

---

# The Key to Pillar Properties' Success Is Remarkable Culture

Kudos® Case Study

**kudos**®  
Thank Different.®





## The Goal:

### Attracting and Retaining the Right Talent

**Pillar Properties (Pillar) considers itself a “culture-first” company.**

Its internal mantra, “Quietly Awesome,” guides the decisions they make and the experience they deliver. It’s a philosophy of balancing humility with ambition – constantly seeking to improve people’s way of life and finding solutions to problems no matter what it takes.

As a family-owned and operated property developer and manager, in an often transactional and impersonal industry, Pillar treats every relationship like family and seeks deeper connections with clients. This can be a challenge in an industry also known for frequent employee turnover.

#### NAME

Pillar Properties

#### LOCATION

Seattle, Washington

#### INDUSTRY

Property Development and Operations

Specializing in multifamily and development for their sister senior living company, Pillar takes a relationship-based approach to development, asset management, and operations.

#### SIZE

< 250 Employees

#### KUDOS PROGRAM

Recognition + Rewards  
Kudos client since 2013



They know that to stand out, they need great people, which means attracting and retaining the right talent.

“Property management is notorious for high turnover,” said Sierra Berg of Pillar. “We often have team members joining us from competitors or other companies in the space, looking for a more long-term employer – a place where they can build a career.”

The challenge faced by Pillar Properties is finding a way to stand out in the property development and management industry to retain top talent in today’s competitive job market.

“

We think that if we treat our team members well and empower them to make a meaningful impact, that’s what will help our company’s performance. In fact, that’s what we’ve seen.”

**Sierra Berg**  
*Pillar Properties*





We believe that the next innovative move by Pillar Properties can come from anywhere in the company. All voices contribute to the unmatched experience our partners and residents receive.”

**Sierra Berg**  
Pillar Properties



## The Approach: Recognizing ‘Quietly Awesome’ Loudly with Kudos

Pillar’s leadership team is committed to ensuring their company is a great place to work. To Pillar, the key to retention is making people feel welcome and giving them the tools to do their best work. That’s where Kudos comes in.

Pillar has been a Kudos client since 2013. “Kudos is indoctrinated in who we are,” said Sierra Berg. “In terms of recognition and culture, Kudos is what brings every single person together. I don’t know how we could have the expectations we have in terms of working hard and being innovative if we didn’t have Kudos to recognize and reward our people. I can’t imagine not having it.”

### A Culture of Recognition from the Start

Kudos is a crucial part of the onboarding process at Pillar. Team members are invited to the platform on their first day. This connects them to the culture right away – they have notifications from colleagues welcoming

them to the team waiting for them. They can see the interactions between all teams and departments in the feed, participate in wishing a fellow team member happy birthday, or congratulate them on a work anniversary. “We’re always proud to see a new team member use Kudos in their first week to recognize those who’ve made their onboarding experience positive and memorable,” shared Sierra.

### A Transparent and Open Culture at All Levels

At Pillar, anyone, at any level, can share ideas and feedback with leaders. Pillar’s senior leadership team hosts regular forums to hear directly from team members. Focus groups bring team members from all departments and roles together to brainstorm ideas and implement strategies to disrupt and elevate the status quo. “Engaged team members are simply more invested in company success and performance,” said Sierra.

This transparency translates to the peer-to-peer nature of recognition on Kudos. Anyone, at any level, can recognize any single member of the organization on the Kudos platform.





At Pillar, Kudos is not only a space that drives retention through regular recognition, but it also serves as a resource to measure performance.”

**Sierra Berg**  
*Pillar Properties*

### Spotlighting Performance with Kudos

“Going on autopilot is just not how our team members operate, and Kudos is the platform that supports the priority we place on team member engagement. Pillar Properties expects a lot from its team members – to push boundaries, reach goals, and grow – but not without support, recognition, and fun along the way,” shares Sierra.

