



The  
**Art** of  
Recognition

LIONS CLUBS INTERNATIONAL

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Oak Brook, Illinois

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*Recognition is a  
behavior deeply  
rooted in Lionism,  
but it is also a tradition  
that could become  
obsolete unless  
members commit to  
implementing it  
regularly... keeping it  
fresh and relevant... and  
making it a part of  
their lives.*



## Welcome

Welcome to The Art of Recognition, a booklet filled with ideas and tips to recognize achievement.

This booklet is dedicated to all of the hard-working Lions, Lionesses, Leos, and friends of the association who contribute their time and effort to serve their own communities and the worldwide community to which we all belong.

Members at all levels will find some useful ideas in its pages, and hopefully the concept of recognition will spread throughout Lionism.

The ideas within are derived from many sources, including Lions who have encouraged and actively pursued recognition programs in their own clubs and districts.

We hope that you not only read this booklet, but also keep it handy as a reference for developing your own recognition plan.

**To order additional copies of this booklet:  
Call Club Supplies at LCI Headquarters at  
(800) 710-7822**

**or**

**Visit the Club Supplies section of the LCI website at  
[www.lionclubs.org](http://www.lionclubs.org)**

*Many of the examples and concepts presented in this booklet are used with permission from:*

*180 Ways to Walk the Recognition Talk  
The "How To" Handbook For Everyone  
By Eric Harvey*

*The WALK THE TALK Company  
2925 LBJ Freeway, Suite 201  
Dallas, Texas, USA 75234*



## Introduction

Is recognition an art? Let's think about it...


One definition for the term **recognition** is “acknowledgement with a show of appreciation” That sounds like such a simple thing to do...show someone you appreciate them. In truth, recognition is one of the biggest challenges facing organizations today.

Similarly, the term **art** can be defined as, “the conscious use of skill and imagination.”

To summarize, the **art of recognition** refers to the use of skill and imagination to show appreciation. That is exactly what this booklet is all about...finding and implementing a wide variety of ways to let people know you appreciate their efforts.

*“People value being appreciated for their contributions. Recognition does not have to be elaborate, just genuine.”*

Alfonzo Rivera, from *The Leadership Challenge*, James Kouzes and Barry Posner



*Most leaders and managers fail to use the potential power of recognition and reward regularly even though 33% of them report that they would rather be in an organization where they receive better recognition themselves.*

But, why would you personally want to read a booklet about recognition? Answer these two short questions and you will discover why:

1. Do you ever feel unappreciated or unrecognized for the good work you do?
2. Have you ever missed an opportunity to recognize someone in your life for the good work they did?

If you are like most people, you probably answered “yes” to one or both of these questions.

If you answered “yes” to the first question you know how bad it feels to be taken for granted.

If you answered “yes” to the second question, you have passed that bad feeling along to someone else...probably without even thinking.

This booklet will help you make sure that you are neither the villain nor the victim of “recognition dereliction” in the future.

We all know that the terms “Lions” and “hard work” go hand-in-hand. Whether we are assisting with a community sight program, repairing the roof on a community center, volunteering at a youth center, or standing in the rain to sell candy – **we are worth recognizing for the good works that we do, and we deserve to feel good about ourselves for our efforts.**

But, making people feel better about themselves is not the only reason to acknowledge the achievements of our fellow Lions. Recognition has many positive effects for individuals and organizations, as this booklet will demonstrate.

*Appreciation is a wonderful thing; it makes what is excellent in others belong to us as well.*

Voltaire

The main purpose of this booklet however, is to encourage you to use your skills and imagination to think of ways to recognize others. It will provide you with some specific, concrete examples you can use concerning the awards and certificates the association sponsors as well as some “little” things you can do yourself to let members know that you appreciate their hard work.

As you read through the booklet and think about things you can do to acknowledge other Lions, don't forget those non-Lion individuals and groups who help us with our projects and assist us with monetary donations. Without them our goals would often not be met, and our service to the community would be lessened.

Section 1 of this booklet is titled “Recognition: What? Why? Who? And How?” This section provides some background on what recognition is all about and

answers some questions you might have. You can refer to Section 1 to learn about:

- The different types of recognition
- Who you should recognize
- What to look for
- How to get started
- How recognition benefits the recipient, Lions, and the community
- Who is responsible for recognition
- And why recognition doesn't happen as often as it should

Section 2 is titled “Everyday Recognition.” It offers a list of guidelines for getting started on a personal plan for giving recognition and provides a number of tips for recognizing Lions in a variety of creative ways. You may not sit down and read through all of the tips at once, but you will probably want to refer to Section 2 often if you commit to making recognition a regular part of your life as a Lion.

