

100 Ways to Appreciate Your Members

First Quarter - October 2018

Everyone wants to be appreciated!!!

1. Send a thank you letter, note or email.
 - A. A written letter is the most formal. Consider handwriting your letter. A handwritten thank you note always makes a really good impression. It's old fashioned, but it means a lot.
 - B. A thank you note is more personal. Keep it short and sweet – simply explain what you are thanking them for, and express your gratitude and appreciation. It is always a good idea to send a thank you message as soon as possible, while the event is fresh in the person's mind. The longer you wait, the less sincere your thank you will come across. Of course, sending a thank you message late is better than never sending it at all.
 - C. An email is a great idea when the time is of the essence. Use a "clear" subject line. When sending an email, the subject line of your email message can simply say "Thank You". Be sure to proofread your email for any spelling or grammar mistakes. This is easy and fast opportunity to recognize members for a job well done or emphasizing dedication to the club goals.
2. Saying thank you in public and perhaps giving a tangible gift along with the words – has multiple functions beyond simple human courtesy. To the member, recognition implies that someone noticed and someone cares. It may be obvious to say "Thank You", yet it is highly an underused form of appreciation.

Simply praising a member's involvement is motivation in itself." Praise people immediately. Tell people what they did right - be specific. Tell people how good you feel about what they did right and how it helps the organization and the other people who are members.

Deliver recognition in an open and publicized way. If not made public, recognition loses much of its impact and defeats much of the purpose for which it is provided. Deliver recognition in a personal and honest manner.

A sincere word of thanks costs nothing and is very effective.

Be genuine, be specific, be honest, and be SINCERE when giving appreciation.

"THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN APPRECIATION AND FLATTERY? THAT IS SIMPLE. ONE IS SINCERE AND THE OTHER INSINCERE." --DALE CARNEGIE--

3. Call a person by their first name when delivering a comment. Tell him or her why the behavior or result is important to you.
4. Greet members by name when they come into the meeting room, as you pass their table or when they are speaking with you.
5. Give recognition in a meeting. Saying a simple "thank you" and acknowledging your members can go a long way. Share an accomplishment, praise or recognition during a club meeting.

6. Appreciate your members by asking for their opinion and following through with their suggestions.
7. Name a recognition award after an outstanding member.
8. Give them a \$5 Starbucks gift card or a card to a local coffee shop.
The problem with giving cash is that often members use the money to pay bills and quickly forget about the rewards. Give cash substitutes (such as gift certificates)
9. Go to the dollar store and spend \$1 on something clever and unique; it is better than spending \$50 on something ordinary and forgettable.
10. Establish a place to display memos, posters, and photos to recognize members on their goals of PGI, PDP or other matters.
11. Get a letter of communication from your District Governor or Lt. Governor for a member who has done a good job on a project. It is a major motivator to a member.
People want to feel that what they do makes a difference.

MOST PEOPLE ARE HUNGRY FOR SOMEBODY TO SIMPLY LOOK THEM IN THE EYE AND SAY "I LIKE THE WAY YOU DO THAT."

12. Start with the Optimist Creed Book, or self-development books and let members sign out the materials. "Who Moved My Cheese", "Tribes", An Enemy called Average, etc.
13. Honor a member who has chaired an event by recognizing them at meetings.
14. Honor an entire committee for the work that they did at an event. Mention the outstanding work.
15. Honor a new member who has brought an idea to your attention.
16. Give a gift of a framed picture of the members in your organization in action at an event to the chair. Have the photos made at Target or Wal-Mart for as little as under \$.50 and a picture frame from the dollar store or garage sale. A gift is a wonderful way to show sincere appreciation.
17. Give a gift of an Optimist pen to your Essay Chair.
18. Give a plaque, coaster, or flashlight to a member that has the Optimist logo on it. Gifting your member(s) with a gift for their time and expertise proves that their sacrifices don't go unnoticed.
19. After Christmas buy Hershey kisses on sale (Red, Green and Silver). Give red and silver chocolate kisses at Valentine's Day.
20. Give green and silver chocolate kisses at St. Patrick's Day.
21. Give a calendar at Christmas time for a Secret Santa gift.

NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF PRAISE.

22. When working on an event, post a You Tube video (less than a minute) showcasing your members working at the event. You can illustrate how your club is helping youth. Invite your members to share these through social media. Doing so increases the profile of your club in the community and serves to attract new recruits.
23. Post on your website photos of a project or event. Recognition all members who helped on the project or event. Posting a message on your website that promotes thankfulness to a broad audience shows you appreciate their time and efforts and the impact that your members make in the club. It is a personal connection that will boost engagement and loyalty. Be sure to tag members to boost morale and give them recognition.
24. Find out a member's hobby and give an appropriate gift.
25. After an event which the club sponsored, appreciate your membership by throwing a party. It could be as simple as a wine and cheese gathering around happy hour. Bringing your members together for face-to-face interaction builds a sense of community and loyalty.
26. Appreciate a member who hasn't come to a meeting for a while by picking up the Phone. A personal phone call to a member is a great way to show how much you care. Keep the conversation short, be sincere and speak to them as a friend. Ask about their life, not why they haven't been to a meeting.
27. Appreciate a member by having a Governor make a phone call to a member who has brought in a new member. It is one of the most personal forms of communication. Hearing a voice on the other end of the line not only builds authenticity, but it also builds trust.
28. Appreciate new members with a Welcome Package within the first two weeks after you receive their membership packet from Optimist International. It is an effective way to educate new members in your club. It could include a thank you letter for joining the club, facts and figures about your club and members names and phone numbers and even a small gift with the Optimist logo on it.
29. Place a photo and video together with a clear and simple 'thank you' on Face book to publicly recognize them through social media and also promote your organization to other prospective members. It is a quick, meaningful way to effectively say thank you. It also tells the world of your member's commitment to your organization.
30. Appreciate your members by being thoughtful. Did a member tell you that he/she is going fishing with his daughter on Saturday? Ask how their day on the lake was the next time you talk to him/her. People always appreciate knowing they were heard.

BEING TOLD YOU'RE APPRECIATED IS ONE OF THE SIMPLEST AND MOST UPLIFTING THINGS YOU CAN HEAR.

31. When a club member marks a milestone, such as a birthday or anniversary – celebrate that along with them. Mention the day at the meeting closest to the date of the milestone and mark it in a tangible way. This could be as simple as bringing cupcakes to celebrate a birthday. If that is not possible, be sure to send an Anniversary Card that is signed by the members.
32. For particularly big events (such the birth of a grandchild or a milestone anniversary) consider maintaining a small budget for gifts or tokens.

33. If a member is facing a difficult time in their life (such as the death or illness of a loved one) ensuring that the club is there to provide practical and emotional support goes a long way. This sort of recognition goes a long way in making members feel appreciated and part of a community.
34. Send a Birthday Card when a member has a birthday. Surprise and delight your member with a birthday card that the members have signed and put their own messages in it as well. Celebrate the birthdays and have a cake every month to celebrate all of the birthdays that took place during that month.
35. Pick an unusual or funny object and place next to the member at the meeting. Know your members so that it relates to them.
36. Send a “shout-out” on Face book of your member(s) on their birthdates.
37. Send a “thinking of you” card on a member’s anniversary date of joining the club. Send a personal handwritten note inside the card.
38. Send a card to a member who brings in a new member. Have it signed by the President. Not only for each member, but also send cards for bringing in 5, 10, 15, 20 and 25 members.
39. Appreciate your members by resolving Complaints quickly. Resolve member complaints and issues within 24 hours. If you don’t know how to respond to the complaint initially, let your member or members know that you are aware, you are working on the problem and will update the member(s) as soon as you know more information. Members will not only appreciate this knowing something will get done and follow up with them.
40. At the completion of a project, provide the chair with a small photo book that showcase the project, the people who worked on it from the inception to completion. A photo book is tangible evidence of the work that has been done and a remembrance of those that helped in the project.
41. Appreciate your members by RESPECTING them. A little acknowledgement goes a long way, so long that the desire for recognition compels some to volunteer to help with projects. For those that helped on a Committee, have your members stand for applause.
42. Be polite and friendly to everyone! It goes a long way.
43. Take a photo of your next event and the chair person and committee who made it happen. Place the photo and a write up into the newspaper along with information about when and where your club meetings and the invitation that people are welcome to attend. Community newspapers are often hungry for content. Invite the local media to your club events.
44. Surprise your members with food such as donuts or desert to boost volunteer engagement. Bake a cake to share with all members.
45. Appreciate your members for their volunteering by offering to be a reference or write a recommendation for them. Volunteering for your non-profit organization looks great on a resume.

