

# VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION

“Putting a New Spin on certificates,  
mugs and 5 year pins”

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The RETHINK Group



# Reminders

- You can hear us, we cannot hear you!

## Can't hear?

- Try turning up your volume
- Call in by phone or use your computer headphones

**Have a question?** Use the Q&A box, any time. We will have time at the end to answer questions or you can email me after the webinar.

## Downloads

- Webinar recording
- PPT Slide presentation
- Recognition Ideas – 1 page
- 2013 Volunteer Recognition Study, Volunteer Canada

# AGENDA

1. Your survey results
2. Definition and link to Recruitment & Retention
3. What does Volunteer Recognition mean in your organization?
4. Recognition & Appreciation – let's consider Baby Boomers
5. Key Questions to ask when building a volunteer recognition program
6. Best Practices
7. Impact when recognition is successful

# Quick Poll

- How many of you have volunteered in another organization (not the arts/culture/heritage group you are with) in your community, this past year, 2014?
- YES
- NO

# Quick Poll

Think about how YOU would like to be recognized as a volunteer.  
Select the **preferred way** you would like to be recognized as a volunteer.

Let's see what happens....

# **Your Survey Results: Good-Bad News**

**Planned Strategy:** 50/50 as to whether you have a planned strategy for recognition.

**What do you do:** good range of annual events considered formal recognition (some events tied to years of service – think about these as volunteers do shorter times)(is once a year enough today?)

**New Terms: Acknowledgement – Appreciation.** You are interested in learning about building a culture of appreciation!

Your questions from survey integrated into this presentation and addressed at the end.

# Exploring Recognition

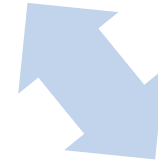
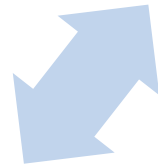
- Volunteers are an essential resource in the non profit world. Although Arts has a small % of volunteers (5.8% of 13.3 million volunteers in Canada) they volunteer 127hrs on average; more than any other type of organization. (5% increase in numbers from 2004 and 11% increase in hours volunteered since 2004).
- Volunteers don't volunteer to be recognized. They volunteer to do good work, make a difference and have their needs met.
- **Traditionally:** formal recognition 'events' once a year to take time out to officially thank volunteers.
- You want volunteers to enjoy their experience and feel that their efforts are appreciated. Saying thanks and then formally recognizing efforts helps keep volunteers motivated and happy.

- You have invested time and effort in recruitment and then in support (orient, train); and recognition is a support function to this.
- Volunteers are also ambassadors – their experience will directly impact the way they represent your organization.
- So developing an ongoing process to thank and recognize will have an impact on your success! (which in turn impacts recruitment)
- **New Approach**: learned that informally thanking volunteers throughout the year along with some formal method of recognizing, builds a culture of appreciation within the organization that helps to strengthen the relationship to volunteers. (when we feel good about something, have fun doing it...we should want to keep doing it)



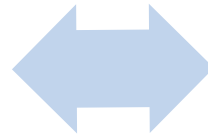
## Recruitment

What motivates? What needs does the volunteer have? What opportunities do we have? What messages?



## Recognition

How will we demonstrate appreciation both formally and informally?



## Retention

What does the volunteer need to stay connected? What support do volunteers need?

# What does Recognition mean to your organization?

- The atmosphere of an organization can have a huge impact on volunteer experience.
- Volunteers need to feel welcome, part of a team, valued and appreciated.
- Think about your own volunteer experiences
  - Would you volunteer again?
  - Would you recommend that organization to others?
  - Would you continue to support the cause?

# Quick Poll

Think about your own volunteer experience you shared earlier and what recognition you preferred.

- Would you volunteer again?
- Would you recommend that organization to others?
- Would you continue to support the cause?

# Assessment

- The first step to developing a good recognition program is to assess what you are currently doing.
- Step back – think about the environment of your organization –
  - Is it positive? What would current volunteers say?
  - Is it welcoming?
  - How are new volunteers treated?
  - Do seasoned volunteers accept new recruits?
  - What has been the history of recognition...what have you done in the past and what are you doing right now?
  - Are plans thought out and plans put in place, information tracked?