By seeing how many different and interesting ways there are to recognize the actions of others, we hope you will be inspired to create your own recognition ideas...that you will experience *The Art of Recognition*.





# SECTION 1

## Recognition: What? Why? Who? And How?

### So, what is recognition again??

We said earlier that recognition is “acknowledgement with a show of appreciation.” But let’s go a little further.

For the most part, recognition can be categorized in one of two ways: formal or informal. Both types are important if an organization hopes to have a truly well-balanced approach to acknowledging the efforts of its members.

### Formal Recognition

Recognition can be a **reward** for a special achievement. This is usually something awarded to an individual, maybe at a special function or event. It might be a certificate, medal, plaque, or pin informing all of the achievement. The rewards that are typically associated with recognition are usually part of a **formal recognition program**, such as the 100% District Governor Award that is given to district governors for meeting a specific set of criteria that indicate exemplary service in their role.

Lions Clubs International has a highly extensive formal recognition program to reward Lions for special achievement. The program encompasses individuals from Leos to government officials, and from new members to international presidents. The criteria for these awards are clearly defined; and in most cases, recognition is at a ceremony or event where Lions (and in some cases non-Lions) may be invited to witness the honor.

*The Guide to Awards & Recognition*, the companion piece to this booklet, provides information about all of these programs. The guide provides a listing of all current awards, certificates, plaques, banners, and pins

available to recognize Lions (and non-Lion supporters) formally. The guide is easy to use and is color-coded to indicate the nature of the awards by the intended recipients. For each award, it describes:

- Award name
- Type
- Recipient
- Criteria/requirements
- Procedure for obtaining
- When it is issued

*The Guide to Awards & Recognition* may be downloaded from the LCI website, ([www.lionsclubs.org](http://www.lionsclubs.org)).

### **Informal Recognition**

Formal recognition is an important tool for recognizing achievement. However, as an association we must not rely just on the formal recognition programs, the awards, to be the only vehicles for letting our hard-working members know we appreciate their efforts.

Recognition can also be a more **personal reinforcement** to let someone know you have noticed something they have done, and you appreciate it. This type of recognition can take many forms, like saying “Thank you,” sending them a note, or taking them out for lunch.

While formal recognition is usually planned and awarded after a set of criteria have been met, informal recognition is usually “unexpected” by the recipient and is most effective when it is presented in a “timely” way – as soon as possible after the achievement or good work has been performed.

We must use our creativity to employ personal reinforcement, which may be planned or may be spontaneous...may be in a group or may be one-to-one... may be verbal or may be written...may be tangible or may be just a smile.

## **Do I need to recognize everything our members do??**

The answer is “no,” but maybe you should start thinking about all of the things that your members do...the “high profile” achievements as well as the “low profile” tasks that need to get done that you might not notice.

## **What should I be looking for??**

A good approach to adopt is:

1. Recognize the **importance of every job**. Projects require many small tasks that often go unnoticed, but they are critical to the success or failure of the project. Keep the attitude that every task to be done is important – and begin thinking about the small tasks that together produce the big result.
2. Recognize the **quality of performance**. Everyone has his or her own standards and expectations of quality. People want recognition to be earned not given, and they will know when it is not deserved. Consider whether the effort and the result meet or surpass your standards and those of the recipient.
3. Recognize the **person**. Make sure it is the person, not the situation, that is being acknowledged.

## **How do I get started?**

Many successful leaders have found it helpful to develop a list of the performances and behaviors that they feel deserve recognition. They add to the list periodically as they think of new items. Then they watch for those behaviors, **and they recognize them!**

Here are a few ideas to get you started on your own list:

- Long-term positive performance such as perfect attendance at meetings
- Exceeding expectations in the completion of a fund-raiser
- Volunteering for a tough assignment
- Helping other members meet their goals or overcome obstacles
- Displaying “contagious enthusiasm” in working with other Lions
- Making people laugh in a stressful situation
- Requesting or accepting additional responsibilities
- Going “above and beyond” the expected performance in completing a project
- Keeping a calm composure under pressure
- Resolving a conflict
- Mentoring another Lion
- Sharing important information
- Introducing a prospective new member to the club

## Why am I doing this, again??

We know that people feel better when they believe they are appreciated. However, recognition results in many more benefits ...to the recipient, the association, and the communities we serve.

