

Rethinking Volunteer Recognition

July 28, 2020

WELCOME

The word "WELCOME" is displayed in a playful, handcrafted style on a corkboard. Each letter is cut from a different colored piece of paper and is pinned with a matching colored pushpin. The letters are: 'W' (blue paper, white pin), 'E' (white paper, red pin), 'L' (red paper, blue pin), 'C' (yellow paper, yellow pin), 'O' (white paper, red pin), 'M' (light green paper, white pin), and 'E' (red paper, blue pin). The letters are arranged in a slightly staggered, horizontal line across the center of the frame.

Upcoming Sessions in the Learning Series

Volunteer Retention

September 1

Providing Feedback is as Easy as 1, 2, 3!

September 22

“Engaging” Conversations: Recruiting Volunteers through Meaningful Discussions

October 7

Finding the Fit: Interview and Screening Tips

November 12

Beth Steinhorn, President



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[facebook.com/VQVolunteerStrategies](https://www.facebook.com/VQVolunteerStrategies)



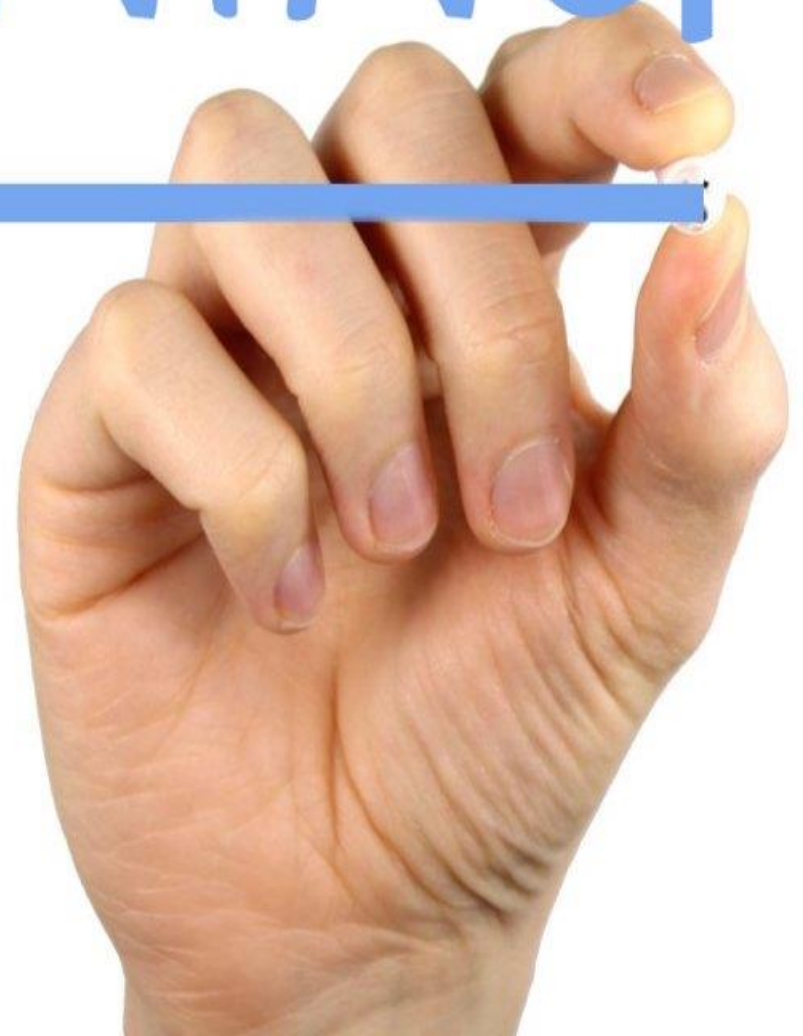
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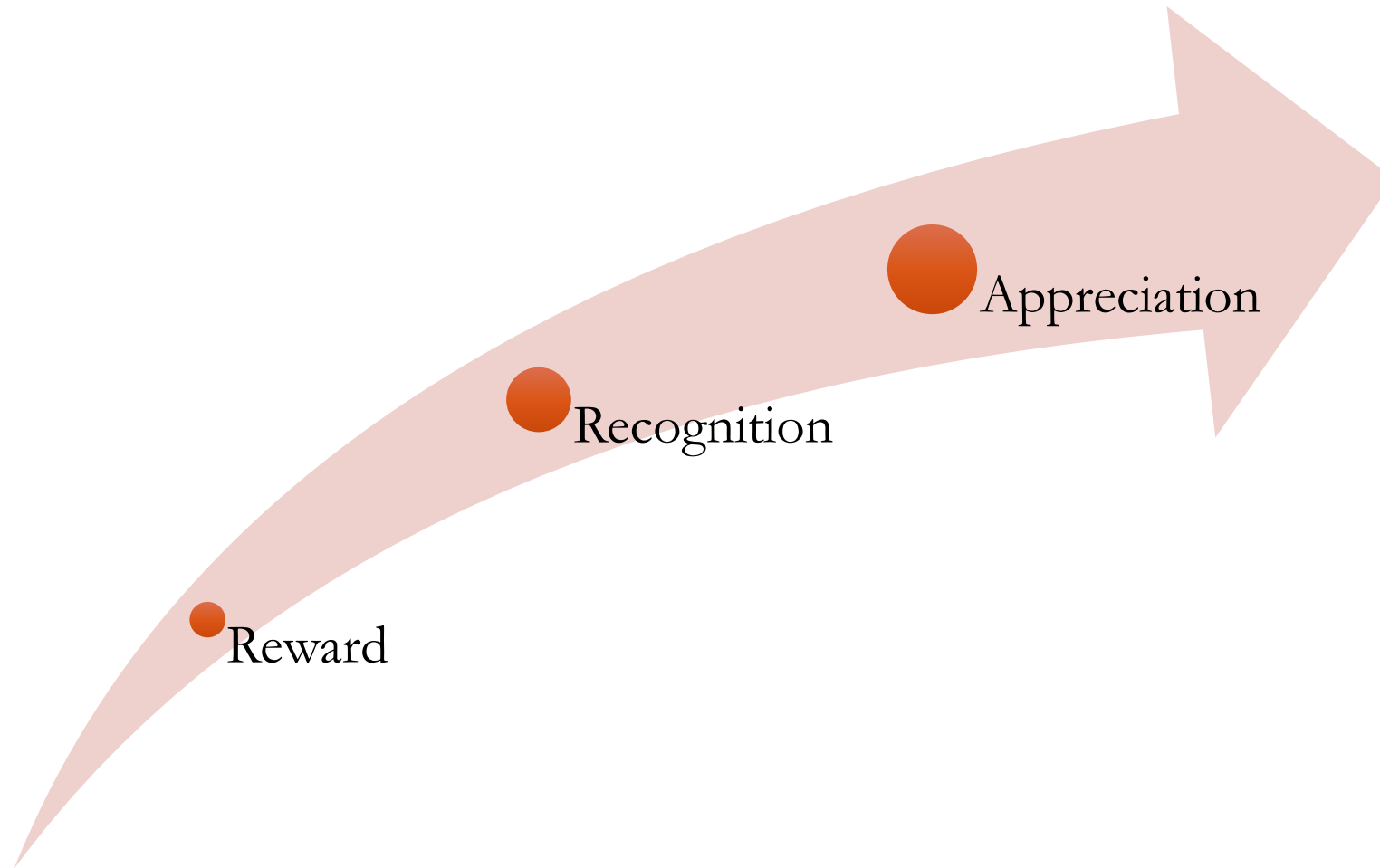
LEARNING

- Be familiar with research on volunteer recognition
- Be able to incorporate impact measurement into their recognition efforts
- Have a template to use to develop a meaningful recognition plan for your program volunteers



thanks

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Thank you

Rethinking Recognition



<https://www.sterlingvolunteers.com/resources/free-downloads/>

In a Culture of Appreciation:



Volunteers are...