# Recognition & Appreciation

- Recognition has traditionally meant **formally** acknowledging volunteer efforts, usually as a group.
- **Formal:** those activities/events that are planned and usually happen on an annual basis. The organization sanctions this and often has awards or recognition items (traditional approach)
- **Informal:** small, everyday gestures that show gratitude to others in spontaneous ways. These are **personal** and **focused** on the unique characteristics or specific accomplishments of an individual volunteer (more recent understanding)

- **Appreciation:** “ By combining both formal and informal methods of recognition, an organization can create a ‘culture of appreciation’ in which both volunteers and paid staff feel respected and valued for their contributions.” (John L. Lipp)

## Changes to our “Traditional Approach” to Recognition?

- Indicates ongoing appreciation, daily work
- Focus on both staff and volunteer contributions
- Values individual contributions not just everyone as part of the volunteer team
- Builds an organizational approach; creates a supportive atmosphere
- Increased retention is an additional outcome

# Why have changes come about?

- We have profiles of new volunteers: (Youth and their 40 hours of community service; Generation Y in their 30's; Generation X; Baby Boomers – highly skilled volunteers)
- New volunteers want different opportunities for volunteering. Sometimes meeting their specific needs is recognition enough or making a difference/showing outcomes.
- There is a life-cycle to volunteering, so that many baby boomers who volunteered during their younger years, do not want another certificate or mug.
- Changes in WHO is volunteering: WHY they are volunteering: also has impact on HOW they want to be acknowledged or recognized.

# Baby Boomers

“This coming generation of retirees will have different needs, different motivations, different expectations and different barriers to becoming volunteers.”

(Heartbeat Trends, 2001)



# Boomer Profile as volunteers

- Highly skilled and experienced
- Don't waste time approach
- Want flexibility due to life style choices and variety
- Want shorter commitments - episodic
- Technologically keen - interest in virtual opportunities
- Want 'opportunity' to make a difference but not a job
- Want to be treated professionally, part of decision making

# **3 things we know about Baby Boomers that would influence Recognition**

- Recognizing efforts and demonstrating the value and impact of volunteer activities – valuing boomers' contributions and allowing them to see the results of their efforts
- Fostering an environment that values boomer input – given the unique combination of life and work experience boomers have to offer, they appreciate feeling like a valued part of the organization and given a role in decision-making processes
- Measuring the social and economic value of volunteering – this is important to boomers in order to demonstrate the impact of their time as well as enhancing their satisfaction with the volunteer activities in which they are involved

# How do Boomers see recognition?

- This group of adults are used to seeing impact/outcomes in their work place – a form of recognition is seeing/feeling the **impact/outcomes** of their efforts.
- This group of volunteers have been active decision makers/ advice givers – a form of recognition might be **asking for advice** on a project, seeking input on a strategy, or helping to **make the decision**.
- This group of adults may prefer **feedback** on work well done, for a good team effort, for a great attitude rather than a formal event or certificate.

# Planning a Recognition Program: Key Questions to Ask

Volunteer Canada has listed 7 questions to consider when planning a recognition campaign:

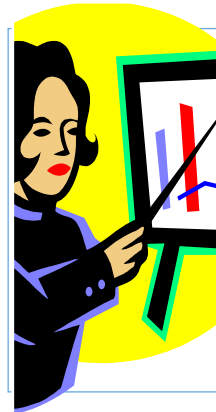
1. What is the purpose and desired result?
2. What is the budget?
3. What is the objective?
4. What is the strategic approach?
5. Who are you trying to engage?
6. Where and how can you engage them effectively?
7. What does success look like?

# A Strategic Approach (sample campaign)



## **INSPIRE**

What activities will inspire an internal culture of year-round volunteer recognition?



## **IMPACT**

What should be done year-round to ensure our volunteers see the impact of their work?



## **CELEBRATE**

How can we effectively recognize the impact of our volunteers during a National Week event and year-round?

