83 Ways to Retain, Recognise and Reward Volunteers

- 1. Never stop saying 'Thank You' catch people doing things right and thank them on the spot
- 2. Create a 'Retain, Recognise and Reward Volunteers Initiative' and involve volunteers in its design and implementation
- 3. Regularly review and vary your 'Retain, Recognise and Reward Volunteers Initiative'
- 4. Create a specific budget for volunteer recognition and reward
- 5. Establish a volunteer suggestion box
- 6. Acknowledge volunteers by names at public events
- 7. Reimburse any 'out of pocket' expenses
- 8. Send birthday cards with personalised messages
- 9. Hold an annual volunteer community barbecue
- 10. Invite volunteers to staff meetings
- 11. Create a photo 'Wall of Fame' bulletin board to highlight the work of volunteers-make it ever-changing-highlight a different volunteer each week
- 12. Recognise and support the personal needs and challenges
- 13. Establish a volunteer recognition board in a prominent position
- 14. Organise informal morning teas
- 15. Always greet by name learn ways to remember people's names
- 16. Provide continuous training opportunities
- 17. Continuously ask for opinions and ideas
- 18. Hold regular idea generation sessions
- 19. Regularly organise photos of volunteers and their initiatives in local newspapers
- 20. Take time to talk about their job with each volunteer
- 21. Write references
- 22. Organise volunteers to attend conferences and external training opportunities
- 23. Write personal 'thank you' notes
- 24. Invite participation in policy formation
- 25. Celebrate outstanding projects and achievements
- 26. Nominate individuals for volunteer awards
- 27. Carefully match volunteer interests and skills to the right jobs
- 28. Plan staff and volunteer joint social events
- 29. Organise occasional extravaganzas and surprise parties

- 30. Take out an annual paid advertisement in local newspaper to take all volunteersinclude a list of the names of all volunteers
- 31. Send letters of appreciation to volunteers' families
- 32. Write to the employer of the volunteer highlighting the contribution of the volunteer and thanking the employer for their support
- 33. Say 'we missed you' when absent
- 34. Instigate special awards for extraordinary achievements
- 35. Fully orientate new volunteers check with newer volunteers about ways to improve the orientation process
- 36. Send Christmas cards with a personalised message
- 37. Organise community-wide, cooperative, inter-agency volunteer recognition events
- 38. Produce and distribute an organisational T Shirt to all volunteers
- 39. Offer personal praise and recognition on the job, through the media and at public occasions
- 40. Give complimentary tickets to volunteers for special events and functions
- 41. Arrange discounts for volunteers at local businesses and events
- 42. Award life memberships, VIP recognition certificates
- 43. Hold social events in honour of volunteers
- 44. Create volunteer skill development opportunities
- 45. Farewell volunteers when they are retiring or moving away from the area
- 46. Use exit interviews to provide feedback to ensure continuous improvement
- 47. Arrange accreditation e.g. Certificate 1 in Active Volunteering
- 48. Organise an annual 'Volunteer Appreciation Dinner'
- 49. Administer a volunteer satisfaction survey every six months
- 50. Offer volunteers the opportunity to change roles
- 51. Discover what aspects of the organisation's procedures that volunteers find irritating and unnecessary
- 52. Ask volunteers what the organisation can do to make their roles easier and more satisfying
- 53. Create and distribute a 'Great Work' postcard
- 54. Use low cost creative ideas to improve the attractiveness of work facilities
- 55. Ensure all recognition is specific, frequent and personalised- and celebrate in front of as many people as possible
- 56. Instigate a welcome morning tea for all new volunteers
- 57. Create a buddy system which teams a new volunteer with an experienced volunteer
- 58. Provide gift vouchers donated by local businesses as volunteer rewards- match vouchers to volunteer interests

- 59. Create a personalised data base for each volunteer including significant dates, events and sporting teams in their lives; and the skills that they would be prepared to share or learn
- 60. Ensure recognition is shared with others who are significant to the volunteer being honoured
- 61. Highlight the work of individual volunteers in organisational newsletters and website
- 62. Give volunteers some operational freedom delegate some responsibility and give authority to make some decisions
- 63. Treat volunteers as 'insiders' and keep them in the communication loop
- 64. Surprise and delight volunteers by knowing and acknowledging upcoming events in their lives and that of their families e.g. birthdays, marriages, births, graduations etc.
- 65. Encourage expressions of peer recognition
- 66. Bring volunteers and senior management together in informal 'meet and greet' sessions
- 67. Host forums with senior management in the 'hot seat'
- 68. Organise a 'New Ideas' Workshop to generate better ways to improve services, streamline procedures and develop better recognition methods
- 69. Take out several volunteers for coffee or lunch each month and use the occasion to seek feedback
- 70. Find someone who does great portraits or cartoons from photographs, and ask them to draw volunteers. Present a framed version to hang in the organisation or to take home
- 71. Designate special car bays for volunteers
- 72. Celebrate volunteer birthdays
- 73. Send an inspirational note to volunteers' others partner, children and close friends expressing the positive difference the volunteer has made to the organisation.
- 74. Organise an 'Open House' event for family and friends of volunteers to visit the organisation
- 75. Use unusual special days of the year to remember volunteers e.g. 6 February is 'Compliments Day', 1 July is 'Jokes Day' and 5 October is 'Do Something Nice Day' see www.holidayinsight.com
- 76. Issue regular press releases to local media highlighting the contribution of volunteers Do not forget to attach photograph see
- 77. Collaborate with local government and other local organisations to create a hero welcome town sign that thanks the volunteers in the community

- 78. Collect and share appreciation stories/testimonials coming from the community and users of the organisation's services- encourage users of services to comment on outstanding service
- 79. Use the organisation's website as a cyber bulletin board- ensure there is section just about volunteers
- 80. Offer to include free advertising of the services and products of any volunteer running their own businesses enquire whether they would like to offer a discount arrangement to other volunteers and staff as a win-win opportunity
- 81. Establish and name special Volunteer Awards after long term and committed volunteers- whenever presented, use opportunity to remind audience of the volunteer after whom the Award is named
- 82. Create lots of opportunities for volunteers to socialise, recreate and network with each other
- 83. Welcome and encourage feedback from volunteers and be attentive to complaints and ideas.

The Bank of I.D.E.A.S. acknowledges the inspiration of the work of Dr Judy Esmond in compiling this list - www.mtd4u.com