

Encouraging Volunteerism: Recognition Programs for Youth and Adults

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Introduction



- Seva, aka volunteerism, is integral to any society's growth and spirit of community. It gives people a sense of ownership
- Karma karo, phal mat dekho
- It is however important to recognize, acknowledge, and appreciate
- and there are several ways to do so



Introduction



- We often think Millennial (born 1980-2000) are not interested in service
- The truth however is far from that – in a 2012 survey, every 3 out of 4 Millennial volunteered at not-for-profit. Clearly this generation is not afraid of getting involved
- Instead it is us who need to adapt – just like Hinduism does as a living religion and adapts to time and situations



Why Millennial-focus



- They are our kids
- They were born here
- This is their nation and the society is their culture
- They follow Western rules and society guidelines
- They are our future

- Need proof? Look at the organizers!

- In contrast, those born prior are you and me who immigrated and follow different rules and society guidelines



How To Engage Millennials



- Know how they function – know your Customer!
- They connect with a Cause, not organizations
- They involve social network (on/offline) and do things that look “good” on social network
- Seek opportunities that build professional skills and expertise (and look good on social network)
- Prefer a volunteer continuum



How to Keep Them Engaged and Recognize Them - 1



- Formal versus Informal Recognition
- Formal
 - Planned, institutionalized actions
- Informal
 - Small everyday gestures to express gratitude



How to Keep Them Engaged and Recognize Them - 2



- Ongoing Informal recognition
 - Call to say Thank you
 - Take photographs
 - Buy coffee!
 - Recognize a birthday
 - Send a note of gratitude/appreciation
 - Say Thank you



How to Keep Them Engaged and Recognize Them - 3



- Create a Volunteer Advisory Committee
- Do a Volunteer Appreciation Week
- Daily activities for a week vs one-time banquet
- Daily raffles – e.g. gift card to restaurant (Bonus points: Socially responsible business)
- Do "For the Greater Good" activities e.g. donate back-packs, clean the neighborhood, tutor community kids ----things that look good





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Two More Things



- If it does not work on smart-phone, **RETHINK!**
- Make a link to “Volunteers” obvious on your web-site. It shows **YOU** care and honor volunteers



Conclusion



- Millennials are our Future
- Engage them at their Needs and Level
- Recognition must be an attitude that permeates the entire organization, its planning and implementation efforts, and throughout the year. It is far more than pins, plaques and certificates





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**VOLUNTEERS
ARE PAID IN
SIX FIGURES...**

S-M-I-L-E-S.

-GAYLA LEMAIRE

womensserviceday.com



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Connect with Cause



- Speak to the cause, not organization
- Speak to their passions – relationship with your organization will come later
- They want to see concrete impact of their volunteering on what they care about – give them inspirational stories



Bond with their social needs



- They like to share socially – make sure your opportunities are easily shareable.
- This means lots of multi-media and visuals
- They engage with organizations on multiple platforms – if it does not work on smart-phone, RETHINK!
- Obvious link to Volunteering on your website



Fuse skill-building with millennial opportunities



- They want to derive other benefits while also doing good
- They wish to grow professionally

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Bind Millennials with many ways to volunteer



- They engage on a continuum and critical to offer multiple ways and levels of getting involved, from virtual to microvolunteering, to one day events to pro bono projects, to board opportunities
- Be willing to be flexible and design opportunity for them.
- Set clear expectations



Slide 4



- Appreciation versus Recognition
 - Combining formal and informal methods of recognition, an organization can create a “culture of appreciation” in which volunteers and paid staff feel respected.
 - Deeper sense of connection to the organization and its mission



Slide 5



- Wanting to feel appreciated is human nature and it is one of the fundamental principles of working with volunteers.



Making volunteers feel special



- Providing validation
- Recognizing the accomplishments of volunteers
- Motivational orientation
 - Achievement oriented volunteers
 - Affiliation oriented volunteers
 - Power oriented volunteers

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Millenials needs/ expectations



- Enjoying sense of purpose and fulfillment
- Staying physically active
- Reducing stress level
- Opening doors to new life opportunities
- Increasing personal satisfaction
- Making new friends
- Increasing job opportunities for school aged individuals
- Feeling connected to community
- Experiencing the “Happiness effect”

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