# Formal Ideas

- Name badges for volunteers.
- Annual design a t-shirt event and use the winning design as the shirt for special events.
- “Volunteer of the Month” post his/her personal story on your web page to inspire others. Post testimonials from satisfied volunteers.
- Ask clients served by the organization to craft personal gifts for their volunteer.
- Host an annual event for both volunteers and their families.
- Host an annual event during National Volunteer Week in Canada and have your theme merge with Volunteer Canada - April 12-18, 2015  
Theme: “Volunteers are part of the Ripple Effect.”

# Informal Ideas

- Remember to say 'thanks' on the spot when a job is well done or something is completed.
- Greet volunteers by their name.
- Share the results of program evaluations/funding events so volunteers can see impact of their work.
- Make sure the volunteer is doing meaningful work. Provide additional training opportunities (many highly skilled volunteers appreciate training as a form of recognition).

# Best Practices

- Make a culture of appreciation for volunteers a goal for 2015.
- Do both formal and informal recognition with both groups and individual volunteers.
- Make recognition personal and focused as well as aligned to the work of your organization.
- Make informal recognition (thankful acknowledgement) everyone's responsibility. But make it sincere not overdone.
- Good volunteer recognition makes sure a person feels appreciated for his/her individual contributions, as well as for being part of a larger group.



# Impact of showing appreciation? (John L. Lipp)

- Volunteers feel appreciated for their individual contributions to your group's mission.
- Volunteers feel a sense of pride for their collective contributions to your mission.
- The general public has an increased appreciation and understanding of your volunteers and the work you do.
- Your group's leadership and your peers have an increased appreciation for the work of your volunteers.
- Your volunteers are motivated to continue to serve/keep coming back.
- Your volunteers recruit others – their co-workers, friends and family through positive word of mouth.

# Your Survey Questions

## Key Questions:

1. How to do this on a limited budget?
2. How can I engage the rest of the staff in recognizing and appreciating our volunteer core more actively?
3. How to recognize volunteers without making more work for the stressed core of volunteers?
4. What do volunteers expect?

## **1. How to do this on a limited budget:**

- Saying thank you from the heart does not cost anything.
- There are tons of ideas on little-no cost recognition. Make the recognition aligned to what 'art' you do. (Give a pass to the next art show; let volunteers meet the artists/performers)

## **2. Engaging the rest of the Staff**

- Building a culture of appreciation means that staff need to be appreciated as well. Recognize staff who volunteer; recognize staff who work well with volunteers; train staff on the whole area of volunteer engagement, appreciation is one piece.

### **3. How to do this effectively/without more work for current volunteers?**

- Recruit a volunteer whose role it is to develop/plan and execute a recognition/appreciation strategy – target someone with planning or project management skills. Let them survey staff and volunteers and work to communicate with everyone about what it takes to build a culture...have fun doing this (but it has to start with the Board, buy-in and desire).

### **4. What do volunteers expect ?**

- Ask them ....when you build a relationship with volunteers they will be open and tell you...most volunteers do not want the organization to spend money that they help raise, on recognition. Baby Boomers will tell you.. “ I do not need another mug, certificate, pin or plaque.”

Questions posted today....or email me...



“Recognition must be an attitude that permeates the entire planning and implementation efforts throughout the year. It is far more than pins, plaques and certificates...” Sue Vineyard, 2001

# Resources

- Building the Bridge to Baby Boomer Volunteers. Volunteer Canada research.  
<https://volunteer.ca/content/building-bridge-baby-boomer-volunteers-fact-sheet>
- Charity Village Resource Section [www.charityvillage.com](http://www.charityvillage.com)
- Everyone Ready: Creating a Culture of Appreciation. Online volunteer management resources. John L. Lipp
- Volunteer Recognition from A to Z. Slide share ideas  
<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/331577591289024478/>
- Wild Apricot: Volunteer Appreciation Guide.  
[www.wildapricot.com](http://www.wildapricot.com)

# Please share your feedback by completing the survey below.

If you have questions after the webinar is over, please contact me and I will try to help you!

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