

Great Volunteer Management System

Recognizing and Retaining Volunteers

ASL & Captioning Services

1. ASL Services

- Interpreters are Brandon Kazen-Maddox and Michael Barrios
- Pin their windows for ongoing interpretation services

2. Captioning Services

- Attendees can click the “CC” button at the bottom of their screen to see real-time subtitles

Agenda

- Icebreaker
- The Importance of Volunteer Recognition
- Effective Ways To Recognize
- Activity: Recognition Tactics
- Components of a Recognition Strategy
- Activity: Recognition Strategy Development
- Best Practices
- Questions

Icebreaker

In pairs, discuss how your organization currently recognizes volunteers.

What works well? What would you like to improve upon?

The Importance of Recognition

- It's the right thing to do
- Allows volunteers to see their impact
- Encourages higher engagement and leadership
- Recognition = Retention

Keys To Successful Recognition

- Consistency is key
- Diversify your strategy- not all volunteers want to be recognized in the same way
- Engage all staff members who work with volunteers in recognition
- Treat volunteers equitably- don't play favorites

Effective Ways to Recognize

- Celebrate milestones
- Increase responsibility
- Annual awards
- Speak to local vendors about small 'thank you' gifts/promotions/discounts
- Send birthday cards, get well notes, etc.



Effective Ways to Recognize

- Allow volunteers a space to give feedback and share ideas
- Make sure any strategy is consistent and deliberate
- It is imperative to track data about volunteer's activities
- Have recognition come from various sources



Activity: Recognition Tactics

- Recognition tactics your organization has used that have been successful.
- Recognition tactics your organization has used that have been unsuccessful.
- Recognition tactics you would like to try in the future.

Activity: Recognition Tactics

- How do you recognize volunteers?
- Do you believe your recognition tactics have helped you retain volunteers?
- Which recognition tactics have been unsuccessful at your organization? Why?
- What are some things you would like to change about your organization's recognition of volunteers?

Components of a Recognition Strategy

Great recognition is:

- Personal
- Timely
- Frequent
- Honest
- Consistent
- Proportionate
- Evolving



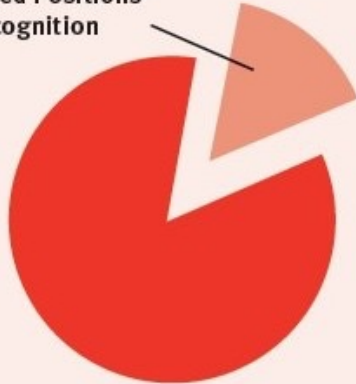
Saying Thank You Matters- The Study

- **Study conducted by New York Cares in 2011**
- **Tracked 4,600 volunteers**
- **Regularly thanked them after 5, 25 and 50 projects and on anniversaries of their service**
- **Control group of 300 who were not recognized**

Saying Thank You Matters- The Result

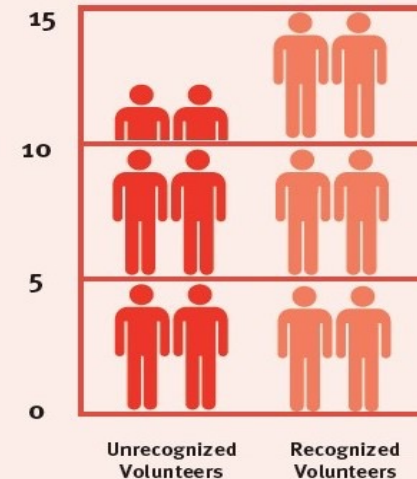
FILLED VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

16% of Filled Positions
Due to Recognition



Sixteen percent of our total 97,000 volunteer opportunities filled just because we thanked our volunteers.

AVERAGE NUMBER OF PROJECTS



Volunteers in the recognition group volunteered 15 times during the year; unrecognized individuals just 11 times.

Activity: Recognition Strategy Development

Step 1: Complete the “Recognizing Volunteers – Strategy Development Questionnaire” Worksheet.

Step 2: Develop a recognition strategy for the volunteer roles you want to create or refine. Use the Volunteer Recognition Strategy worksheet.

Step 3: Put your Recognition Strategy into a calendar.

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Worksheet 2: Recognizing Volunteers—Strategy Development Questionnaire

Great volunteer programs recognize volunteers strategically. This means recognition should encourage the behavior you want to see. Your most productive volunteers should be recognized quite a lot and in many ways but, for a one-time volunteer, a single thank-you email may suffice. Review the following questions with your colleagues to further develop your volunteer recognition strategy. These questions can help you decide if you are using recognition in the most effective ways.

Who are my most productive volunteers?

What are the common characteristics of my most productive volunteers?

What motivates my volunteers?

How do I currently encourage a volunteer to become more engaged?

How do I, as an individual, currently recognize volunteers?

How does my organization currently recognize volunteers?

Does a targeted communication strategy fit my organization? Why?

Do I have a budget associated with recognition? Is it adequate?

What are other, non-financial, constraints to recognizing volunteers?

Best Practices

- Be sure to say thank you at the end of each volunteer project, even if the volunteers are consistent.
- Be genuine in thanking and recognizing volunteers
- Be specific, and include examples of volunteer actions and impact when recognizing volunteers
- Mark your recognition on a calendar to make sure you keep on schedule and offer consistent recognition
- Develop a system of awards, and rewards (consider the Presidential Service Award)
- Serve as a reference for volunteers applying for work or further schooling
- Write commendation letters for long term, committed volunteers

TIP:

Ideas for recognition include:

- Individual thank you notes from clients
- Celebrations during Volunteer Appreciation Month in April
- Networking events
- Public recognition on social media or in a newsletter
- “Promotion” to a role with more responsibility Register for the Presidential Service Award at presidentalserviceawards.gov



Questions

THANK YOU!