



Valuing Volunteers: Volunteer Recognition Wednesday, April 8, 2015

78 Ways to Recognize Your Volunteers

Start off on the right foot...

1. Match the volunteers' desires with the organizations' needs.
2. Develop a volunteer policy for your organization.
3. Accept that an individual volunteer's ability to commit may change over time.
4. Add volunteers to memo and email distribution lists.
5. Ensure volunteers have adequate space and equipment to do their work.
6. Ensure a safe and healthy working environment.
7. Ensure confidentiality for your volunteers.
8. Provide a clear role description for every volunteer.
9. Make sure new volunteers are welcomed warmly.
10. Give volunteers a proper induction.
11. Provide car or bike parking for volunteers.
12. Devote resources (time and money) to volunteer support.
13. Maintain Occupational Health and Safety standards.
14. Provide the opportunity for volunteers to take leaves of absence.
15. Have a vision for volunteer involvement in your organization.

Easy every day and cost-free ways to acknowledge your volunteers...

16. Always be courteous.
17. Always greet your volunteers by name.
18. Say 'thank you' often, and mean it.
19. Recognize that volunteers play a unique role.
20. Be honest at all times.
21. Treat volunteers as first-class citizens.
22. Help volunteers feel good about themselves.
23. Create a climate in which volunteers can feel motivated.
24. Be careful not to overwhelm volunteers.
25. Always be appreciative of volunteers' contributions.

26. Give volunteers a real voice within the organization.
27. Tell volunteers they have done a good job.
28. Suggest sources of help and support for personal problems.

Ways to show you value volunteer input...

29. Ask volunteers for ideas of how the organization can show it cares.
30. Encourage volunteers to sit on committees and attend meetings.
31. Allow volunteers to take on more challenging responsibilities.
32. Encourage volunteer participation in planning that affects their work.
33. Enable volunteers to 'grow' on the job.
34. Send articles about your volunteer/s to the local newspapers, and/or run them in your newsletter.
35. Include the volunteer's name on a program they helped to organize.
36. Ask volunteers to share their ideas.
37. Share the results of program evaluations with volunteers so they can see their impact on clients and programs.
38. Review the progress of volunteers on a regular basis.
39. Provide constructive appraisal.
40. Allow volunteers to get involved in solving problems.
41. Learn what motivates each volunteer, and make your recognition appropriate to what he or she thinks is important.
42. Give volunteers tasks in which they will be successful.
43. Make sure the volunteers are doing work that is meaningful to them and the community.
44. Promote volunteers to other roles that take better advantage of their talents.
45. Highlight the impact that the volunteer's contribution is having on the organization.
46. Always have work for your volunteers to do, and never waste their time.
47. Provide meaningful and enjoyable work.
48. Give volunteers an opportunity to debrief, especially if they work in stressful situations.
49. Let volunteers put their names to something they have helped to produce, or to make happen.
50. Use surveys as a way of eliciting your volunteers' views.
51. Ask volunteers to give presentations or lead meetings.
52. Ask volunteers to train other volunteers, e.g. older volunteers to mentor the young.
53. Make sure the volunteer coordinator is easily accessible and has an open door policy.
54. Supervise volunteer's work.
55. Ask volunteers' opinions when developing new policies and strategies.
56. Maintain regular contact with volunteers.

57. Use quotes from volunteers in leaflets and annual reports.
58. Allow volunteers to air legitimate grievances and make sure these are dealt with swiftly.

Some tips that may involve a slight cost...

59. Provide excellent training and coaching.
60. Reimburse out-of-pocket expenses.
61. Give a personal note to say 'thanks' for a job well done.
62. Thank volunteers in a newsletter.
63. Pay registration fees (or part of) for continuing education classes or conferences.
64. Write letters to the volunteer's family to let them know how much the person's work has contributed, and thank the family for supporting the volunteer in their efforts.
65. Have a letter to the volunteer from (or a visit with) a person who has benefited from the volunteers' services. Let the volunteer really see, hear and feel the end result of their work.
66. Create a volunteer notice board.
67. Provide free refreshments during breaks.
68. Nominate your volunteers for community awards.

Annual / one-off recognition ideas...

69. Feature your volunteers at special events throughout the year.
70. Conduct an exit interview when a volunteer leaves.
71. Say farewell to volunteers when they move away from the area or leave the organization.
72. Provide letters of reference.
73. Recommend volunteers to prospective employers.
74. Help interested volunteers prepare their resumes, emphasizing the skills they have developed through their volunteer work.
75. Send birthday cards.
76. Present volunteers with a special memento recognizing their service to the organization.
77. Celebrate the years of work together.
78. Present special awards for 1, 3, 5, 10, 15 and more years of service.