RECOGNITION IS THE GREATEST MOTIVATOR.

46. Your members are helping you in the club because they believe in your club and the cause. Show your members that you believe in them too. Cheer on a member who is running a marathon. Affirming and reaffirming your non-profit volunteers is well worth the effort. Investing a bit of time and creative energy in expressing your appreciation will make for happier, more committed members.
47. Show that you appreciate a member in your club by nominating them for an award in your community.
48. There are a few other little words that can make a big difference. Don't forget about 'please' and other general niceties to show appreciation.
49. Give a "You Done Good" Award: "Draw up a note card called 'You Done Good Award' and letting any member send it to any other member." "Even though people say nice things to you, it means something more when people take the time to write their name on a piece of paper and say it.
50. Give a "Pat on the Back" Award: to members who do an outstanding job.
51. Give a VIP Pass – It entitles you to a free drink of beverage.

A SIMPLE AND SINCERE "THANK YOU" AND A GENUINE SMILE GO A LONG WAY IN THANKING YOUR MEMBERS AND SHOWING THEM APPRECIATION.

52. Give a "Caught in the Act of Caring" Award: You were caught in the act of caring.
53. At your Meeting, honor a member with lunch or dessert. Prepare a toast to share how thankful you are. Let the member talk about themselves. Remember at this meeting to do more listening than talking.
54. Carry a supply of business cards with the Optimist Creed on the back with you and as you 'catch people doing something right,' immediately write 'Thanks,' 'Good Job,' 'Keep it up' and what they specifically did in two to three words. Put on the person's name on the card and sign it."
55. Hand out Life Savers candy to member(s). A dozen packs of Life Saver candies to recognize member(s) efforts - "You're a lifesaver."
56. Give a "Most Helpful Member" Award, "Nicest Member" Award, or "Bravo" Award. Let your members vote for the member they think should win the titles and have your President, Lt. Governor or Governor make the presentation.
57. Have the members make a list of ways to appreciate them and then see if they match yours. Offer a prize for those with the most matches. Then, find out if anyone has any others.
58. Offer a "High Five" to the member(s) – someone who goes above and beyond. Give a card of what the person said about you.

"DON'T FORGET, A PERSON'S GREATEST EMOTIONAL NEED IS TO FEEL APPRECIATED." H. JACKSON BROWN

59. Tape or affix chocolate kisses to the meeting Agenda.
60. A day of appreciation for a worthy member, as a chair of an event. Schedule a day in honor of the person (for example, Bob Jones Day), and the club sends a notice to all members announcing the date and the reason for the honor. The honoree enjoys all sorts of frills, such as computer banners and a free lunch.
61. Create a Hall of Fame wall with photos of outstanding members. Thereafter, place the photos into a photo album identifying the member and what they did to get into the photo album.
62. Take a photo of a person being congratulated by someone. Frame the photo. And give it to the person being congratulated.
63. Give the “Energizer Bunny” Award to a member who just keeps on going and going and going, helping others when needed.
64. When a member is ill, send a get well card or call and see if they need anything.

GOOD THOUGHTS NOT DELIVERED MEAN SQUAT.

