GOOD PRACTICE IN VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT
PART THREE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to part three of this course in good practice in volunteer management. So far, in parts one and two, we’ve looked at:

- what good volunteer management is, from the perspective of a volunteer and the organisation
- what practical skills and knowledge a good volunteer manager needs to have.

In this section on reward and recognition we are going to look at why it’s important to acknowledge the contribution your volunteers make and help you think about some practical ways you can do this.

Put yourself in the shoes of a volunteer. What do volunteers give you?

- Time
- Energy
- Commitment
- Skills
- Knowledge
- Experience

As a volunteer you give this of your own free will and if you felt that you didn’t feel valued, you might go elsewhere to volunteer or spend your time differently.

There are many ways to recognise volunteer efforts and to create a positive environment for volunteering by rewarding people who are exceptional volunteers. You can recognise volunteers in two ways, formally and informally. And you can combine both.

Here are some informal ways to recognise the contribution your volunteers make.

- Making sure they have enough tasks to do every day
- Including them in informal social events, such as team lunches
- Consulting your volunteers on informal matters, such as making a welcome display for visitors to the organisation
• Telling them about the difference they make – earlier we looked at communication and the simple act of telling your volunteers about how their work has made a difference, this will make a difference to them
• Create rewarding and interesting roles – if a role is not very exciting, think about how it can be delivered, such as a group volunteering effort to make it more fun
• Saying thank you – often in the daily rush of everyday we forgot the power of thank you!
• Involving them in decision making and listen to feedback – volunteers may seek to influence how an organisation delivers its mission or they may wish to change perceptions about particular issues that your organisation is engaged with
• Volunteers may have some great ideas and experience to share so creating clear opportunities for them to share this with you will add value as they will bring their perspective to your whole bigger picture

We will now look at some of the specific ways you can formally recognise your volunteers.
• Offer development opportunities in their role. This could be by giving them training relevant to the role they are undertaking. For example, a volunteer telephone counsellor will need training in how to handle callers with sensitivity whilst addressing safeguarding issues and maintaining professional boundaries. Suggest accredited training that is linked to the role they are performing, where they can acquire a qualification.
• Make them feel part of your staff team and include them in training aimed at staff, such as training in social media platforms to enable greater efficiency in their role.
• Offering them the chance to shadow or volunteer alongside someone who they can learn from closely in relation to the role being performed.
• Offer your volunteers taster sessions, again related to their role but that stretch their skills and deepen their experience.
• Invite volunteers to meetings that affect them, such as staff meetings if appropriate.
• Invite volunteers on to working groups.
• Give them a certificate that recognises their efforts.
• Take part in volunteer events – Volunteers’ Week is an annual awareness raising campaign that has been delivered every year for over 30 years, in the first week of June to celebrate volunteering across the UK. Hundreds of organisations run their own ‘thank you’ event as part of Volunteers’ Week and NCVO help them promote what they do as widely as possible in local and national media. Volunteers Week is a fantastic way to show off your volunteers!

However not all volunteers feel comfortable with being recognised in the same way and some would rather you didn’t draw any attention to them at all. Remember people’s motivations to volunteer run deep and can be complex.
In part one we looked at Investing in Volunteers, the UK-wide quality framework for good practice in volunteer management. Let’s see how it can help to raise our standards in how we recognise the contribution of volunteers.

The 9th indicator says that ‘the whole organisation is aware of the need to give volunteers recognition’.

Think about how you recognise the contribution of your volunteers. What challenges have you encountered in relation to this and how can you avoid them?

There are also implications for reward and recognition. Volunteers should not be rewarded with anything that represents a cost to the organisation or that the volunteer could use to make a profit. For example, this could include an item like a concert ticket that the volunteer could then sell on.

Make sure that if you have a reward and recognition policy for volunteers that it doesn’t breach tax, benefits or employment rules.

It is acceptable to offer a gift for exceptional service or commitment but gifts should be small and one-offs to avoid creating expectations.

Rewards should be clearly linked to why you are offering them and this is something you should communicate to your volunteer.

That’s it for part three. In this section we’ve looked at different ways you can recognise and reward volunteer efforts. Recognising your volunteers’ achievements can create a positive culture where volunteer contribution is acknowledged and endorsed.

You can do this through informal methods, such as including volunteers in social events, consulting with them on informal matters or saying thanks.

Formal ways include involving volunteers in feedback in how you deliver your project or mission or involving them in Volunteers’ Week, the annual UK-wide thank you campaign led by NCVO in England.

Join us for part four, the final part of this course, where we’ll look at what tools you should have when managing volunteers.