- **integrated** into the organization's work
- **valued**
- **celebrated** for their impact

Organizations...

- build and acknowledge **teams**
- **include volunteers** in meetings
- **celebrate** together

Defining Your Organization's Culture of Appreciation

Leadership support

- Does leadership support volunteer engagement and staff?
- In what ways?

Team support

- Do staff and volunteers appreciate and support each other?
- In what ways?

Impact

- Is there a shared vision for success?
- Does everyone understand the impact of the work?

Personal Contributions

- How do I show appreciation?
- Is feeling appreciated the norm or the exception?

A Culture of Appreciation

Which of the following are part of your recognition efforts?

- Small gifts
- Annual volunteer recognition event
- Handwritten thank you notes, staff to volunteer kudos
- Selection for participation in special projects and/or professional development and training opportunities
- Recognition for years of service (certificates or small gifts)
- Volunteer of the month/year

And the survey says...



Research on Motivation

Mastery

Autonomy

Purpose

Daniel Pink, *Drive*



Research on Appreciation



50% of Americans
regularly express
gratitude to **family**



15% of Americans
express gratitude
to **colleagues**

Kaplan, Janice *Gratitude Survey* conducted for the John Templeton Foundation

Recognition Research



*Volunteers want to be thanked
and shown how they have made a
difference — they want to know the
impact of their contributions.*

Volunteer Recognition Study 2013 (Canadian)

Key Findings

Volunteers want to be recognized

- 80% Hearing how their work made a difference
- Close to 70% would like to be thanked in person on an informal basis



Key Findings

Least preferred ways

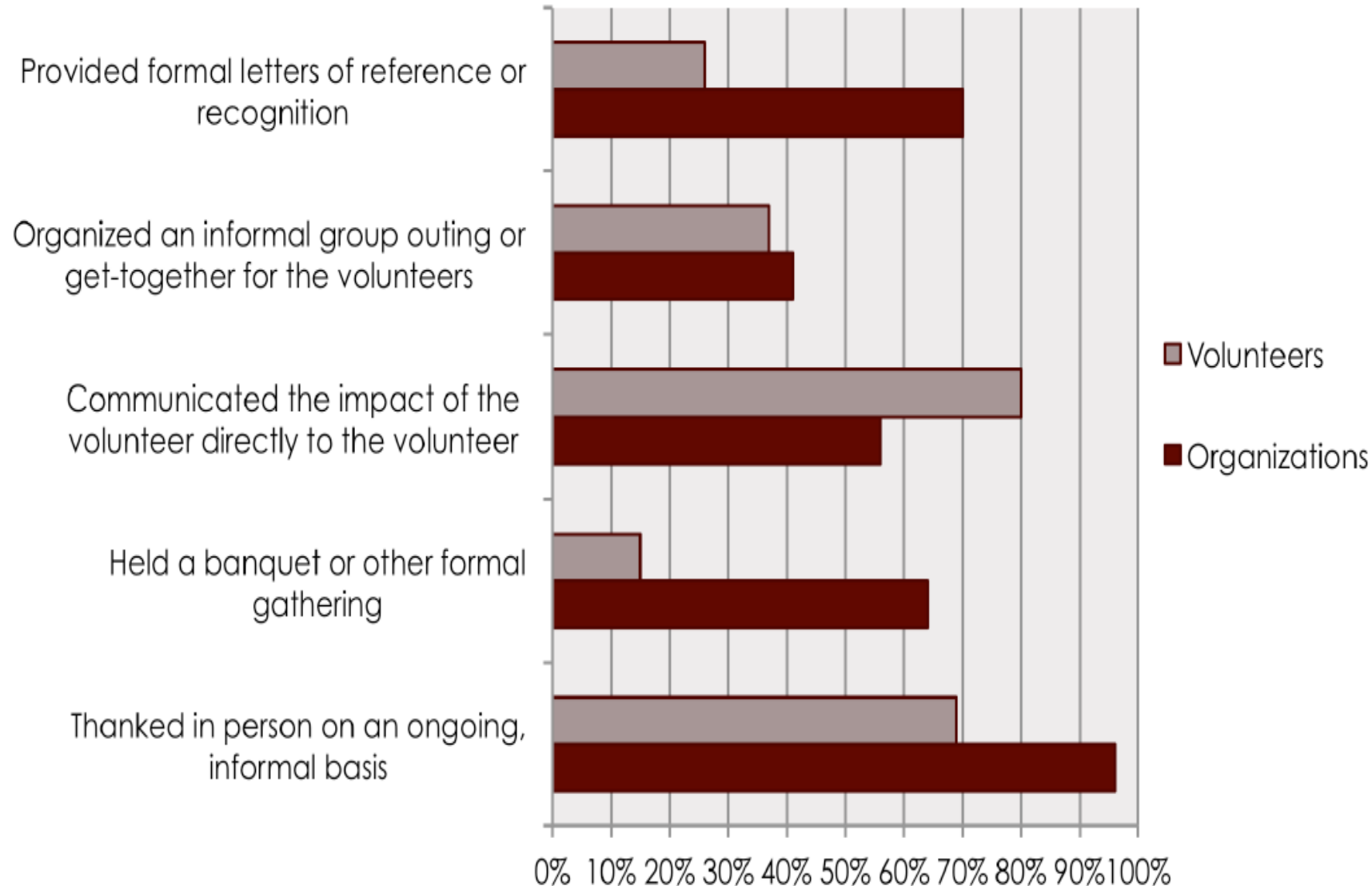
- Banquets, formal gatherings, public acknowledgements in media