Recognition benefits the recipient by:

- Satisfying some basic human needs like being noticed, being involved, feeling relevant, or being “in the spotlight”
- Motivating people to continue active participation
- Signifying that they have the respect of their peers
- Increasing self-confidence to seek new challenges

*“People repeat behavior that’s rewarded, avoid behavior that’s punished, and drop or forget behavior that produces neither result.”*

Effective Behavior in Organizations,  
A.R. Cohen, S.L. Fink, H.Gadon, R.D. Willits,

Recognition benefits Lions by contributing to:

- **Productivity.** When people are rewarded for their accomplishments, they feel that their tasks are more meaningful. As a result, they are more productive. This means that Lions accomplish more for the communities they serve.
- **Morale.** Morale can be contagious. Happiness can spread, and the club or district becomes a more comfortable environment for current members and a more attractive choice for potential new members.
- **Retention.** When you identify and address specific needs of your members and provide recognition that satisfies these needs, your members are more likely to stay with the association because they are satisfied with their roles.

- **Membership growth.** Recognition can be spread by word of mouth, by the Internet, and by the media. The more people know about the work of individual dedicated Lions, the more likely they are to consider joining us in our mission.

*In the Philippines, a PowerPoint presentation was used at a district convention to recognize a number of members for their service and financial support. One Lion, whose name and picture were shown on the wide screen in front of all the delegates, was so moved that he submitted his application for his 3rd Progressive Melvin Jones Fellowship the very same day!*

Recognition benefits the community by:

- Empowering individuals, through recognition of their achievements, to share their skills and enthusiasm at school, church, work, and home
- Informing the public of our programs and goals and letting them know that we are a resource when there is a need
- Increasing our ability to serve...stronger Lions clubs result in greater service
- Raising the awareness of the need for community service

*“When participants in our workshops and seminars summarize the key leadership practices that make a difference in getting extraordinary things accomplished, recognizing people’s contributions is on just about every list.”*

The Leadership Challenge, James Kouzes and Barry Posner

## **Who should be recognized and who should do the recognizing??**

There is a common misconception that recognition is something that a supervisor or manager does for people who report to him or her. In Lionism, this would mean that club officers or committee chairpersons would recognize those members who make up the club or the committee. Multiple-district and district officers would recognize district and club officers and those who work on district projects, and international directors would recognize multiple-district officers and other members.

*“Two out of five volunteers stop volunteering for one or more of these reasons: not good use of time, poor use of talents, tasks not clearly defined, not thanked.”*

Excerpt from 1998 Volunteer Survey by the UPS Foundation

The truth is that all Lions, regardless of their position, can be both the giver and the recipient of recognition. Yes, many of our Lions awards are presented by officers and other leaders to formally mark the achievement of some task or goal. But, just as often, the recognition is a more personal acknowledgement by a person working at your side, or in some cases by a member acknowledging the fine work of his or her chairperson.

*Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it.*

Arthur Ward

### **If it's so important, why doesn't it happen often enough?**

Eric Harvey in his book, "180 Ways to Walk the Recognition Talk" lists ten reasons (or excuses) for not giving recognition. How many of the following apply to you?

1. "I don't know how." This can be an honest concern. Most people never receive any type of training on giving recognition. That's the reason for this booklet!
2. "I don't have time." Time is a precious and limited resource. Most of us have more things to do than we have time to do them. But somehow we all manage to do the things that are really important to us. If you feel you don't have time to recognize others, it may be that you just haven't made it a priority. Besides, how much time does it take to say, "Thank you" or "I appreciate it"?
3. "People don't care about it all that much." If you look hard enough you may find a few people that truly don't care about being recognized. But for every one of them you will find hundreds more who like being remembered for their efforts and contributions. Even those who say they don't care about being recognized show a wide and happy smile when it happens to them!



4. "It's not my job." Some people think that recognition is a top-down thing and only "leaders" are responsible for it. But that's not true...and it's one of the biggest reasons why recognition doesn't happen. The truth is that supporting an environment in which people are acknowledged and truly appreciated is everyone's job.

*What used to be common courtesies have been lost due to speed and technology. Leaders tend to be too busy and too distanced from their members to notice when they have done exceptional work, and to thank them for it. Technology has replaced personal interaction with unfavorable results.*

5. "I don't believe in giving awards to people for just doing what they are supposed to do." This is a very true statement, but awards are only one aspect of recognition. Awards are for special achievement, but recognition can be more than that. Recognition can be any act of appreciation that lets people know that you notice their effort. This simple acknowledgment increases the likelihood that they will remain motivated to continue their efforts.
6. "It becomes meaningless if done too much." This may be true, but most organizations have a long, long way to go before experiencing this problem. Actually, it's insincerity rather than quantity that tends to devalue recognition.

7. "I'm very limited in what I can do." It could be that your limitation is mostly your untapped imagination. Maybe you can't always utilize the variety of award programs that LCI sponsors, but these are only a few of the multitude of things you can do. Get creative!
8. "Sometimes it's awkward and uncomfortable." The first time you rode a bicycle was probably an uncomfortable experience, too. But the more you rode, the easier it got...and the more you liked doing it. If you are uncomfortable with recognition, it might be that you are not doing it enough. Practice! Practice! Practice!
9. "People will think they've made their impression, and they'll stop working hard." Ask yourself if you slow down when others show their appreciation for your work. Probably not.
10. "Since I don't get recognized, why should I recognize others?" You may know how it feels to have your efforts and achievements overlooked. You may know how it feels to be taken for granted. Don't let one wrong become your rationale for doing another.





