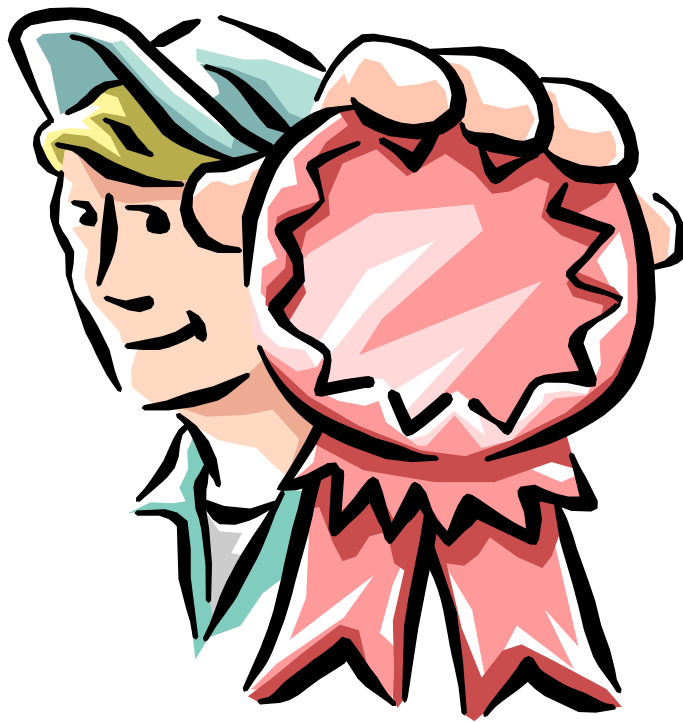


Recognition



7. Recognition

A volunteer’s “pay” is the recognition that he or she receives from the organization. **The contributions of time and effort made by each volunteer must be recognized by the Program/Service area for which he or she volunteers.**

An effective, targeted recognition program can support you in many ways. Recognition can:

1) Contribute to Productivity

Volunteers who are given meaningful tasks feel rewarded by their own accomplishments. They benefit from this while the WRHA benefits from making good use of volunteer time.

2) Contribute to Retention

By identifying and addressing the specific needs of individuals and providing recognition that satisfies these needs, you are more likely to encourage your volunteers to stay with the program.

3) Contribute to Morale

By demonstrating concern for your volunteer through appropriate task assignment and performance recognition, your volunteer’s personal satisfaction and willingness to participate will increase.

Recognition Programs that Fail

- Base awards on what the supervisor values rather than what the volunteers value.
- Assume certain rewards to be good for everyone without regard for individuality.
- Are inconsistently administered.
- Are external to the volunteer, with no connection to the work or person.
- Offer rewards whether performance merits it or not.
- Assume that the organization’s mission is sufficient justification to volunteer, with no recognition or celebration of the volunteer’s work.
- Offer excessive recognition and celebration.

Recognition Programs that Work

- Base rewards on appreciation of the individual volunteer as a unique person and which addresses individual needs.
- Are based on individual roles or tasks.
- Have consistent reward policies, resulting in a sense of trust that effort will receive the proper reward.
- Recognize longevity and special contributions frequently.
- Offer rewards that can be shared by teams of volunteers or the entire organization.

Planning for Recognition

An effective approach to developing effective, meaningful recognition is to build a year-round, on-going process that finds a variety of informal ways to acknowledge volunteers. Informal recognition can become part of the way to “do business” with volunteers. It can be part of everyday business, being both inexpensive and effective.

Sound volunteer management practice allows for effective volunteer recognition. The following will make volunteers feel valued for their contribution.

Making Volunteers Feel Valued

- Take into account the interests and skills of volunteers to create volunteer roles that challenge but don’t overwhelm.
- Place volunteers in roles that they want to do.
- Link volunteers to sources of help by considering teams, mentors and buddies when designing work assignments.
- Help people set realistic goals - program volunteers for success, not failure.
- Demonstrate your respect for the individual, his/her values and views by listening to suggestions, compliments and concerns.
- Provide opportunities for volunteers to learn new skills.
- Make even tedious work fun by building in camaraderie and an opportunity to innovate.
- Celebrate outstanding projects.
- Keep people personally connected so they feel part of the action and part of your team.

- Recognize accomplishments on a year round, frequent and informal basis. Say thank you often. Look for opportunities to find someone doing something right.
- Be user-oriented, it is important that the person whose efforts you are acknowledging feels appreciated – be sure that your method of thanks says “thank you” to the recipient.
- Keep your plans manageable, don’t make promises you can’t keep, don’t set up elaborate programs that you cannot organize well.
- Be consistent.
- Be timely, the best recognition is delivered as soon after the accomplishment as possible.
- Be sincere. Don’t give accolades that you don’t really mean.
- Keep good records, maintain accurate lists – you can damage your reputation in the community if people feel they were forgotten, ignored or slighted.
- Personalize your thanks; say thank you to the person for the work he/she did to accomplish the goal.

Remember, an effectively managed volunteer recognition program will not only keep your volunteers motivated, but will ultimately help you reach your goals.

Formal Recognition

Formal recognition provides volunteers with tangible evidence of their involvement with the WRHA. Formal recognition activities of the WRHA include:

References

A letter of reference can be helpful when applying for paid employment or entrance into educational programs. Once a volunteer has established a consistent volunteer history, you may provide a reference (verbal or written).

Annual Volunteer Recognition Event

WRHA organizes an annual event for all volunteers where they are honoured for their contributions and our appreciation and gratitude is extended.

Staff Appreciation and Recognition Program (StAR)

Volunteers are included in the WRHA StAR Program, an initiative of WRHA Human Resources. Staff and volunteers are eligible to receive discounts from various services within and around Winnipeg ranging from fitness facilities, restaurants and car dealerships. To obtain a discount volunteers must present their volunteer identification badge. A complete list of discounts is available on the WRHA web site at <http://www.wrha.mb.ca/professionals/star/discounts.php>.