

## 5 Slido Questions Answered from Volunteering Victoria State Conference 2019

**Social Return on Investment in volunteering studies need to be shared and communicated as reports on shelves do nothing- how can we share and get access to them in order to raise the profile and change the value perception of volunteering?**

Too many non-profits, government agencies, and community associations believe volunteer work is free labour. While volunteers are not paid for their services, organizing their involvement takes resources, time, and attention. For volunteer effort to be successful, all stakeholders, especially senior executives and board members, must be able to see how volunteer involvement furthers their organization's mission and why they should allocate resources to the effort. Organisations must create the right roles for volunteers, measure their success accurately, and report the work to senior leaders.

[https://www.energizeinc.com/store/measuring\\_impact\\_volunteers](https://www.energizeinc.com/store/measuring_impact_volunteers))

**As CEOs, how do you engage and recognise your volunteers?**

Recognition should fit with the organisation's culture. A visit by a very senior member of management to a branch volunteer team could be a significant morale booster. Involve all the key players in the programme and your organisation.

- Respect volunteers' privacy. If recognition is public (for example, a profile in the staff magazine or an award presentation) employees should be asked in advance if they are willing to accept this form of publicity.
- Choose who to recognise and why with care. The value of recognition may be diminished if it is given out to too many people for different levels of achievement. Write thank you letters or emails to individuals and groups whose efforts are too small to warrant a substantial recognition symbol.
- The best rewards are often non-financial. If money is offered, it could be given as a donation to the charity of the individual's or group's choice.
- Promote peer group recognition. This can be the greatest reward of all and being asked to talk about their achievements to other branches or public events can instill a great sense of pride.
- Thank your volunteers promptly. Send thank you letters or emails within two weeks of the event or project being completed, when the experience is still fresh in their minds. It is impossible to say thank you too much or too often.
- Nominate your volunteers to national/local award schemes for volunteering.

<https://www.energizeinc.com/art/recognising-employee-volunteers>)

**Is there a regulatory body that governs those companies/ organisations that have volunteer participation? How can we protect volunteers against exploitation, particularly young people?**



Health and Safety laws apply to both paid staff and volunteers. For example, bullying is covered under mental health and that is covered under the Health and Safety laws in Australia. We would advise you to speak to Justice Connect for some legal advice on this matter.

Visit <https://www.volunteeringvictoria.org.au/resources-guides/guides/> for more information

### **What are some effective strategies to managing 'difficult' volunteers?**

Even in informal, small-scale groups, conflict can arise. A planned approach to handling disputes will lead to better resolutions and reduce the fall out for your organisation. Here are a few things you can do:

- As with any human interaction, the potential for conflict increases when people feel taken for granted or misunderstood. By following 'best practice' in volunteer recruitment, training and performance management, you can avoid many potential pitfalls in your relationship with volunteers. See the National Standards for Volunteer Involvement in Not for Profit Organisations developed by Volunteering Australia.
- Prevention is obviously the best medicine. However, you will be best placed to deal with disputes that do arise if you take a planned approach to conflict management. This means thinking ahead to how you might deal with a problem and documenting your policy and procedures.
- Put some thought into appropriate ways to deal with the fallout from conflict: perhaps speaking individually to team members, or raising issues at a team meeting before they escalate

#### **For more information:**

- Download our "Dealing with Conflict" Guide <https://www.volunteeringvictoria.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Dealing-with-conflict-PDF.pdf>
- <http://www.disputes.vic.gov.au/>
- [http://www.nfplaw.org.au/results?search\\_api\\_views\\_fulltext=volunteer%20disputes](http://www.nfplaw.org.au/results?search_api_views_fulltext=volunteer%20disputes)

### **How do we convince our older volunteers, many of whom have been with us for decades to embrace new technologies?**

Although older volunteers have many similarities to their younger colleagues, they may also bring with them physical or other limitations that need to be accommodated. Here are a few tips to encourage older volunteers to embrace new technologies:

- Make it safe and comfortable for the volunteers to say 'I have a limitation' without feeling like they can't volunteer or that they're going to be a drag on the project.
- Ask the volunteers what they would like to do, rather than assigning them a task that they may not feel comfortable with.
- Provide proper training rather than a brief orientation.
- Provide clear guidelines of what the expectations are.

(<https://www.philanthropy.com/article/Tips-for-Recruiting-and/183517>)

