building a Cohesion Culture™ with Kudos

### Enabling a Cohesion Culture™

Ubay adopted a type of culture known as **Cohesion Culture™**. According to author Dr. Troy Hall, who works closely with Ubay, Cohesion Cultures™ are ones in which employees feel they belong, that they are valued, and are committed to personal and organizational goals.

### Values-based Recognition with Kudos

Ubay’s core values are:

- R** RELIABLE
- O** OPTIMISTIC
- O** OPEN-MINDED
- T** TEAMWORK
- S** SINCERE



We use Kudos to recognize performance goals, our senior managers love it. They use Kudos to recognize milestones in lending goals and milestones in mortgage goals.”

**Leslie Webb**

*Vice President, People & Strategy,  
United Bay Community Credit Union*

With Kudos, those core values remain top of mind. Every recognition message sent on Kudos must be connected to a core value. Employees know that if they live by Ubay’s core values, their colleagues and leaders will notice and recognize them using Kudos. At first, the motivation may be extrinsic, the recognition and small reward of Kudos points feels great, but over time, the motivation becomes intrinsic – the satisfaction of doing a great job and having an impact – and that’s what creates sustainable culture change.



### Motivational Mondays

Ubay shares a video on Kudos every Monday featuring a core value. In the videos, the CEO explains what the featured value means to the company. These videos are also then used in onboarding to help new employees get familiar with the Ubay culture.

### Celebrating Diversity and Inclusion

With Kudos, Ubay employees can celebrate diversity with monthly calendars that feature events and important celebrations. Monthly diversity celebrations include Hispanic heritage, Black history and disability awareness. The Ubay team posts the events on the platform, and when notifications pop up, employees comment on them, often sharing how they're celebrating or recognizing the event.



It's not just about recognition. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion is very important to us. Using Kudos as a tool to showcase celebrations shows our company that we care and support a wide range of causes.”