## SECTION 2

### Everyday Recognition

This section offers a list of basic guidelines that can be helpful to you as you apply “skill and imagination” to finding your own ways to recognize fellow Lions, and it provides you with a number of examples to get you started in your own informal recognition program.

#### Basic Guidelines

Before we examine some of the proven ways to employ informal recognition, let’s consider six basic guidelines that will help you get started:

1. **Think outside the parameters of formal recognition awards.**

When you observe a fellow Lion doing something that you think deserves recognition, don’t fail to show your appreciation just because his or her action doesn’t fit into the criteria for a formal Lions award.

This doesn’t mean that you should forget about the formal recognition program, because formal recognition is a powerful tool for motivating people and satisfying their personal needs. It just means that when the action doesn’t merit a pin or certificate, don’t forget to do **SOMETHING** to convey your appreciation.

2. **Determine what motivates the recipient.**

For years, businesses thought that money was the prime motivator in employees’ lives. Numerous studies have shown this to be false. Repeatedly, employees have stated that a simple acknowledgment of their work means more to

*Volunteers are not paid – not because they are worthless, but because they are priceless.*

them than a financial reward. This is good news to associations like ours, because we know that our financial resources are directed to helping others.

It's easy to generalize that what one person holds as important is true of others; but in fact, we are motivated in different ways. One person may enjoy public recognition at a meeting or event; others may prefer a simple "thank you" note delivered privately. The challenge in providing recognition effectively is matching the recognition to the person, so that it has the proper effect.

To find the right match you should:

- Pay attention to them...their activities, hobbies
- Learn about their families and interests
- Talk to their friends
- Get to know them, and don't be afraid to ASK what it is that makes them feel appreciated

### **3. Make sure the recognition is appropriate.**

Finding a cure for a rare disease may deserve more than a verbal "thank you," but a simple handshake or "pat on the back" may be appropriate for helping set up for a meeting or a charter night.

The important thing to remember is that you should keep the recognition proportional to the action being recognized.

#### 4. **Make sure the recognition is genuine.**

Probably the number one characteristic of good recognition is sincerity. Most people will be able to tell when you really mean what you say and when you're just "going through the motions." If you ask people, they will usually agree that insincere recognition is worse than none at all.

True sincerity will shine through. If you really appreciate the good work of others, it will show.

*“You can’t buy people’s commitment – to get them to care, to stay late, or come in early – with just thank-you notes, stickers, or plaques. What makes these effective is the genuine concern and respect you show for those who are doing the work.”*

*The Leadership Challenge,  
James Kouzes and Barry Posner*

#### 5. **Be specific.**

The more specific your recognition, the more impact it will have. Instead of just saying, “Great job,” tell them what it was about the job that was done well. Example: “That was terrific work you did. You were able to get all of the other volunteers working as a group, and the children benefited from the experience.”

*Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, and honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around.*

Leo Buscaglia

**6. Make recognition a habit.**

Recognition needs to be a part of your normal routine. We know that sometimes it can be a special event, but we have already determined that it can be more spontaneous. If you find yourself using every appropriate occasion to acknowledge effort and achievement, you will find that giving recognition will become a habit...a good habit.

## 70 Ways to Recognize Lions

The Art of Recognition invites us to use skill and imagination to find ways to recognize the achievement of others. As Lions, we know that there are many occasions for recognition, and that we can each think of new ways to show our appreciation if we try.

This section provides you with some recognition tips to get you started. You may have utilized some of these already, and some may be new to you. We hope you find some tips that will work in your club or district, but we also hope that as you read through the many ideas you will come up with some of your own.

Remember also that, although we are one association with a common mission and vision, we are comprised of many different cultures. Some of the ideas may not be suitable for your own culture, so it is up to you to use your skill and imagination to adapt these ideas and to think of some others.

### **Recognize Lions through the words you say...**

1. Remember that gimmicks, gadgets, and giveaways can make your recognition fun and memorable. But it's hard to replace an honest and sincere "Thank You."
2. Listening is one of the most underutilized recognition activities in the world, and it is one of the most underdeveloped skills. Try listening to what others think. Whether they are fellow Lions, or non-Lions who support our work, listening to them sends a message that you care...and that they are important.
3. Write the word "recognition" in your calendar or planner, like every Friday for the entire year. Make this word act as a trigger to quickly think of Lions who have demonstrated their hard work

since the last time you checked. Then make a note to yourself to thank them personally for their efforts the next chance you get.

