



5 Tips to Supercharge Member Loyalty & Power Community Engagement

Volunteering tactics to reward your members and improve organizational culture

How do you reward and recognize volunteerism in your organization today? Mission-driven volunteering can be a game changer for your member loyalty and community engagement. Employing new volunteerism concepts like adhocracy, micro volunteering and virtual volunteering can demonstrate real world impact if you are looking to involve new members and users.

Two leading innovators on this topic recently joined us for a Learning Series session on all things volunteerism: Peggy Hoffman, CAE, of Mariner Management, and Elizabeth Weaver Engel, M.A., CAE, of Spark Consulting. Read on for their top tips on using volunteer tactics to improve member loyalty and community engagement.

- 1 Mind Your R's.** In any volunteer program, it's important to remember two things: recognize efforts and reward outcomes. Your tasks would never be completed without the hard work and generosity of your volunteers, so take into account what motivates and really matters to them. Also be wary of the unintended consequences of undeserved praise or excessive Thank You's.
- 2 Build a Culture of Valuing Volunteers.** Every organization has a culture, which is the sum total of values and beliefs that drive action. Your culture is about the way you conduct your business, treat people, make decisions, share information and power, and go about achieving your goal, and it affects EVERYTHING you do. To intentionally create a culture that values volunteers, you need to offer options that suit everyone, manage your volunteers well and professionally, and provide appropriate, personalized appreciation.
- 3 Create a Volunteer Continuum.** Newer concepts such as micro or ad hoc volunteering can help organizations develop a pipeline of potential volunteers—it's a low level of commitment at a higher volume. This doesn't mean the quality of volunteers goes down; rather the opposite, it rethinks the traditional path and honors all types of volunteers equally. For example, Boomers won't "graduate" from your board of directors and feel like they can't contribute anymore, Generation X won't have to adjust career and parenting roles for traditional committees, and Millennials won't have to fight against a lack of authority or senior-level influence to be allowed to help. Every role is productive for the organization, with options for volunteers to flow in and out of different types and levels of commitment as their lives permit.

THE HIGHER LOGIC LEARNING SERIES

Interactive Webinars Hosted by Community Leaders

We started the Learning Series to cover new topics and create conversations that matter to people and organizations creating and building dynamic online communities. Attendees build their knowledge-base and share user stories in an exclusive environment designed to be collaborative, interactive and educational. This inventive series is a collection of social networking webinars hosted by industry experts, thought leaders and Higher Logic staff who are empowering their organizations through social technology—and big ideas.

HIGHER LOGIC 
Learning Series

4 Provide Your Volunteers with a Map. When building out a strong volunteer program for your organization, it's important to take an honest look at what you already have and what you are lacking. Write out all of your current or traditional volunteer roles, and assign an engagement activity to mirror each role. This codifies your organization's plans and helps you create roles at all different levels. Don't forget that technology is a friend for all volunteer programs—take advantage of your website, community platform and social media channels to engage volunteers and spread the word on what your volunteer map looks like.

5 Invest in Solid Volunteer Management. Your volunteers are worthy of excellent volunteer management. A good volunteer program will include three critical elements: orientation, training and evaluation. Orientation provides the broad overview or framework for your volunteers, helping them understand what they're committing to, how it fits into the overall mission of your organization, and what the anticipated impact will be. Training is tactical, focused on teaching your volunteers the skills and knowledge they need in order to be successful in the specific tasks you need them to complete. Evaluation is pivotal to your program's success, although organizations are often tempted to skip it. What did both volunteers and the organization learn from the volunteer project? This feedback will help influence resources and appropriations for the program, as well as adjust future tasks, volunteer roles and outcomes. Shift your game plan and your volunteer program will flourish!

Volunteerism Defined, 2015 Edition

It's critical for organizations to set up effective volunteer management, orientation programs and tools for success. But what if you're still playing catch up with new terms and concepts? Consider this the definitive guide for all things volunteerism, whether it's classic tactics or modern twists. These terms will help you accommodate a wide range of skills, interests and availability.

Volunteer - A person who freely offers to take part in an enterprise or undertake a task.

Adhocracy - A flexible, adaptable and informal organizational structure without bureaucratic policies or procedures.

Micro volunteering - Small, discreet tasks that are mission-related and done at a volunteer's convenience and schedule. These opportunities often lend themselves to mass-mobilization for volunteer programs.

Virtual volunteering - Opportunities enabled by technology and do not require face-to-face interactions to complete tasks.

Episodic volunteering - Temporary, small-scale opportunities or tasks that generally require short increments of time (one hour/day/week/month).

How did you celebrate #NVM2015?*



- Mailed a card (or similar) to all volunteers - 14
- Sent a personal 'Thank You' email - 24
- Thanked publicly (website, social media or event) - 20
- When is #NVW? - 10
- Combination of the above - 33

*101 Higher Logic Learning Series attendees participated in this poll

SAVE-TH-DATE:

The 2016 National Volunteer Appreciation Week is April 10-16!