**Leslie Webb**

*Vice President, People & Strategy,  
United Bay Community Credit Union*

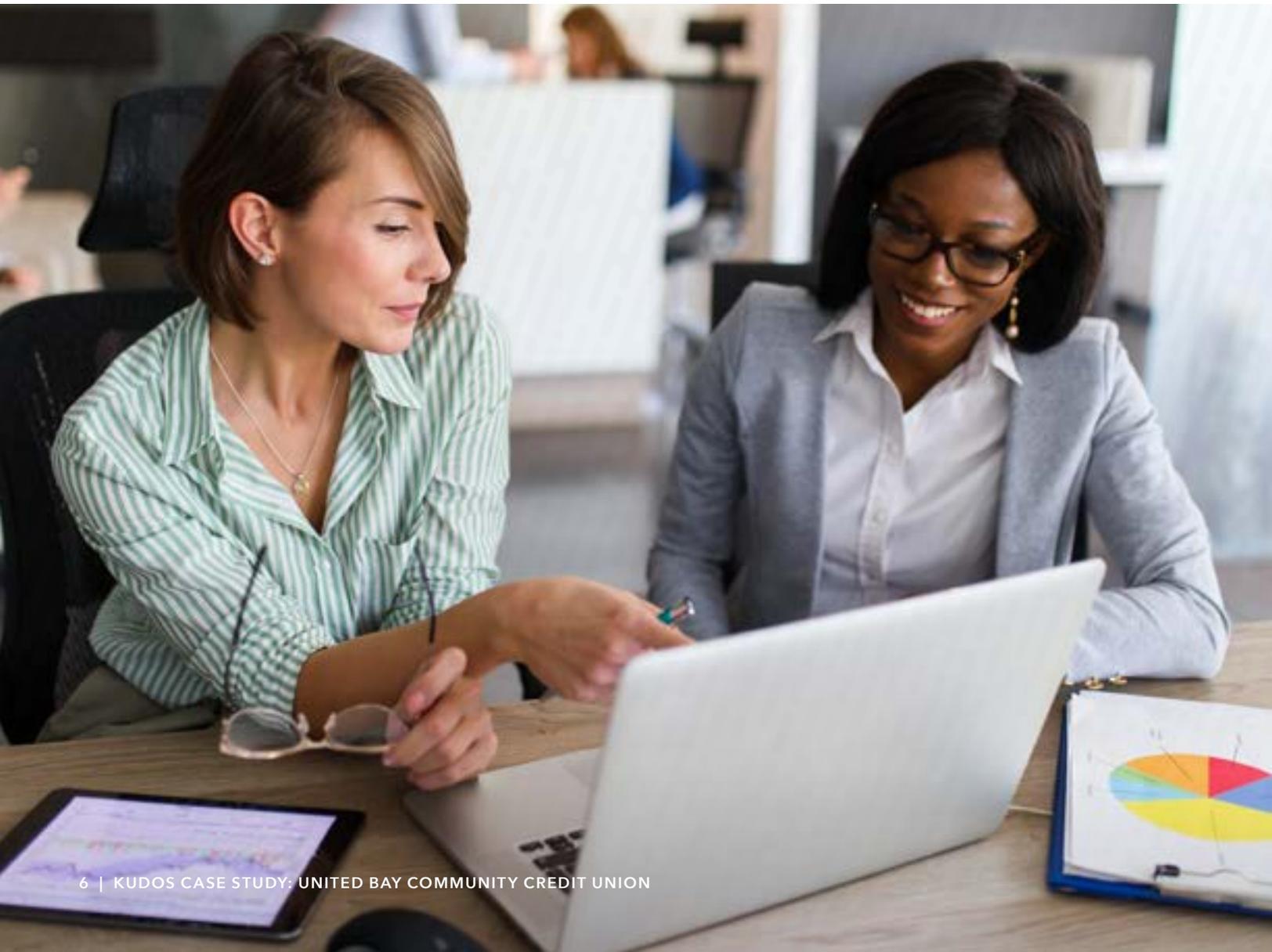
### Employee Happiness and Wellness

Kudos provides the platform for Ubay's Wellness Wednesday program, where health tips, resources and recipes are shared within the platform's Spaces feature on Wednesday mornings. The content is published, and employees get alerts to check the latest updates.

### Celebrating Birthdays & Anniversaries with Kudos

Every month, Ubay shares a video on Kudos in which the CEO acknowledges all staff birthdays and anniversaries. The Ubay staff loves these videos – the posts always receive plenty of comments and fanfare on Kudos.

The Ubay team also loves the automated anniversary announcement feature. The Kudos notifications sent companywide on anniversaries often prompt others to send their own recognition messages congratulating colleagues on their anniversary, creating a special celebration.





Kudos has helped us improve our employee retention and performance. Employees really lift each other up on Kudos and appreciate when their managers recognize them publicly.”

**Michelle LaClair-Ziembo**  
*Human Resources Manager,  
United Bay Community Credit Union*

## **Results and Impact: Improved Employee Experience & A Strong Employer Brand**

### **Culture-Scaling Success**

Ubay has successfully redefined its culture with new core values through its partnership with Kudos. “Kudos is a big part of the Cohesion Culture™ we’re building. We’ve been able to tie our core values into every facet of the Kudos platform, which made implementation successful,” shared Leslie.

### Bringing Branches Together with Transparency

Kudos has been instrumental in displaying, in a very tangible and visible way, how others are connecting, encouraging and supporting one another.

Kudos allows Ubay's leaders to learn about the work being done in other branches. This transparency helps foster creativity through inspiring ideas across the organization and maintains consistency across branches.

Kudos also allows Ubay leaders to uncover workflow and workload issues through transparency of what work is being done by whom. The data in Kudos also showcases growth-minded and high performing employees, allowing Ubay to support and fuel their growth, supporting retention.



Affirming each other regularly on Kudos motivates us to form strong attachments (belonging) and gain a sense of accomplishment through achievement (value and commitment). Providing rewards for that commitment through Kudos is the cherry on the cake. We can recognize milestones, project work, volunteerism or organizational goals, and celebrate together.”

**Leslie Webb**

*Vice President, People & Strategy,  
United Bay Community Credit Union*





The benefits of a healthy culture go far beyond monetary rewards and a good benefit package. It is what is on the inside that counts, and when you get this right, success and performance are natural outcomes.”

**Michelle LaClair-Ziembo**

*Human Resources Manager,  
United Bay Community Credit Union*

### **Building a Powerful Employer Brand**

Ubay’s employer brand is stronger than ever, and well-positioned to sustain its growth plans. “Ubay is a great place to work because our CEO has really invested in our culture,” said the Ubay team. Commitment to employee engagement through the Kudos platform lets prospective employees know that rewards and recognition are entrenched in the culture at Ubay, which helps with recruitment.

### **Award-Winning Business Results**

Ubay was named one of the 2022 winners of the **Best Consumer Lending Experience Award**. The award goes to credit unions that consistently provide exceptional

levels of member service during a calendar year. Studies continue to show that customer and employee satisfaction go hand in hand, and this award is evidence in and of itself. When employees are happy and satisfied with their jobs, they are more capable of ensuring customer satisfaction.

### **Improved Employee Recognition**

Ubay has seen a significant increase in the frequency of employee recognition within its organization. In all its branches, they have **100% enrolment on Kudos**, and employees are actively engaged on the platform.



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