



PACTIPS PACTIPS

Recognizing Volunteers

As the leader of an organization, your job is only half way over once you have recruited new members: the next and often most important step is to keep them involved. Recognizing the volunteers involved in your organization will make them feel needed, important and a vital part of the organization. Recognizing these individuals will keep them involved, committed, and enthusiastic.

RECOGNITION IS VITAL

It is very important for all of your members to understand the importance that recognition plays at any level of an organization! The obvious person that would be involved in overall recognition is the president, but so should committee chairs with their committees. In addition, individual members should give a pat on the back to the club president or other officers and members. Recognition is for everyone!

SOME REASONS FOR RECOGNITION:

- A successful program
- Always volunteering for the jobs that no one else wants
- Demonstrating a positive, supportive attitude during a heated discussion
- Being open to new ideas
- Suggesting ideas for improvement in the organization
- Taking on a tough challenge
- Being a member
- Attending every meeting
- Arriving on time to all meetings and events
- Being a positive, enthusiastic member

WAYS TO GIVE RECOGNITION

- Provide constructive feedback and explicitly communicate that you appreciate their work, involvement, etc. Be specific about the reason for your appreciation.
- Give members free event passes.
- Give out buttons, stickers, t-shirts, or backstage passes.
- Write thank you notes.
- Plan social get-togethers.
- Give out carnations. Lollipops, candy bars, balloons, etc., with notes of appreciation attached.

- Write a letter of recommendation and give the member a copy.
- Give the members more challenging responsibilities: show that you trust them.
- Recognize them in front of a board or committee meeting.
- Have the president attend a committee meeting and personally thank committee members.
- Make the members a focus of an organization newsletter article.
- Bring a snack to your next meeting.
- Create a committee member of the month award.
- Have an end of the year reception for all members.
- Nominate members for university leadership awards.

RECOGNITION BANQUET

A more formal method for member recognition is a member recognition and appreciation banquet. Have the organization host a banquet in honor of the members. In order to further enhance the sense of recognition, you could give out awards to the members. These might be established, annual awards. For example: the *Committee Member of the Year Award*; or, to be humorous, tailor-made awards to suit each member's contribution, such as the *Ansel Adams Picture-Perfect Award* for the most organized committee leader.

DURING THE BANQUET

- Try to have people give the awards who know the recipients and the work they have done: they will usually mean more to the person receiving the award. This person could be a supervisor, organization officer, advisor, or peer.
- If you are planning to have a speaker at the ceremony, give more time to the actual recognition of the members than to the speaker.
- Consider giving several members an opportunity to say a few words about their experiences in the organization or share their words of wisdom instead of bringing in an outside speaker.
- Set the tone of the ceremony or banquet to the desires or needs of the organization and its members. For a laid-back organization, a dinner at a casual restaurant may be better than a high-class expensive one.
- Costs are a big factor. If having the ceremony at an elegant establishment will further enhance the recognition experience and the organization can afford it, then do it.
- On the other hand, if the elegant atmosphere will only make members feel uncomfortable, you might want to choose a different spot.

Member recognition is extremely important for maintaining member involvement, and for promoting members' feelings of self-worth. Give recognition all year long to show members that the organization cares about them and that the entire organization appreciates their accomplishments.

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