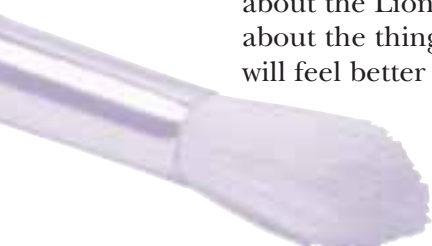
4. Celebrate success! Consider closing meetings and events by recognizing one or more people who have made a recent contribution...someone who coordinated a service project, someone who handled the clean up after a fund raising dinner, or someone who has just earned a formal award.

*In Uruguay, at the conclusion of a district-wide evaluation and planning meeting, special recognition was given to the Lion who arranged the hotel, meeting space, equipment, and food arrangements for the event. Her work was acknowledged as having increased the motivation and the effectiveness of those attending the meeting and impacting the success of the whole event.*

5. Leave recognition voice mails and e-mails. Don't let the inability to meet face-to-face get in the way of acknowledging others.
6. Add "shameless bragging" as a short agenda item to club or committee meetings. Encourage members to brag about someone who has had a positive effect on the group.
7. If the person you are recognizing appreciates public praise, initiate a **STANDING OVATION** at your next meeting. This can be a special and memorable experience for the person being honored.



8. Think about a Lion who really puts in that extra effort. Make a list of a dozen things you have noticed that you appreciate, admire, or respect about the Lion. Then, go tell them! Be specific about the things you have noticed. The person will feel better for it...and so will you.



*“Appreciative words are the most powerful force for good on earth!”*

George W. Crane

### **Recognize Lions through the ways you communicate...**

9. Use positive, non-verbal gestures to let individuals know that what they are doing is great with you. These gestures vary by culture, but all have the same effect of energizing the recipient or the team.

*A pat on the back, though only a few vertebrae removed from a kick in the pants, is miles ahead in results.*

Bennett Cerf

10. Become a recognition catalyst! Once you find a person who deserves recognition, pass the information along to the club president, district governor, or appropriate district chairperson to add their personal message of appreciation. The recipient will feel especially proud to be recognized, and the leader who you involve will appreciate the opportunity to recognize a deserving Lion.

11. Use club or district newsletters to honor good works. If you have a website, showcase the achievements of individual members on a regular basis, and encourage other Lions to do the same.

*A Lions leader in England recommends the district newsletter, club website, and The Lion magazine as a way to praise members for their achievements. He reminds us that, "Simple respect and appreciation for Lions efforts in simple words go a long way. Most Lions want to serve and help because they want to...and not for what they will get in return. As Lions, we are rewarded every time we help those less fortunate than ourselves."*

12. Harness the "power of the press." Community newspapers are always looking for interesting stories. Why not let them write about the achievements of individual members of your club? This is just one way that good public relations can be a part of recognition.
13. Create charts and posters to display examples or stories about an individual's good work. Hang them up at meeting places and events.
14. Send a letter or card to the family of someone you want to recognize. Describe his or her good work and the impact it is having on Lions and the community. Close with something like, "We're very proud of \_\_\_\_\_, and we think you should be, too."
15. Arrange for a special thank you (note, letter, card, call, etc.) to a deserving individual from your entire committee or club or from all of your officers.

16. Use EXTRA SPECIAL words in written communications to recognize outstanding performance.

### GREAT WORDS

Finding the right word to use in writing notes or letters, or in talking about a person's achievements can be difficult. Here is a list of words that may help.

accurate	adaptable
alert	ambitious
appreciative	attentive
capable	caring
concerned	conscientious
considerate	constructive
cooperative	creative
daring	decisive
dedicated	deliberate
dependable	determined
direct	effective
efficient	energetic
fair	forceful
farsighted	forthright
frank	friendly
humorous	honorable
independent	ingenious
innovative	intelligent
kind	logical
meticulous	objective
open	optimistic
organized	original
outgoing	persuasive
practical	precise
professional	reliable
resourceful	responsive
self-confident	sensitive
sociable	steady
thorough	tolerant
willing	wise

*“I can live for two months on one good compliment!”*

Mark Twain

17. Send a special recognition fax to members at their place of work. It will brighten their day and can be a source of pride as it is shared with co-workers.
18. Send an e-card if the person you are recognizing has Internet access. Many websites, like, [www.lionsclubs.org](http://www.lionsclubs.org) offer this free service. The recipient will be in for a nice surprise when they see that you took the time to recognize their hard work.