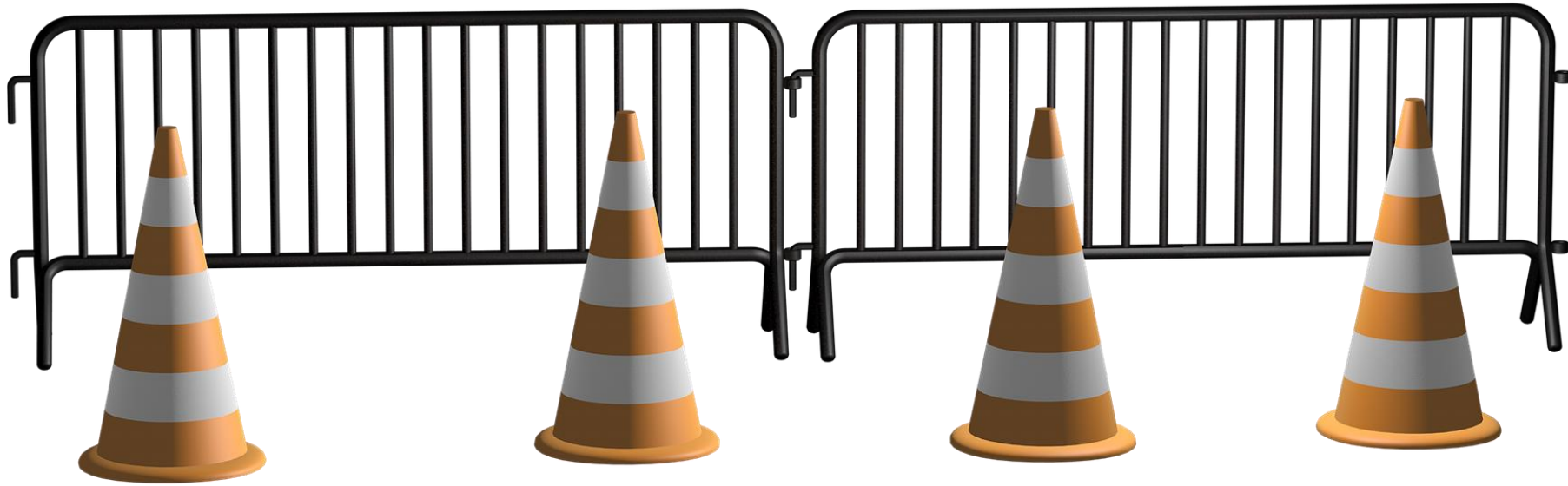
Key Findings

Recognition practices/preferences

Volunteer Recognition Study 2013 (Canadian)



