

The Top Ten Ways to Impress Your Volunteers (and keep them happy and generous)

VOL-UN-TEER: according to Webster, a volunteer is one who enters into or offers himself for any service of his own free will; one who offers or bestows voluntarily.

10. Have specific tasks and responsibilities outlined in a job description.
9. Place volunteers in roles with tasks and responsibilities that fit their interests and talents.
8. Make them feel like they are essential members of the team. If you are using volunteers properly, they are essential!
7. Let them be involved in the strategic planning process. You will be surprised how much some volunteers really know!
6. Don't shield them from bad news - let them know why some programs are not working, why fundraising results are below goals. They may have a solution for the problem(s), including stepping up to the plate with their own money!
5. Learn their names immediately – nothing is more impressive than remembering someone who is doing something nice for the organization. Introduce these "named individuals" to staff, other volunteers and your constituency.
4. Don't waste their time by poor planning on your part. Have all necessary supplies, materials, etc. ready to go. Be ready to help them at the drop of a hat. When someone is offering time and advice for free, they can't be expected to work around your schedule.
3. Feed them during lunchtime meetings and evening meetings. They need nourishment to work for free!
2. Make them laugh and laugh with them - volunteers need to enjoy their time at your institution.
1. Compliment them often and always! Let them know that they make a difference in the level of service that your organization is able to provide for your constituency.

Volunteers are the lifeblood of not-for-profit organizations'. Treat them right and they will keep coming back for more, and ultimately, your constituency will be the big winner!

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