

83 Ways to Retain, Recognise and Reward Volunteers

1. Never stop saying 'Thank You' - catch people doing things right and thank them on the spot
2. Create a 'Retain, Recognise and Reward Volunteers Initiative' and involve volunteers in its design and implementation
3. Regularly review and vary your 'Retain, Recognise and Reward Volunteers Initiative'
4. Create a specific budget for volunteer recognition and reward
5. Establish a volunteer suggestion box
6. Acknowledge volunteers by names at public events
7. Reimburse any 'out of pocket' expenses
8. Send birthday cards with personalised messages
9. Hold an annual volunteer community barbecue
10. Invite volunteers to staff meetings
11. Create a photo 'Wall of Fame' bulletin board to highlight the work of volunteers- make it ever-changing- highlight a different volunteer each week
12. Recognise and support the personal needs and challenges
13. Establish a volunteer recognition board in a prominent position
14. Organise informal morning teas
15. Always greet by name - learn ways to remember people's names
16. Provide continuous training opportunities
17. Continuously ask for opinions and ideas
18. Hold regular idea generation sessions
19. Regularly organise photos of volunteers and their initiatives in local newspapers
20. Take time to talk about their job with each volunteer
21. Write references
22. Organise volunteers to attend conferences and external training opportunities
23. Write personal 'thank you' notes
24. Invite participation in policy formation
25. Celebrate outstanding projects and achievements
26. Nominate individuals for volunteer awards
27. Carefully match volunteer interests and skills to the right jobs
28. Plan staff and volunteer joint social events
29. Organise occasional extravaganzas and surprise parties

30. Take out an annual paid advertisement in local newspaper to take all volunteers- include a list of the names of all volunteers
31. Send letters of appreciation to volunteers' families
32. Write to the employer of the volunteer highlighting the contribution of the volunteer and thanking the employer for their support
33. Say 'we missed you' when absent
34. Instigate special awards for extraordinary achievements
35. Fully orientate new volunteers - check with newer volunteers about ways to improve the orientation process
36. Send Christmas cards with a personalised message
37. Organise community-wide, cooperative, inter-agency volunteer recognition events
38. Produce and distribute an organisational T - Shirt to all volunteers
39. Offer personal praise and recognition on the job, through the media and at public occasions
40. Give complimentary tickets to volunteers for special events and functions
41. Arrange discounts for volunteers at local businesses and events
42. Award life memberships, VIP recognition certificates
43. Hold social events in honour of volunteers
44. Create volunteer skill development opportunities
45. Farewell volunteers when they are retiring or moving away from the area
46. Use exit interviews to provide feedback to ensure continuous improvement
47. Arrange accreditation e.g. Certificate 1 in Active Volunteering
48. Organise an annual 'Volunteer Appreciation Dinner'
49. Administer a volunteer satisfaction survey every six months
50. Offer volunteers the opportunity to change roles
51. Discover what aspects of the organisation's procedures that volunteers find irritating and unnecessary
52. Ask volunteers what the organisation can do to make their roles easier and more satisfying
53. Create and distribute a 'Great Work' postcard
54. Use low cost creative ideas to improve the attractiveness of work facilities
55. Ensure all recognition is specific, frequent and personalised- and celebrate in front of as many people as possible
56. Instigate a welcome morning tea for all new volunteers
57. Create a buddy system which teams a new volunteer with an experienced volunteer
58. Provide gift vouchers donated by local businesses as volunteer rewards- match vouchers to volunteer interests

59. Create a personalised data base for each volunteer including significant dates, events and sporting teams in their lives; and the skills that they would be prepared to share or learn
60. Ensure recognition is shared with others who are significant to the volunteer being honoured
61. Highlight the work of individual volunteers in organisational newsletters and website
62. Give volunteers some operational freedom - delegate some responsibility and give authority to make some decisions
63. Treat volunteers as '*insiders*' and keep them in the communication loop
64. Surprise and delight volunteers by knowing and acknowledging upcoming events in their lives and that of their families e.g. birthdays, marriages, births, graduations etc.
65. Encourage expressions of peer recognition
66. Bring volunteers and senior management together in informal '*meet and greet*' sessions
67. Host forums with senior management in the '*hot seat*'
68. Organise a '*New Ideas*' Workshop to generate better ways to improve services, streamline procedures and develop better recognition methods
69. Take out several volunteers for coffee or lunch each month and use the occasion to seek feedback
70. Find someone who does great portraits or cartoons from photographs, and ask them to draw volunteers. Present a framed version to hang in the organisation or to take home
71. Designate special car bays for volunteers
72. Celebrate volunteer birthdays
73. Send an inspirational note to volunteers' others - partner, children and close friends expressing the positive difference the volunteer has made to the organisation.
74. Organise an '*Open House*' event for family and friends of volunteers to visit the organisation
75. Use unusual special days of the year to remember volunteers e.g. 6 February is '*Compliments Day*', 1 July is '*Jokes Day*' and 5 October is '*Do Something Nice Day*' - see www.holidayinsight.com
76. Issue regular press releases to local media highlighting the contribution of volunteers Do not forget to attach photograph - see
77. Collaborate with local government and other local organisations to create a hero welcome town sign that thanks the volunteers in the community

78. Collect and share appreciation stories/testimonials coming from the community and users of the organisation's services- encourage users of services to comment on outstanding service
79. Use the organisation's website as a cyber bulletin board- ensure there is section just about volunteers
80. Offer to include free advertising of the services and products of any volunteer running their own businesses - enquire whether they would like to offer a discount arrangement to other volunteers and staff as a win-win opportunity
81. Establish and name special Volunteer Awards after long term and committed volunteers- whenever presented, use opportunity to remind audience of the volunteer after whom the Award is named
82. Create lots of opportunities for volunteers to socialise, recreate and network with each other
83. Welcome and encourage feedback from volunteers and be attentive to complaints and ideas.

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