



VolunteerMatch

VolunteerMatch Learning Center
Core Components

Creative and Innovative Recognition Strategies for Today's Volunteers

Jennifer Bennett, CVA
Director, Education & Training

Agenda

- Why recognition matters
- Basing recognition in culture and values
- Designing meaningful recognition for your volunteers
- Understanding and evolving current recognition strategies and rewards
- Implementing a more modern recognition strategy
- Things to think about

Recognition Matters

Volunteers want to:

- Find a cause they care about
- Make a difference in their community

How can you help them do that? How will they know when they've done it?

Understand Why

Volunteers also have their own individual motivations for volunteering.

- Why are they volunteering with you?
- What do they want to accomplish with their volunteer time?

Motivation matters in recognition!

Traditional Recognition

Old school recognition assumes long-term relationships, based in social motivation

- Hours counting
- Event or seasonal based recognition
- Longevity based 'thank you' gifts

But it

- Doesn't tap into individual motivations
- May exclude more modern engagement models
- Doesn't appeal to impact-driven volunteers

Match Recognition to Culture

What matters to your library? What do you value or prioritize?

- What's the real impact of volunteers in your library, your patrons? - Not FTE, or \$ value
- How can you help your volunteers understand their contribution?
- How can you help them tell their story?

Meaningful Recognition

- Is personalized and heart-felt
- Shows you value the work a volunteer does
- Volunteers are not interchangeable, and they don't want to feel like they are
- Is tied to the mission, patrons, and culture
- Makes an investment in the volunteer
- Time, energy, responsibility, not necessarily money

When Hours are Gold

If volunteers are invested in hours counting don't eliminate the program

- Integrate impact recognition into existing recognition
- Incorporate personalized recognition on a regular basis
- Steer incoming volunteers toward new recognition goals -
Personalized accomplishments

Modernize your Recognition Strategy

What could recognition look like?

- Personalized and heart-felt – notes from clients, staff, accomplishments or small wins
- Individual Value – acknowledge an individual's role, skill set, or dedication
- Tied to Organization's Values – mission-driven recognition celebrates the work volunteers do by telling the story of their impact
- Invest in Volunteers – leadership roles, professional development, invitations to participate

Getting Started

Understand your current recognition culture

- What's working? What do you want to keep?
- Where are your opportunities?
- Ask!
- What's motivating your volunteers? How can you tie it to recognition?

Where can you provide access?

- Leadership roles, ongoing training/skills building
- Town Halls, Open Houses

Getting Started

Make it easy and sustainable

- Recruit others
- Start with impact when (re)designing opportunities

How Much is Enough?

Create a series of recognition and celebration events

- Personalized and impact-driven in the short term
- Celebrate or acknowledge small wins or special circumstances
- Regular celebrations with the team for bigger accomplishments
- Acknowledge the work with others – volunteers, paid staff, patrons, community, community

Things to Think About

- Invite volunteers into the process
- How do they want to be recognized and celebrated?
- Incorporate new recognition opportunities into existing channels and events
- Consider appropriate recognition when designing new-model volunteer engagement opportunities
- Mission/Impact driven, professional-level work, project milestones

Thank you!

Join us online:

Like us on Facebook: www.Facebook.com/VolunteerMatch

Follow us on Twitter: [@VolunteerMatch](https://twitter.com/VolunteerMatch)

For any questions contact:

Jennifer Bennett

[@JenBennettCVA](https://twitter.com/JenBennettCVA)

jbennett@volunteermatch.org