

## Volunteer Recognition

Recognizing volunteers is a task that every corporate citizen should think about - and do! It is a very important, yet sometimes forgotten, aspect of corporate citizenship. There is not any “right way” to recognize volunteers but here is a list of ideas that could work for your company.

Recognition, or saying “thank you” in public, has multiple benefits beyond courtesy. To the volunteer, recognition signifies that someone notices and appreciates their volunteer efforts. In addition, these individuals can be recognized as role models for other employees to emulate. Recognition also enhances a company’s reputation as an involved corporate citizen.

### Tips for delivering recognition:

1. Deliver recognition in a personal and authentic manner.
2. Tailor your recognition to the unique needs of the group. Avoid providing recognition that is too overproduced—be specific about the volunteer efforts being recognized.
3. Time the recognition. Recognize contributions throughout a project. Reward volunteers close to the time that the volunteering occurs.
4. Have a clear message. Be sure that volunteers understand why they are receiving the recognition and clearly articulate the recognition criteria. Create a clear, well-communicated connection between accomplishments and the recognition received.
5. Enlist your executive champions to help celebrate your volunteers’ efforts.
6. Link the volunteer efforts to community outcomes—help your audience understand why and how this volunteer’s efforts made an impact on a social issue or challenge.

### Suggestions for volunteer recognition:

There are personal tokens of appreciation that may be given to volunteers like a heart-felt verbal ‘thank you’, a certificate of appreciation, or a thank you card from the CEO. Or, you can include a monetary component or add-on employee benefit to your employee recognition program.

### Ideas for corporate volunteer recognition:

1. Host a thank you event after a group volunteer activity.
2. Spotlight the “volunteer of the month” on your website. Also, include information as to what the volunteer did to receive this type of recognition.
3. Ask a local radio station or television station to cover your community/volunteer activity.
4. Have the CEO, executive champion, or the employee’s manager send the employee a thank you letter.
5. Make a monetary donation to the employee’s nonprofit of choice.
6. Offer the employee a day-off with pay or a volunteer day-off to volunteer at their favorite charity.
7. Allow the employee to select the next group employee volunteer activity.
8. Give your outstanding volunteers company logoed merchandise that celebrates their volunteer activity.
9. Create a circulating monthly or quarterly volunteer trophy for the “volunteer of the month” or “department of the quarter”.
10. Take photos of your volunteers in action: (With their written permission)
  - a. Frame them and present it to them at an all-hands meeting.
  - b. Use photos of your employees volunteering to decorate your lobby and office area.
  - c. Post photos to your website, intranet, blog and social media sites.
  - d. Start a lobby photo album of CSR activities; include quotes and information on the activity so that visitors will see the team’s efforts.
  - e. Include volunteering photos in the company annual report or CSR report.

Many of these suggestions will work for both group recognition and individual recognition. And, for the companies that are very competitive, it certainly keeps the competitive spirit alive when a departmental team “wins”. These ideas will help to encourage employees who have not previously participated to get out and join in the next CSR activity. Give your volunteers the support and tools they need to be successful, as well as ongoing praise.