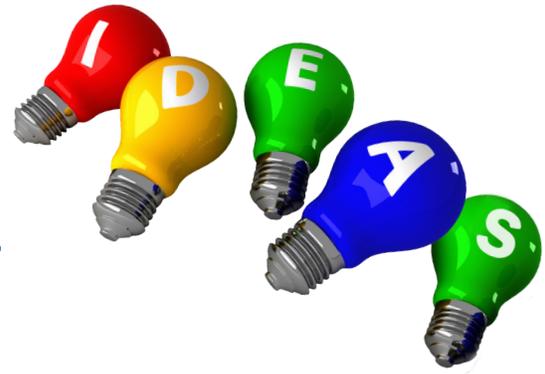


# 10 TIPS TO MAXIMIZE VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT



- 1. Understand motivation.** Volunteers commit for different reasons. It's important to understand their goals, passions, and drivers (e.g., fostering a sense of belonging, having fun, being a role model). Appeal to a volunteer's motivation and be specific about what you can offer to meet those needs.
- 2. Match capacity to challenge.** The [Career Engagement](#) model highlights the importance of balancing challenge and capacity (both individual and organizational). Asking volunteers to do more than your organization can support is a recipe for burnout. However, not offering enough challenge (i.e., underutilizing your volunteers) can also lead to disengagement.
- 3. Don't get stuck.** Keep volunteer interest and energy alive by cross-training, rotating volunteers through various roles, and making ongoing adjustments to keep projects fresh and manageable.
- 4. Make engagement a focus.** Volunteer engagement, like employee engagement, has four essential elements – alignment, commitment, contribution, appreciation. Identify reasons for volunteers becoming disengaged and respond with solutions that fit.
- 5. Align individual and organizational goals.** Just as your organization has needs which volunteers help to fill, so your volunteers have needs that they're hoping involvement with your organization will satisfy. Clearly identify both sets of needs and look for win-win opportunities.
- 6. Ignite commitment.** Volunteers will have varying amounts of time and energy available for you. To fully engage them, don't assume – ask! Promote long term loyalty by helping them see that they are making a significant difference.
- 7. Inspire contribution.** Volunteers want to help – it's why they're there. Take time to enquire about how they'd like to contribute. Ask what needs they've identified that they have the capacity to fill. Let them know that they matter.
- 8. Show appreciation.** A simple "[thank you](#)" goes a long way, but don't forget to get creative with your approach. Reward and recognize volunteers regularly – it's good for productivity, retention, and morale.
- 9. Be strategic.** Have a plan to [recruit and retain volunteers](#) – find and keep people who share your organization's values, are committed to your vision, and fit with your mission and people.
- 10. Customize your approach.** Motivate volunteers by treating them as unique individuals; effective volunteer recognition programs are personalized. Offer tailor-made challenges, supports, and celebrations to suit the unique contributions and personal styles of each member of your team.



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