Organizational Barriers



Conduct Your Own Research

How meaningful is the action?	Very	Somewhat	Not At All
A sincere “thank you” from the staff or volunteer leader with whom I work			
Invitation to a volunteer lunch or dinner			
Nomination for a volunteer award			
Opportunities for training or professional development			
Opportunities to increase my leadership role			
Profile on our website			
Receiving a certificate or pin for hours or years of service			
Receipt of a small token of thanks (e.g. mug, tote bag, t-shirt)			
Selection for a special project			
Getting noticed and thanked by leaders of my team, program, or organization for something specific about my work			

Rethinking Recognition...1, 2, 3!

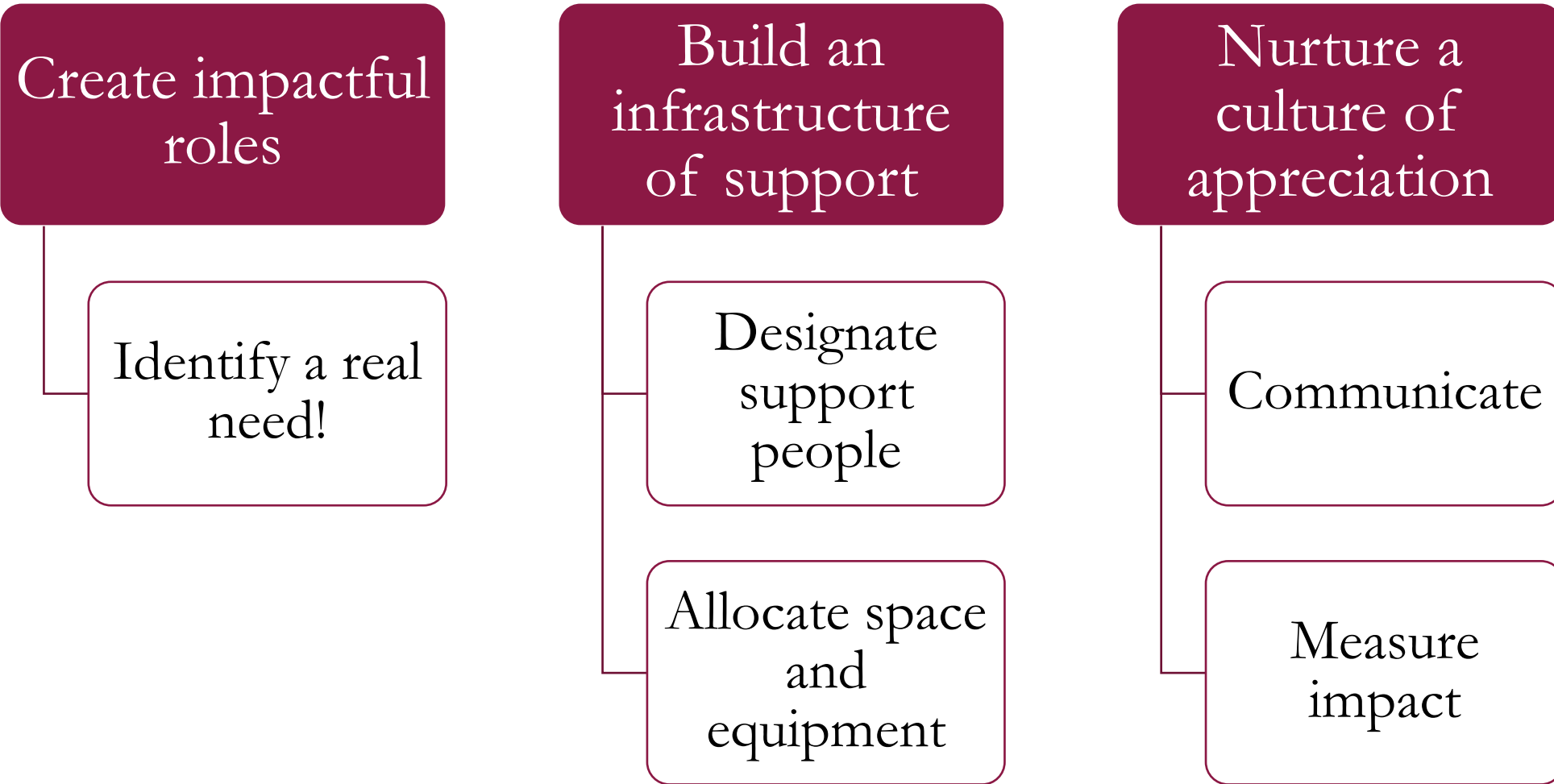


Set the
Stage

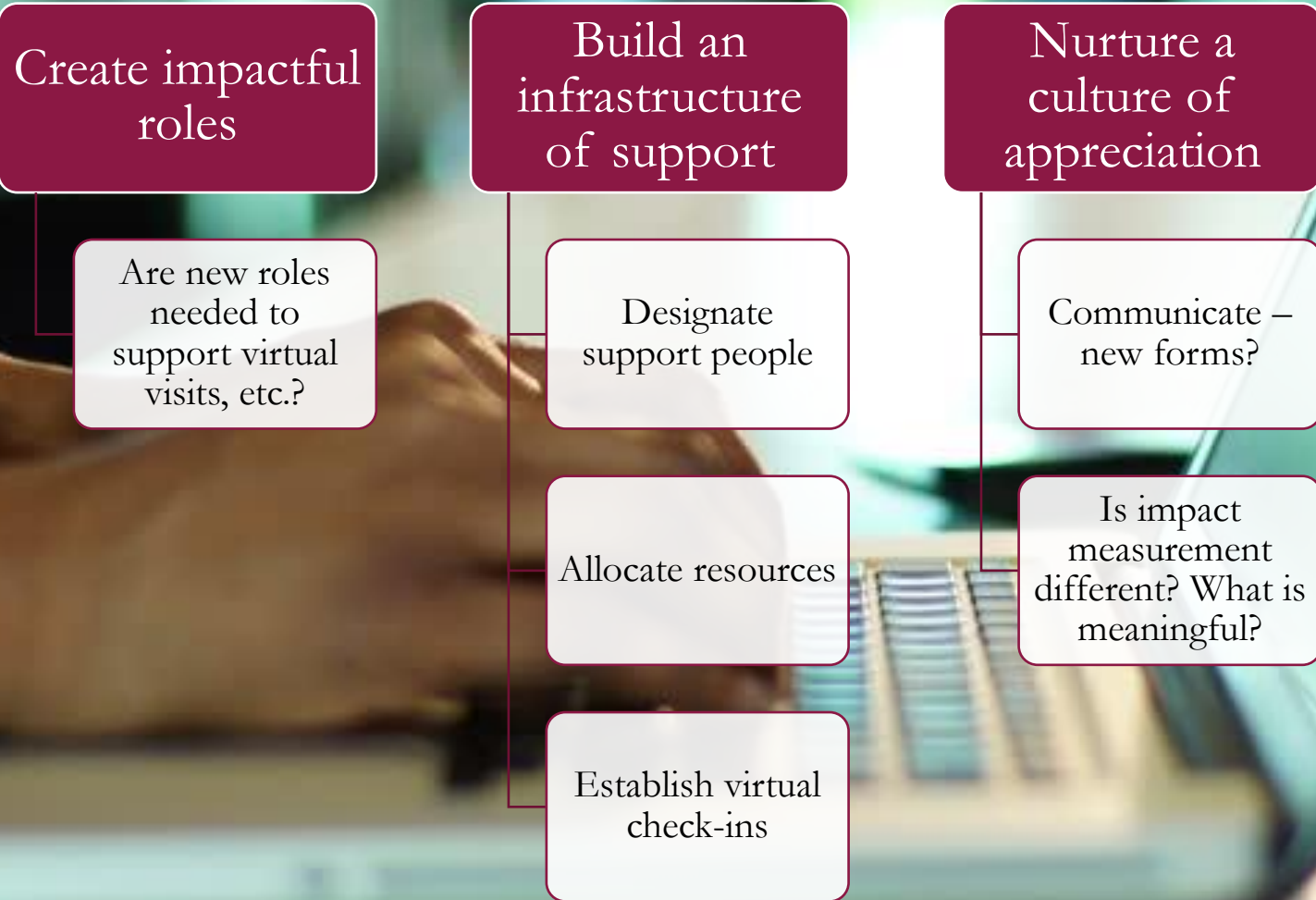
Make it
Personal

Keep it
Going

Setting the Stage for Success



Virtual Applications



Personalizing Recognition: Motivational Styles

Achievement

Power

Affiliation

Personalizing Recognition: Motivational Styles

Achievement Volunteers

- Are goal-oriented and look for time-limited projects with a defined beginning, middle, and end

Power Volunteers

- Seek assignments with a measurable impact

Affiliation Volunteers

- Prioritize building relationships through work

Achievement

Characteristics	Approaches	Example
Want clear, concrete feedback Prefer projects with a beginning, middle, and end Want control over outcome of the work	Share what happened because of their work Acknowledge unique contributions and skills Provide opportunities for more challenge and higher-level interaction	Reporting on the impact of the work at a conference or to the Board Helping to create a dashboard or writing an update to be distributed virtually

