



Volunteer Recognition

Understand the value of recognition

Recognition is acknowledgement, approval, gratitude and confirmation of a job well done. Make it genuine and meaningful to the individual as it can promote productivity, increase morale and support retention.

Plan and budget for recognition

Recognition goes hand in hand with training and it doesn't have to cost a lot to convey appreciation. Determine what skills you will recognize (e.g., attentiveness, hard work, positive service delivery, going above and beyond, etc.), Create a recognition plan including policies, time, costs and who will execute it; you won't get approval if you don't ask. Prepare to deliver on the plan even if no funds are allocated.

Make it meaningful and consistent

Get to know your volunteers and how you think they would like to be recognized (one-on-one or in public). Offer consistent, regular and timely acknowledgement throughout their commitment. Say "thank-you" a lot and with sincerity. Invite them to a volunteer recognition event after the event is over to honour them. Arrange for a senior level volunteer or community leader to thank them for their contribution.

Be creative

Give them thank-you post-it-notes or cards with a personal message. Post an "our stars" bulletin board with volunteer pictures; arrange for photos with the event mascot, if applicable. Share their pictures in your newsletter, website, Facebook page, etc. (with their permission). Profile a volunteer's story to share with the community. Provide access for them to experience the event, when possible (it can be a raffle). Thank them at the beginning of their shift and at the end. Send a note to their family for supporting them to give up their time.

Involve others

Use the talents of your volunteers to help plan a recognition event. Invite community businesses to donate draw prizes (e.g., coffee gift cards, entry to local attractions, movie passes, etc.). Have random draws or one draw per shift, weekly or at the recognition event. Secure event or community pins, water bottles or other commemorative items for volunteers (can be sponsorship).

Encourage recognition within your volunteer team

Provide guidelines on how to give recognition to others. Set up a recognition board with ballots or post-it-notes to fill out/post; provide a comment book or set up a blog to capture appreciation of fellow volunteers. Share "kudos" in a daily update meeting or email to everyone. Mention volunteers by name in newsletters/blogs/updates to the community.

Support volunteers in their next role

Keep a copy of the recognition a volunteer receives on file. Offer to provide reference letters and include quotes and specific examples of their performance. Thank them one final time.