# Workhuman achieves $1.2 billion valuation by blending human appreciation with AI



Workhuman, an Irish technology firm, has achieved a significant milestone, building a business valued at $1.2 billion based on the fundamental human desire for appreciation and the expression of gratitude in the workplace. This development has been spearheaded by Chief Executive Eric Mosley, who emphasises the importance of these core human needs.

In a move that may seem contradictory to its ethos, Workhuman has recently integrated artificial intelligence (AI) into its platform, which focuses on "social recognition". This platform enables colleagues to publicly commend each other's contributions and recommend associated rewards. The recent AI enhancement, launched last month, allows users to access a virtual assistant via a new feature named “Human Intelligence”. Through this tool, employees can receive assistance in crafting more meaningful feedback, although some users have noted that the assistant's tone can come off as condescending.

As the name suggests, "Human Intelligence" stands out among various social recognition platforms incorporating AI by automating tasks such as enhancing language, identifying unclear phrases, and analysing emotional responses generated from interactions. Despite the technology’s integration, Workhuman stresses that genuine, human-generated feedback remains vital to fostering emotional connections in the workplace. Adam Basilio, the Director of Product Strategy at Workhuman, commented, “We really want it to be human-generated, organic.” The intention is for individuals to feel genuinely moved when they receive recognition.

Other competitors in the industry are also embracing similar technologies. For instance, rewards platform Benifex has articulated how AI could help personalise employee benefits while streamlining HR processes. Bonusly, another recognition service, has indicated that “human-centric skills, like collaboration and communication” are becoming increasingly essential as AI assumes routine responsibilities.

Organisations using Workhuman's services, including BP, Cisco, and LinkedIn, can convert commendations into tangible rewards such as vouchers or merchandise. The newly implemented AI function enhances the relevancy of these rewards by offering insights on appropriate reward levels within predefined company budgets.

From a managerial perspective, the AI’s capability to aggregate and analyse data represents a significant advantage. This includes identifying mentors with relevant expertise and recognising high-performing employees — insights that Kerry Dryburgh, Executive Vice-President for People and Culture at BP, describes as a “game-changer” in facilitating ongoing feedback within teams.

Highlighting some concerns, Bruce Daisley, a workplace culture consultant and former executive at Twitter, notes that while AI can augment recognition tools, there is an inherent risk that the integration of technology could detract from genuine human interactions. He expressed, “We don’t want to take the humanity out of heartfelt actions and I think that’s the danger.”

Interestingly, a study led by Harvard Business School has revealed the potential of AI to foster positive emotional responses, noting that teams using AI assistance experienced emotional engagement that matched or even exceeded that of teams lacking AI support. This suggests that AI could fulfil certain social and motivational roles typically associated with human interaction, further bolstering the appeal of such integrations in corporate settings.

Workhuman utilises its own language model, which is informed by millions of employee messages and enhanced by open-source large language models, allowing for what Mosley describes as “shockingly accurate” insights for managers. He also noted that as the AI’s database grows, its performance improves, raising its "IQ".

However, some users have expressed frustration over the AI assistant's phrasing, which can come across as overly simplistic or patronising, offering phrases like “this is shaping up nicely” or “Wow! You’ve just crafted a recognition moment that will leave a lasting impact.”

Ultimately, the effectiveness and reception of these AI tools may hinge on the corporate culture of the organisations implementing them. As Daisley articulated, “There are organisations where this is going to be incredibly helpful and others where unfortunately it becomes another part of . . . a performative bureaucracy.”

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

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* <https://www.businesspost.ie/tech/revenues-surpass-1bn-at-workhuman/> - Supports the information about Workhuman's revenue growth and its achievement of surpassing $1 billion in turnover for 2023.
* <https://www.irishtimes.com/business/2023/11/27/workhuman-reports-29-rise-in-revenues-in-2022/> - Confirms Workhuman's revenue rise in 2022, aligning with the company's growth trajectory.
* <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Artificial_intelligence> - Provides general background information on artificial intelligence, supporting the context of AI integration in Workhuman's platform.
* <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbestechcouncil/2019/01/31/the-future-of-human-resources-is-ai-powered-employee-experience/> - Highlights the trend of AI being used in HR processes, such as employee benefits personalization and streamlining HR tasks.