



Volunteer Recognition Ideas Across the Generations

Here are tips from leaders of volunteers at MAVA workshop on what they have found for recognition preferences in the different generations.

Traditionalists

Born before 1946

- If give an item, give something useful
- Make donation in honor of them
- Service pins are popular
- Honor years of service
- Many like recognition parties

Boomers

Born 1946-1964

- No trinkets or meaningless stuff
- Like training opportunities
- Like thank you for organizational leaders
- Promote to new opportunities. Offer leadership of a project.
- Send “insider” information – such as advanced notice of new Executive Director hiring or including in organizational communication
- Provide name tags like staff have
- Send thank you to their family for sharing their time with the organization.
- Some like to be highlighted in newsletters, on website, etc.
- Mixed reaction on recognition parties – some like the networking and some feel to busy to attend

Generation X

Born 1965-1980

- Send note to their works supervisor
- Give business cards for volunteer position
- Offer to be a reference
- Acknowledge in news or other ways that are public
- Add to their network, help make a connection, introductions
- Offer opportunity to develop skill or skill set
- Spontaneous email thank you
- Give volunteer positions interesting titles
- Provide electronic logo that could add to website

Generation Y/ Millennials

Born 1981- ?

- Offer reference letter
- Give feedback – this generation loves feedback
- Offer to take to meetings for networking opportunities
- Offer information interview with position(s) in organization
- Offer increased responsibility or a challenge
- Gift cards popular
- Like verbal thank you.
- Give increased responsibility, a leadership role or a project to be in charge of
- Many do not like traditional recognition parties
- Handwritten notes