65. Give a President’s Medallion. Create something special.
66. Track the Hours of Service on a project; Give a “Master’s Degree” to the chair or members that spent a lot of time on it.
67. At your fundraiser event – put up a sign with the chair person’s name. Thanking him/her. An option is to include the committee members on it.
68. Give a “Behind the Scenes” Award: Specifically for those whose actions are not usually in the limelight.
69. Make up Certificates ahead of time and get the Governor to sign them or, better yet, the OI President. [Send them in a package with a stamped, self-addressed envelope for return back to you.] They are busy people and would most likely do it for you, but you need to be respectful of their time and help them. Honoring a past president, Perfect Attendance for nine months. Chairing an event. Bringing in ten members this year, a certificate signed by the President would be priceless ... literally no money.

“THERE ARE TWO THINGS PEOPLE WANT MORE THAN MONEY: RECOGNITION AND PRAISE.” MARY KAY

70. Send a thank you note to the member’s home when they do outstanding work. When someone works a lot of time on an event, sending a note to the family thanking them for their support. And if you are asking yourself if that member has a spouse, or partner or family – perhaps you had better get to know the member more to learn about them . They may have great ideas to help your club but ‘nobody asked’. They may also feel appreciated and that they are wanted in the group.
71. Check on your inactive members. If you have members who have been inactive for a while, contact them to let them know that they are remembered and appreciated. If they need help or require assistance, let them know you would be happy to assist them.

72. Arrange for the member to have lunch with the Governor. Yes, it may take some pre-planning, but do the leg work and make it happen.
73. Put a flip chart by the door when people walk in to the meeting room. The members can write thank yous to other members for they have done since they last met. Then, read them off out loud during the meeting.
74. Set up a phone call with the Governor or OI President, Chair of the Essay Contest, Chair of the Oratorical Contest, for something that you regard as recognition. Be respectful of their time and set it up so it fits their schedule.
75. Once a month, give a "Recognition Dessert" for something special someone has done. It could be as simple as a cupcake, muffin, or piece of pie or cake. Find those special people. Perhaps it is the person who puts up the banner, or takes the banner down, welcomes your members, etc.
76. Member of the Month. High light the member in a monthly news bulletin. Or, send an email out to members highlighting the member. Write an article about the member in your club newsletter. Include the member's photo or a photo of them "in action" during the event.

A PERSON WHO FEELS APPRECIATED WILL ALWAYS DO MORE THAN WHAT IS EXPECTED.

77. Honor a member by make a contribution in their name to the Optimist International Foundation or the Canadian Children's Optimist Foundation. Honor a deceased member by making a Memorial to the Optimist International Foundation or to the Canadian Children's Optimist Foundation.
78. Use your event chair's quote/photo in marketing of your event.
79. Put a sincere acknowledgement of your member(s) for what they have done in your club's newsletter. This takes only a few minutes of your time but creates long-term "trophy value" for the member.
80. Awards / Certificates
 - A. Circle of Excellence Award: emphasizes teamwork on a project.
 - B. The "Bright Ideas" Award for someone who has given an idea that has be used.
 - C. Pacesetter Award to those that bring in the most new club members in a three month time period.
 - D. Extra Mile Award to a member(s) who go that extra mile.
 - E. Inspiration" Award – to a member who inspires your club members.
 - F. Service Pride Award – given to members who were "caught in the act delivering exceptional service.
 - G. The GEM (Going the Extra Mile) Award for member service.
 - H. Give the Spark Plug Award – "to spark new ideas"
 - I. Give a "Thumbs-Up Certificate"- thanking a member – it is flashy and fun
 - J. Give an "ABCD" Award – Above and Beyond the Call of Duty. Members who exceed the requirements of the job, project or officer position.
 - K. Member Recognition Certificate – example of wording: "You are receiving this Certificate in recognition of your support and dedication to making a difference. Thank you for caring and being a part of our club."
 - L. Certificate of Appreciation – example of wording: "For your outstanding support of the Optimist Club of _____. We greatly appreciate your exceptional service and leadership."

