

GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION

The number one way to retain Volunteers is to make sure they know they are appreciated. Recognition should come from a range of people in different ways.

There are numerous ways to thank and recognise Volunteers. Expressions of appreciation and recognition go a long way in keeping Volunteers motivated and enthusiastic.

Make it a priority. Recognising the work of Volunteers is crucial to any Organisation/Club that wants to attract new Volunteers and keep the ones it has.

Do it in different ways. Vary your recognition efforts from the informal thank you and spontaneous treats to more formal events, such as dinners and awards.

Make recognition authentic. Make each occasion you use to recognise your Volunteers meaningful and an opportunity to truly reflect on his/her value to your Organisation/Club.

Personalise the recognition. Make sure the recognition is personal – use “I” and “you” language and describe in specific terms how they have made a difference.

Make it appropriate to the achievement. For example a paper certificate and a personal thank you may be appropriate for a few months of service, whereas an award at a formal dinner may be more appropriate for a long serving Volunteer.

Be consistent. Make sure whatever standards for recognition you establish can be consistently maintained and applied by your Organisation/Club in the years to come. Holding a Volunteer recognition event once a year sets up expectations for future Volunteers.

Be timely. Try to arrange recognition soon after the achievement has been achieved – delaying until weeks or months afterwards diminishes the value of your gratitude.

Make it unique. Getting to know each of your Volunteers and delivering recognition in a way that the Volunteer would like to receive it is important – for some this will be public recognition and for others it will be private.

Don't spend a lot. Most Volunteers do not want you to spend a lot of money to appreciate them. It really is a case of the thought that counts.

Make sure the reason for awards are clear and unambiguous. Transparency is key when it comes to giving awards. It needs to be clear to all, why a Volunteer received recognition, in this way, at this time, and why others did not.