Pillar has custom Kudos badges awarded by senior leadership to spotlight that exceptional performance. For example, the “Stellar Review Badge” is awarded when a team member is named in a positive online review, “Most Recognition” for the team member that received the most recognition on Kudos each quarter, and the company favorite “The Billy Special,” where Pillar’s president, Billy Pettit recognizes the entire company for achievements such as exceptional performance, receiving a coveted award, or when he simply wants to share his pride and gratitude for the team.



### Discovering Top Performers

Pillar encourages their team to be as specific as possible when giving recognition on Kudos. This not only gives everyone insight into the remarkable things they're accomplishing, but it also chronicles individual team members' unique contributions. Individual Kudos profiles are an excellent resource for supervisors to better understand their team members' impact.

### Paying it Forward with Kudos

Philanthropic efforts play a key role in attracting and retaining talent that values social responsibility. Pillar's largest initiative of the year is its annual toy drive (Toys for Tots.) Kudos enables every team member who wishes to personally contribute to participate regardless of their financial situation. Pillar team members can redeem Kudos points for Toys for Tots donations through the Kudos platform.



Kudos is the one place where everyone can connect and be together.”

**Sierra Berg**

*Pillar Properties*

### Using Kudos Spaces for Good News

Pillar uses Kudos Spaces to share company newsletters. The newsletters share positive news and highlight recognition messages from Kudos. With some team members in the field and some in the office, Kudos serves as a hub for all team members to come and live out Pillar's culture through recognition, birthdays and anniversaries, and access to the latest news.

## Results and Impact: A People-Focus Leads to Profit

### Award-Winning Workplace

Pillar has received numerous accolades over the years, including:

- Seattle Business Magazine's **Washington's 100 Best Companies to Work For** (2016, 2017, 2018, 2020, 2021)
- Puget Sound Business Journal roster of **Washington's Best Workplaces** (2015, 2018, 2019, 2020)

Being recognized as a "Best Place to Work" has proven effects on company performance. For example, a [longitudinal study](#) on the real-world stock market performance of companies named Glassdoor's Best Places to Work between 2009 and 2019 shows that stocks of BPTW winners earned 20.3 percent per year between 2009 and 2019 compared to 12.9 percent for the S&P 500.

Pillar has also been featured on the Inc. 5000 (America's Top Private Companies.)

### Happy Clients

Pillar's culture-first approach directly impacts their customers – the people who call their buildings home. They consistently perform exceptionally well on annual resident satisfaction surveys through SatisFacts research.

**For the fifth year running Pillar Properties ranked in the top three in the annual surveys, and this is the seventh year in a row that they have been in the top five in the country.**



Success starts with putting the right people first. Kudos plays a significant role in employee retention, performance, recruitment, and engagement. Our partnership with Kudos started in 2013, and the partnership has grown with our company – with the number of users increasing by 456%!"

**Sierra Berg**  
*Pillar Properties*



### An Engaged Remote Team

The strength of Pillar's culture was tested at the start of the pandemic when, like many companies, they had to temporarily close their offices. "Kudos brought us together and kept our culture alive," said Sierra Berg.

### Happy Employees

In their most recent team member satisfaction survey (results anonymously collected by Asure Consulting), an overwhelming majority of team members agreed or strongly agreed that they are adequately recognized (beyond pay and benefits) for their contributions and accomplishments. A great achievement considering

that only about one-third of employees in the US report receiving recognition in the last week ([Gallup](#)).

### Pillar Pride

In the team member satisfaction survey, 82% of team members agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "I am proud to work for Pillar Properties." And although employees can redeem the Kudos points they earn for gift cards to popular retailers, many team members choose to redeem points for Pillar Properties swag. Pillar's Kudos rewards store has 78 items at a wide range of point values, so all team members can pick out swag and proudly represent Pillar Properties.







©2022 Kudos Inc. All rights reserved.

KUDOS® is a trademark owned by Kudos, Inc, a Canadian corporation, registered in the United States, Canada, European Union, and other jurisdictions. For a full list of the trademarks owned by Kudos, Inc. and use guidelines relating thereto, please visit [kudos.com/trademarks](https://kudos.com/trademarks).



[kudos.com/contact](https://kudos.com/contact)