Power

Characteristics	Approaches	Example
Seek roles with significant impact Desire influence, prestige, status Want to share their ideas	Provide opportunities for upward mobility, decision-making, strategic thinking, and influencing direction	Formal recognition by Board or Team Leadership Leading a team to support other CASAs – getting a position of added responsibility

Affiliation

Characteristics	Approaches	Example
Interested in being with others Desire warm, friendly work environment Relationships as important (or more) than the work itself	Use group settings and break bread Express gratitude often Acknowledge life cycles “Warm fuzzies” are good	Team potluck on anniversary of volunteering Zoom gatherings, check ins Mentoring new CASAs to help onboard

Personalizing Recognition: Motivational Styles



Keep it Going

Ongoing Formal
Recognition

Ongoing Informal
Recognition

Annual
Recognition



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Opportunities to share the impact of their work:

- Have the volunteer make a presentation to the board
- Invite the volunteer to write an article on the project for the newsletter
- Ask the volunteer to represent you at meetings
- Offer to write a letter of recommendation or commendation to the volunteer's workplace, school, or other appropriate organization



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Opportunities to **gain or develop new skills:**

- Offer to send the volunteer to a conference
- Provide the volunteer with training on new software or be mentored by an expert
- Send the volunteer to a lecture or program by an expert in a field related to his/her volunteer work



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Small but meaningful tokens of appreciation:

- Donate a book to a library in the volunteer's name
- Order and distribute cute gifts such as...
 - Miniature flashlight with a note, "Thanks to a bright light"
 - A package of tea with a note, "Since you became a volunteer things are really brewing around here!"
 - A wine glass with candy with a note, "A toast to a job well done!"
- Distribute food baskets or goodie bags prior to a virtual event
- Coffee mugs or CASA themed backgrounds to have during virtual gatherings



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Fun and memorable ways to show appreciation

- Create humorous awards such as
 - Best attendance in meetings
 - Best Zoom background
 - Most outrageous idea
 - Most entertaining sense of humor
- Create a photo album or digital slide show with pictures of the volunteer activity, program, event, screenshots from Zoom meetings



Yard Sign



Discussion



Takeaways



Showing appreciation for volunteers leads to happier, more productive members of the team

Ask volunteers their preferences

Ensure that roles are designed in ways that meet volunteer motivations and skills

Create a welcoming environment

Embed training or networking with celebrations around volunteer recognition

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