



National “Thank a Volunteer” Month

A recent conversation with someone new to Maximizing Excellence brought up this question: *who do you work with?*

We work with organizations who want to improve their effectiveness and the individuals responsible for getting the results. The organizations are by and large nonprofits. And the majority of individuals we work with are volunteers.

Magic happens with volunteers. Few things can rival the power, influence, and output of a group of committed volunteers on the same page, moving in the same direction.

Upon reflecting on our work, it is clear to see that advancing the greater good is only made possible through these volunteers. So, join us in showing them love this month and every month!

Inspired by Gary Chapman’s *Languages of Love*, we have translated the languages into communication strategies to show appreciation to your volunteers.

Words of Affirmation – Verbal acknowledgement of impact is essential for this volunteer. Articulate just how their contribution has made a difference to the organization and the mission. Look for opportunities to express your gratitude via cards, email, or in person among their peers.

Quality Time – Find one-on-one opportunities for interaction. Invite them for coffee to say thank you, sit next to them at a board meeting, or spend time with them at your next event.

Receiving Gifts – A personalized token of appreciation can merge “thank you” with thoughtfulness. A gift can also serve as a token of memory, such as a plaque to display for years to come.

Acts of Service – Be present with this volunteer. Be mindful to offer guidance or assistance when needed to help them execute their volunteer role to the best of their ability. Participate in things important to them outside of your organization.

Physical Touch – Ensure this volunteer has a tangible connection to their time with the organization, either through an invitation to an event or to meet other volunteers and leaders. Invite them to spend time with a client or participate in direct service activities. From our experience, hugs and high-fives are often appropriate too.