- M. Award of Recognition – example of wording: “In grateful recognition for your outstanding contributions, exceptional performance and dedicated commitment to helping the youth in our community.”

DON'T WAIT UNTIL THE END OF THE YEAR TO GIVE OUT AWARDS. IF YOU MEET WEEKLY, ONCE A MONTH, TWICE A MONTH OR JUST MONTHLY, YOU CAN LIMIT THE AWARDS TO ONCE A MONTH OR DO QUARTERLY.

81. Plan Theme Awards for the meetings that fall on or near the Fourth of July, Halloween, and Christmas. Have a Halloween Costume contest or a Thanksgiving Poem contest where the Members judge each other.

THANK YOU FOR BEING THE REASON I SMILE.

82. Have the members vote on a Member of the Year Award
83. When possible, give your members a chance to get involved in the projects that matter to them. Give them the chance to take leadership and offer them ownership of these initiatives. Your club members are more likely to give their all in the service of a project that they care about. There are times when the clubs have the same people who run a particular event every year and as a result members think they can't get involved. Simply rotating co-chairs every year gives everyone a chance to participate and get involved. It is simple things like these that show members that their involvement is welcome and needed.

84. Give a Card with mirror and the words, “Face it You make a difference”

“PEOPLE WILL NEVER FORGET HOW YOU MADE THEM FEEL.” MAYA ANGELOU

85. Give a card with lottery tickets or Scratch-off cards, a card with movie tickets inside, or a magazine subscription.
86. Make a batch of cookies. Even two small cookies or one big cookie. Food makes people happy.
87. Give Jellies, jams, fruit, M & Ms, doughnuts, or gourmet coffee. Food is a social gift.
88. Get a candy bar and tape a message over it.

THE GREATEST MOTIVATIONAL ACT ONE PERSON CAN DO FOR ANOTHER IS TO LISTEN

89. Give a flower - Any kind – It is the thought.
90. Give a certificate for a car wash.
91. Give a bottle of wine. Personalize the label on a wine bottle with a message of thanks for an achievement.
92. Inscribe a favorite book as a gift “Oh, the Places You’ll Go”. Inscribe by Governor as well. Place in inscription to commemorate an occasion or achievement.
93. Pay for the registration of a new member to attend a district meeting.

94. Have a Root-beer float party as recognition for members.
95. Take out an advertisement in a local newspaper every year and thank every member by name for his or her contribution. If funds are an issue, list them in your newsletter.
96. Have an ice cream sundae party for the members at a park – include their family members.
97. Issue a Laugh-A-Day Challenge to your members. Ask everyone to bring in a joke or cartoon. All who participate get a small prize. Have the membership vote on who gets the Challenge Award.
98. Plan a fun social event as a thank you to members for their fundraising efforts. Have members blow up balloons, place cash some of the balloons and let the members throw darts at them. Include a Wheel of Fortune with cash and donated prizes ranging from \$0.25 to \$1.00. For every hour of help that the member has done at an event, they get one spin. If the person did not help, no problem, they pay \$1.00 to spin.
99. In addition to honoring the members as individuals, celebrate their dedication to the club once in a while. One way to do this is by scheduling regular socialization events. These events help build a positive dynamic and also give your members a chance to build friendships outside of the Optimist meetings. By doing so, they will improve their teamwork within the club in the future which will help foster a sense of family and belonging.
100. Candy Bar Recognition:
 - ”For a job well done, you Skored” (Skor)
 - “You deserve a break” (KitKat)
 - “You are so Flippin’ Awesome” (Flipz Choc Covered Pretzels)
 - “You make us Chuckle” (Chuckles)
 - “Thanks for being such ‘Grand’ Members” (100 Grand)

Find ways that are natural and comfortable for you to demonstrate your appreciation, since your authenticity is the key. The good news is that you have complete control over your appreciation. No budget limitations or excuses here--there are literally thousands of ways to demonstrate your appreciation at little or no cost.

THANK YOU! IN APPRECIATION OF YOU, AND ALL THAT YOU DO.