### **Recognize Lions by providing opportunities...**

19. Work with people to develop their talents and enhance their skills. Acknowledge a member's efforts by sending them to a special meeting, training seminar, or leadership institute. You are not only recognizing their potential, but you are preparing them for future success.
20. Ask people what they think. Recognize great performance by asking members for their ideas and input on projects, activities, and decisions you are facing. Ask for suggestions on discussion topics that would interest other members and make meetings livelier. The message is: “Your opinions matter to me...You are valuable.”

*“If you want to lift yourself up, lift up someone else.”*

Booker T. Washington

## Recognize Lions by giving responsibility...

21. Allow achievers a chance to strive for greater responsibility or to help other Lions along the same path. Recognize their efforts by suggesting they become mentors to other Lions. Perhaps the ultimate acknowledgment of one's accomplishments is to be asked to teach and train others.
22. Recognize individuals by asking them to represent you at meetings or events that you are unable to attend. They will appreciate the confidence that you have in them, and they'll feel good about taking on more responsibility.

## Recognize Lions by being proactive...

23. Keep a supply of "Thanks for a job well done" cards handy at all times so you can recognize good works as soon as you notice them. Try to give out as many cards as possible.

*A Lions leader in the United States explains: "I always have a supply of stationery or cards with me during my travels and while chairing a meeting or attending a special Lions function. One never knows when an opportunity may present itself for recognizing a Lion, Lioness, or Leo for having successfully completed a task or successfully accepted a challenge that brought distinction to Lionism.*

*It is rather easy and involves little time to write a few words and sign one's name that properly recognizes the deserving individual. Over the years as I have used this approach, tears have come to my eyes, as well as the eyes of the recipients, who can't believe they have suddenly become very special."*

24. Get to know your fellow Lions as people. Find out the things that are important to them. Ask about hobbies, favorite sports, vacations, family, etc. This shows that you are interested in *who* they are rather than just what they can do for you. This is recognition at its most basic level.
25. Focus on strengths more than you focus on weaknesses. Use the “80/20 Rule”: Spend 80% of your time reinforcing what’s going right and only 20% of your time trying to fix what’s wrong. Most of the time things go right, and your attention to people should reflect that.
26. Make a list of all of the Lions with whom you come in regular contact. Then go through the list and identify the last time you gave recognition to each person...and for what. You should remember the last time you acknowledged most of them. If not, you are probably not doing it enough!
27. Catch people doing good things! Every time you attend a club meeting or other Lions event try to “catch” someone doing something good...and praise him or her. Over time, you’ll find that you have acquired a natural tendency to focus on the good things Lions do.

*In the United States, one Lion makes a practice of giving special recognition ribbons to individuals at the end of seminars and events. For each ribbon he presents, he gives the recipient a second ribbon and asks that they find another Lion who has demonstrated exceptional effort and recognize that person as well.*

28. Check your facts! Make sure the people truly deserve praise before you give it. The only thing worse than insincere recognition is unearned or misplaced recognition – especially when it is seen by others who know what is really going on.

### **Recognize Lions with simple gifts...**

29. Give out your own “Certificates of Recognition.” If the good work doesn’t fit into the criteria of any formal LCI recognition programs, encourage your club to create its own certificates to recognize special service, etc.
30. Have a number of “recognition stickers” made up, and award them informally as a fun way to say thank you to Lions.
31. Never underestimate the power of a coffee mug. They make great recognition gifts, and the recipient is likely to use them almost every day.

*One Lions leader in Europe explains that people in her culture are “quiet.” They are somewhat reluctant to verbally express their appreciation or thanks. However, they understand the importance of recognition and send flowers, candy, and other tokens of appreciation to acknowledge the unselfish work of their volunteers.*

32. Consider using day planners or personal organizers as recognition gifts. You will be doing the recipients a great service, and they will remember every day that you acknowledged their efforts.

33. You can reward small achievements with ballpoint pens or notepads personalized with a message of thanks or congratulations on a job well done.
34. Go to the Club Supplies section of the LCI website, or to one of the many catalogs that offer motivation and recognition gifts, and purchase a few small items to have on hand so that your recognition can be timely.
35. Don't overlook the obvious. Take a member or non-Lion supporter out to lunch or dinner to thank them.
36. Contact a local distributor and order candy or treats with customized wrappers that say things like, "Thanks for being a great Lion." They are fairly inexpensive, and they are a great way to recognize those small daily actions that deserve some type of acknowledgment.
37. Use your own hobby to recognize others. For example, if you like to bake, recognize an individual or group that worked on a particular project with a batch of cookies. It won't take long for word to spread: "If you get cookies from \_\_\_\_\_, you know you've done something good."

