

HOW TO RECOGNISE VOLUNTEERS

Recognising the invaluable role volunteers play in our game and community is vital. We know that those already lending a hand at your club will be doing so for a number of reasons. It is important that every volunteer is regularly recognised for their efforts, no matter how big or small.

Understanding how you can do this within your own club environment will support you in recruiting and retaining your volunteers in the best possible way.



1. MAKE IT A PRIORITY

Recognising the work of volunteers is vital and making sure it's a hot topic within your club is key. Ways that this could be achieved are by adding it as a regular item on your committee agenda or by recognising your volunteers on your social media or social event calendars.

2. RECOGNISE REGULARLY

A social media post once a season, or a passing thanks after a training session is a great start to recognising your volunteers, but why stop there? It's important that you acknowledge them all season long and that recognition is a regular event.

Make sure to get the balance right, as well as being regular, recognition should also be authentic to avoid any 'meaningless' thanks.

3. MIX IT UP

Vary the recognition you give between formal and informal, keeping in mind that it doesn't always have to be a thank you. It could be a check in on how they are getting on in the role or even how they are in themselves away from the club. Or you may want to thank them in a more formal way via a social media / website shout out. Keep the recognition fresh and unexpected.

4. MAKE IT MEANINGFUL

No one wants to receive a half-hearted thank you, nor does a volunteer want a thank you without knowing why they are being thanked. Make sure that you are sincere, meaningful and that you are acknowledging what they are doing or what they have done for the club, the members, and the wider community.

5. RECOGNISE THE INDIVIDUAL

There is nothing more touching than recognising the work and dedication of an individual. Focusing on just the end result can lead to volunteers feeling and thinking they will only be recognised if they are 'successful' and this shouldn't be the case. Everyone will be on their own journey and as such their personal milestones should be acknowledged.



6. RECOGNISE AND REWARD APPROPRIATELY

The length of support given by a volunteer may in some cases determine how you recognise and reward them. A more valuable experience may be suited to an individual who has given a greater length of support, in comparison to someone who has just started their volunteering journey with you. Both volunteers, regardless of length of support, are hugely important to your club, but making sure that recognition and reward matches the commitment given is important.

7. CONSISTENCY IS KEY

Once your club has decided how you will recognise the efforts of volunteers, it is important to make sure that this happens every season. Where possible, try to avoid organising a lavish awards ceremony or event that is financially unsustainable, as this may have a negative effect and disappoint volunteers in the future.

8. POSITIVELY REACT TO ACHIEVEMENTS

When a volunteer has reached a goal or accomplished something amazing, either directly aligned with the club or away from the club, try to recognise it as soon as possible. Delaying your recognition may devalue your gratitude.

9. MAKE IT PERSONAL

If your club decides to recognise through rewards, try and ensure that they relate to the individual. Knowing each of your volunteers and their interests will help you when looking for that special way to say thank you.

10. KEEP A RECORD

Every club has a history list, big or small, and often this is linked with on field sporting achievements such as league and cup victories. Why not explore how you can keep a roll of honour of all the volunteers past and present who have stepped up and supported the club. Even better if you can align their time at your club with an achievement.

