



Introduction to Volunteer Recruitment, Management, and Recognition

DISCUSSION TOPICS

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"Recruiting volunteers is a chance to refresh and reinvigorate your organization. A positive approach, combined with clear thinking and creativity, can make all the difference to your volunteer involvement."

Part 1: VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT

Most people who don't currently volunteer say that they would if they were asked!
Wow....

BEFORE YOU RECRUIT.....

- Make sure you are well prepared for the process!
- Ask yourself the following questions:
 - Do I/we have the capacity to effectively engage volunteers?
 - What will the volunteers do?
 - How will I/we support them?

Things to consider:

- Consult your organization and board about volunteer involvement
- Draw up a Volunteering Policy for the organization (basic principles behind your volunteer-involvement and your practice guidelines for working with volunteers)

Consider what motivates individuals to volunteer:

- commitment to the organization / cause, so it is important to emphasize how their contribution will make a difference
- meeting people - volunteering can be a very sociable activity!
- gaining skills - when recruiting stress the skills and experience that volunteers can gain
- utilizing existing skills - some people want to put their skills to a good cause
- keeping active - more and more older people are volunteering



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RECRUITING EFFORTS

Advertisement (the message)

What a recruitment message should include:

- what the voluntary work is (be specific)
- what the organization as a whole does
- how a new volunteer can make a difference
- how to find out more

Word of mouth

Most volunteers are recruited by existing staff, clients, supporters or volunteers. Make sure everyone you know knows that you are trying to recruit, and what the opportunities are. If your existing staff and volunteers are happy and motivated they will be more effective in recruiting their friends!

Pros:

- word of mouth is still the most effective method of recruiting volunteers
- it is particularly useful in smaller communities

Cons:

- you are likely to recruit more of the same, as existing volunteers will tend to recruit people similar to themselves (if you rely on word of mouth your volunteers might not be very diverse)

Print

Posters, leaflets or postcards are a handy and attractive way of providing information to potential recruits.

You might consider placing printed information in:

- schools and colleges
- libraries
- town halls and other public buildings
- sports and leisure centers
- religious centers



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- shop windows
- bars

Pros:

- printed information can be targeted at particular audiences
- eye-catching designs can create a good image for your organization
- printed materials are becoming increasingly cheap and easy to produce

Cons:

- printed information tends to circulate for a long time, so enquiries may come long after the details have gone out of date
- posters and leaflets are unlikely to have much impact unless people already know about your organization

Social Media

Choose the right content to engage your audience (build a relationship!) Encourage them to act through the story you share.

Consider including the following:

- multimedia (photos and videos)
- inspiration (quotes, touching stories, etc.)
- asking a question
- humor

Consider using the following outlets:

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- LinkedIn
- Pinterest
- Eventbrite



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Talks

Setting up a talk or presentation might take some time as you will need to persuade the host that your information will be of real interest. Know your audience and what is likely to appeal to them about volunteering.

Visual images can aid a presentation, but real live volunteers or clients are the most effective inspiration! Make sure you bring printed information to support your talk, giving people the chance to go away and think before committing themselves. Be very clear about how people can get involved or find out more if they are interested.

Events

There are many places and events at which stalls can be set up, including:

- community and recreation centers
- the local library
- outdoor events
- career and recruitment fairs
- places of worship

Pros:

- gets you seen
- provides the opportunity of face-to-face recruitment

Cons:

- can be a lot of work without a guaranteed return
- can be expensive and labor-intensive

DIVERSITY IN RECRUITMENT

Diversity can be important in allowing you to reflect the composition of your local community and/or client group, in meeting your organization's mission and pursuing an equal opportunities policy. Consider the following people groups and how their contributions can affect your work:

- disabled people
- children & youth



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- college students
- working professionals
- elderly people
- unemployed people

SELECTION

If the role has some degree of responsibility (for example, working with people, money or dangerous equipment) selection procedures should be intentional.

Key elements of selection can include:

- application forms
- references
- interviews
- criminal record checks (especially if volunteers are working with vulnerable people)
- health screenings

Part 2: VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

SUPPORT

Methods of ongoing support can include:

- orientation - introducing volunteers to (history, vision, mission, key players, etc.)
- training - everyone must be given sufficient training to do their work well
- problem solving procedures

SUPERVISION/ACCOUNTABILITY

- consistent, on-site staff/leadership presence
- having regular times to talk and plan
- offering correction and guidance as necessary



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Part 3: VOLUNTEER RECONGITION

- Asking for feedback (surveys, reviews, etc.)
- Special acknowledgements (during event, before board members/sponsors, etc.)
- Awards
- Small tokens of appreciation (hand written notes, funny e-cards, etc.)
- Banquets



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