*“Everyone has an invisible sign hanging from their neck saying, ‘Make me feel important.’”*

Mary Kay Ash



38. Don't be afraid to give them a banana! (see note.)

*At the Foxboro Company, a technical advance was desperately needed for the company to survive in its early days.*

*Late one evening, a scientist rushed into the president's office with a working prototype. It was just what they needed to keep the business afloat.*

*Dumbfounded at the elegance of the solution and bemused about how to reward it, the president bent forward in his chair, rummaged through his desk drawers, found something, leaned over the desk to the scientist, and said, "HERE!"*

*In his hand was a banana – the only reward he could immediately put his hands on.*

*From that point on, the small "gold banana" pin has been the highest accolade for scientific achievement at Foxboro.*

*Adapted from "In Search of Excellence"  
Tom Peters and Bob Waterman  
Warner Books*

39. Recognize someone with a hardbound book on a favorite subject or by a favorite author, and write your personal recognition note inside the front cover. The person will remember your message of appreciation every time he or she picks up the book.

40. Remember the club member's family when selecting gifts. Include spouses, children, grandchildren, and parents in your thinking when choosing the appropriate recognition.

41. Make a donation to LCIF or some other Lions-sponsored effort on behalf of the member you wish to recognize. For example, an LCIF Contributing Member Donation or for a truly special honor, a Melvin Jones Fellowship.
42. Many people do not have their own business cards. Recognize Lions for their achievements with personalized business cards with the Lions logo. They'll be proud of their achievement each time they hand out a card.
43. Recognize a "life saver" with an emergency kit, like one for cars, fires, or a first-aid kit. This gift shows the recipient that he or she is important to you, and it could be a real lifesaver...LITERALLY!
44. Give a small gift that will help them in their job tasks; such as a Post-it note dispenser, a pen, a small desk alarm clock, a portable recorder, or a pre-paid phone card.

### **Recognize Lions in different roles...**

45. Recognition isn't a top-down process. Leaders need recognition, too. Far too often, recognition is seen as something a leader or supervisor is supposed to do for the people who report to him or her. In fact, we all need positive reinforcement. Next time you think one or more of your Lions leaders is doing a good job, make sure you let him or her know.

*"The highest compliments leaders can receive are those that are given by the people who work for them."*

James L. Barksdale

46. How often do you recognize the person working side-by-side with you on a project? Why not thank people for carrying their share of the load? Why not show gratitude when others make your club or district (and you) look good?

*“Nine-tenths of wisdom is appreciation. Go find somebody’s hand and squeeze it...while there’s still time.”*

Dale Dauten

47. Encourage those who are not appointed or elected leaders but who demonstrate leadership in the tasks they perform. Consider a lamp, lantern, or even a flashlight as a symbol of leading or showing the way to others.
48. Don’t forget the “constant performers.” Avoid the trap of giving most of your attention to a single accomplishment. Remember the large number of Lions who keep the club going through their constant efforts, especially those who have served for many years. This not only shows them their efforts are noticed, but it inspires continued service in other members as well.

### **Recognize Lions in unique ways...**

49. Diversify! Don’t get in a rut giving the same kind of recognition all of the time. Use a variety of verbal acknowledgements, written commendations, awards, gifts, etc. You will make the act more memorable and more fun.
50. If you provide “tangible” rewards for outstanding performance, allow recipients to choose between several options. Not everyone appreciates movie tickets, and some would never wear a printed t-shirt or a baseball cap.

51. Share Your Success! When you are recognized for something you accomplished, recognize the other Lions who contributed to your success.
52. Keep a camera on hand to record special events and special people. Post the pictures somewhere that everyone can see them, and after a time, place them in an album for all to enjoy
53. Bring a bell to your meetings and events. Whenever an achievement is mentioned, or someone does or says something worthy of recognition, ring the bell in their honor.
54. Name something in their honor. When you are confronted with a major achievement, and no formal recognition for which it qualifies, name something for the member you are recognizing. It could be the Lion \_\_\_\_\_ Golf Outing, or the Lion \_\_\_\_ Fall Cleanup Campaign.
55. Recognize members' time contribution by giving them the "gift of time." Check for resources in your area who offer the following services (or ask the Leos in your area for their assistance), and then present members with a gift certificate or coupon for one of the following:
  - House-cleaning service
  - Taxi or transportation
  - Car washing
  - Gift wrapping
  - Babysitting service
  - Lawn service
  - Dog walking
  - Laundry or cleaning service
  - Dinner

56. Make your recognition personal. Find out the dates of meaningful events in their lives. Acknowledge and celebrate their birthdays, anniversaries, and other special occasions.
57. Make your members feel like stars! Use star pins, certificates or stickers to recognize outstanding achievements.
58. Display a recognition box at all of your meetings and events. Fill it with cards, sticky notes, stickers, etc. Encourage members to use the items in the box to acknowledge fellow Lions for things they have done. Set an example by using the box frequently yourself.
59. Establish a WALL OF FAME. Post all kinds of pictures, certificates, newspaper clippings about Lions' activities, thank you notes, etc., on the wall at all of your meetings. Encourage members to bring their own contributions to post at meetings.

