

Work anniversary email template

Mark an employee's work anniversary with a personal note about their contributions.

Updated October 15, 2026. Written and reviewed by the HRTally Research Team.

When to use this template

Work anniversaries are easy to automate and easy to make meaningless. An automated message saying happy 5th anniversary from the system feels hollow. A short, personal note from the manager naming something the person did that year feels like being seen.

Use the personal version for every anniversary, and add a team announcement for milestones such as 1, 5, 10, 15, and 20 years. If you give service awards, explain them in the email. Anniversaries are also a good moment for a stay interview with valued employees, since they naturally prompt reflection about the year ahead.

Version 1: Personal note from the manager

SUBJECT Happy [Number]-year anniversary, [Employee first name]

Hi [Employee first name],

Today marks [Number] years since you joined [Company]. Happy anniversary.

Looking back at this year, I keep thinking about [specific contribution, such as the way you trained the new hires on second shift]. [One more sentence on its impact.]

Thank you for everything you bring to this team. I'm glad you are here, and I'm looking forward to the year ahead.

[Manager name]

Version 2: Milestone announcement

SUBJECT Celebrating [Employee full name]'s [Number] years with [Company]

Hi everyone,

This week, [Employee full name] celebrates [Number] years at [Company].

[First name] started as a [Original role] in [Year] and is now our [Current role]. Along the way, [two or three highlights].

To mark the milestone, [First name] [will receive a service award, extra PTO, or other recognition].

Please join me in congratulating [First name].

[Manager or executive name]

Subject lines to try

- Happy [Number]-year anniversary, [Employee first name]
- Celebrating [Employee full name]'s [Number] years with [Company]
- [Number] years! Thank you, [First name]
- Today is [First name]'s work anniversary
- A milestone for [First name]

How to personalize it

- Mention one specific contribution from the past year.
- Note how the person's role has grown since they joined.
- Send it on the actual date, not a week late.
- Use your HRIS to remind managers a few days ahead.

Mistakes to avoid

- System-generated messages with no personal note.
- Mentioning age or how long until retirement.
- Celebrating only round-number milestones.
- Public announcements for people who prefer privacy.

Legal and compliance notes

Length-of-service awards can be excluded from wages if they are tangible personal property, not cash or gift cards, and meet IRS rules for employee achievement awards: the employee must have at least five years of service, and the award can't be given more often than once every five years. Dollar limits apply. Cash or gift card anniversary bonuses are taxable wages.

When to send it

On the anniversary date. Set up automatic reminders to managers three days before through your HRIS or recognition platform .

| Before you hit send

- The subject line says what changed and when, and it reads well on a phone.
- Managers were briefed and can answer questions the same day.
- Anyone personally affected heard the news privately first.
- The effective date and any action required appear in the first three lines.
- Employees without company email will get it through managers, texts, or posters.

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