*In India, Lions who have made major contributions to service projects in hospitals, clinics, and schools may be recognized by having their names engraved or printed on a plaque or a Recognition Wall.*

60. Recognize a special contribution by creating a banner thanking an individual and displaying it at a special event. If you meet or have an event at a location with a changeable outdoor sign, put the message on the sign for all to see.

61. Create a “pass along” award. It can be some small trophy or humorous item that has special meaning to your club or committee. Award it to someone you wish to recognize, and encourage the first recipient to pass it along to recognize another Lion at the next meeting. You will develop a mind-set of recognition within the club, and members will have fun thinking of things for which they want to recognize their peers.
62. Retire their jersey! Many sports teams retire the uniform of special players. Why not use a Lions vest, shirt, or jacket, embroider the person’s name on it, mount it or frame it, and present it to the person you wish to recognize. They will get a good laugh out of the gesture, but will also feel appreciated for your effort in creating the award.
63. Give them a day of their own! Recognize special people by declaring certain days as “\_\_\_\_\_ Day.” Coordinate the day with a meeting or special event, announce the person being honored, and present them with a certificate noting the occasion.
64. Introduce them! Use every opportunity to introduce deserving Lions to the district governor, the mayor, or any other Lion or community leader who visits your club. It sends the message that “You are important...I want people to meet you.”
65. Create theme awards to recognize noteworthy achievers. Examples: “The Juggler Award” for the Lion able to handle the most tasks at one time, or “The Silence Is Golden Award” for the Lion who quietly accomplishes a great deal for the club.

66. Make teamwork a priority. Sports teams often award “game balls” to players who have done something that directly contributed to the team’s success. To recognize someone who has managed or had a special effect on a team project, have all of the team members sign an object (it could be a ball, vest, or hat) and present it to the “Most Valuable Player” on the team.
67. Keep a large box or “treasure chest” present at all of your club or district meetings and events. Fill the chest with a variety of items like caps, coffee mugs, movie tickets, restaurant gift certificates, etc. When a Lion deserves special acknowledgment for a job well done, let him or her reach into the chest and pick a surprise.
68. Give a symbol of sunshine to those Lions whose efforts have “saved the day.” Use a shiny button, a holographic sticker, or a bright orange ball. Encourage them to spread their sunshine to others in the same way.
69. Recognize the Lion who adds humor to any task or project. Find a gift or toy with a recorded laugh track or silly song to represent the fun this Lion brings to the club.
70. Reward creativity! Use a fresh flower or a candle to acknowledge those who bring fresh, new ideas to the club.

## Final Thoughts

As with other forms of art, the Art of Recognition encompasses many techniques, tools, colors, textures, and styles. Recognition of each person can be as unique as the personal style of a specific artist. So, use your skill and imagination to find and implement a wide variety of ways to recognize the contributions of others.

You may be thinking this seems like too big a task to add to your already overloaded time demands. Before you do nothing, consider how much a simple “Thank You” or a personal note has meant to you in the past.

**Think** about the power of your example to others. If you recognize someone and encourage him or her to recognize someone, you have multiplied your effort.

**Take heart**, you will be living the Lions Code of Ethics, “Be careful with my criticism and liberal with my praise to build up and not destroy.”

**Remember**, even if you do a small number of acts of recognition, each one is like a pebble tossed into a pond. The ripples from that small pebble go on and on reaching many shores and touching many lives.

We hope that you found the content of this booklet useful, and that you will refer to it often as well as to *The Guide to Awards & Recognition*.

Remember, it doesn't matter what position or title you hold within our association. You are worth recognizing, and you should make it a habit to recognize others as well. With practice and creativity, you too can master *The Art of Recognition*.



**Start this week..**

**Who** can you recognize for outstanding achievement?

**What** creative method will you use?

**How** will you match the recognition to the individual Lion?

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Additional copies of *The Art of Recognition* and *The Guide to Awards & Recognition* may be purchased from LCI Club Supplies by calling (800) 710-7822 or online by visiting the Club Supplies section of the LCI website at [www.lionsclubs.org](http://www.lionsclubs.org).

*The Art of Recognition*.....#LDSP-03EN  
*The Guide to Awards & Recognition*.....#IAD-302EN

*The Guide to Awards & Recognition* may also be downloaded from the LCI website, [www.lionsclubs.org](http://www.lionsclubs.org).

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You are also encouraged to visit the Club Supplies section of the LCI website for a variety of unique and affordable recognition ideas.



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