



Volunteer Development for the Club

Introduction

Volunteers and volunteer programs don't just happen. Like designing a new home, a volunteer program requires careful planning. For a volunteer program to be successful, two critical factors must be considered:

- Volunteers must feel that what they are doing is important and that your cause is worthy.
- A system that encourages and supports the volunteer effort must be established.

In most clubs, a board committee handles volunteers, while in others they are the responsibility of a single person. But more often than not, no individual or group is given the responsibility for managing volunteers. This document examines the changing nature of volunteers, planning and developing a volunteer system, and managing a successful volunteer program. By enhancing volunteer involvement, the continuity and growth of your volunteer program is ensured and better services will be offered to both your members and the community.

Volunteerism – the Changing Nature of Volunteers

The changing nature of today's volunteers and their reduced length of service have created new challenges for clubs. When individuals now volunteer their services and time to an organization, they must feel comfortable quickly, they must understand their duties and responsibilities, and they must believe that their contributions are important.

Who Are The Volunteers?

Volunteers are people who freely donate their time and expertise to help deliver services or perform specific tasks. At one time or another, almost everyone has volunteered for something.

Although the increase of women in the workplace has not appeared to affect the number of women volunteers, it has affected the amount of time available for volunteering.

Volunteer activities that are short-term, easy to schedule, close to home or work, and include families continue to make volunteering attractive.

The increase in volunteerism has changed the nature of the volunteer marketplace. Volunteer work is no longer considered a leisure activity for those without regular employment. Today's volunteers:

- Also hold paid jobs
 - Include more men
- Range from teenagers to senior citizens
- Are more skilled and educated
- Seek opportunities that demand a higher level of skills and abilities
- Are involved in both service and administrative positions
- Consider volunteering an integral part of a person's lifelong work and learning experience

The relationship between clubs and their volunteers has also changed. Today's volunteers demand more challenging jobs, greater responsibility, and more participation in the decision-making process. Organizations have responded by providing their volunteer workers with more direction and training. Volunteers no longer perform menial tasks for the convenience of the organization; today's volunteers do important work.

- Has your organization adjusted to meet the needs of the new community volunteer?
- Do you have short-term volunteer opportunities available?
- Do you provide opportunities for couples and families to volunteer together?

What do we need?

1. Do we have the volunteers we need to carry out the plans and activities that enable us to accomplish our goals?
2. Does our organization have a clear, long-range plan that guides our activities?
3. Do we do an annual review of our current volunteers, their skills, needs and expectations?
4. To accomplish our plans we compare the skills we need with the people we have available to do the work.
5. We provide significant support to our Nominating Committee in its ongoing search for good people.

Whom do we have available to do it?

One of the more effective ways to recruit is to design a membership application form to include a section on volunteerism. You could ask:

1. What do you do for a living and whom do you work for?
2. Any hobbies or skills?
3. Willing to volunteer? Yes No
4. Willing to volunteer as a committee or board member? Yes No

Before rushing out to recruit new volunteers, take a look at the people who already volunteer with your organization. These volunteers are likely to be committed, enthusiastic and already oriented to the organization. By gathering more information about them such as what skills/capabilities they bring to the organization, whether these skills are effectively used in their current positions, and what preferences they have for their involvement in the organization, you can do an inventory of your existing human resources.

There are many ways to collect this information. Remember to include a privacy policy about the information you collect i.e. "It will never be shared or used by any third party".

Recruitment

1. Do we have a well-organized plan for finding suitable volunteers?
2. Does the club portray a positive, vital image that attracts quality volunteers?
3. Are we creative in where and how we look for new volunteers?
4. Are our recruiters informed and enthusiastic representatives of our organization?
5. Do we respect the needs and expectations of potential volunteers?
6. Are we candid about the amount and kind of work involved in a particular job?

Both the volunteer and the club have something of value to offer each other. The volunteer has skills, abilities, intelligence, experience, knowledge, time and energy available at no charge, and the club can provide opportunities for personal challenge, learning and growth and, at the same time, the chance to make a valuable contribution to the operation. If this partnership is to be successful, both parties must carefully consider what they want and need from each other. Thus, if the volunteer is offered something challenging and worthwhile to do, then an "invitation to serve" will be accepted.

How to Recruit

The initial contact with a potential volunteer is crucial — first impressions can be lasting! Make sure you are honest and enthusiastic and that you present the volunteer commitment as clearly as possible. You can make an initial contact in a number of ways:

- Personally or on a one-to-one basis;
- Presentations to leagues or rentals
- Word-of-mouth
- Advertisements, i.e. bulletin boards
- Community newspaper story, letter to the Editor, classified ads
- Newsletters
- Posters, brochures, pamphlets

Be honest. The reason most volunteers give for quitting their jobs is that there is a big difference between what they are asked to do initially and what they end up doing. These "differences" are usually with respect to the amount of time required, the type of work requested, and the amount of support available, e.g., other volunteers, payment of out-of-pocket expenses.

Matching Jobs and People

1. Do we have an effective process for matching volunteer expectations and skills with our organization's needs?
2. Do we encourage volunteers to reflect on their needs and expectations for involvement?
3. Are we careful to ensure a match between the volunteer's needs and expectations and those of our club?
4. Do we define the tasks, responsibilities and authorities for volunteers as clearly as we can?
5. Are there job descriptions for all positions?

Volunteer expectations are changing. Thirty years ago, being a volunteer was viewed as part of one's responsibility as a member of the club. People volunteered primarily out of a sense of duty to improve their club. Today, our facilities compete with many more activities for people's leisure time. In addition, volunteers are more articulate about what they want out of their involvement with the club, i.e., what their expectations are.

Typical Expectations of a Volunteer

Personal Growth

- learning opportunities
- worthwhile accomplishments
- challenge
- recognition, status, responsibility and influence
- social interaction with like-minded others

Helping the Club

- part of being a member
- concern about values i.e. teaching kids
- giving back for something received

Job Description

Most volunteers function without job descriptions. This can result in unrealistic expectations and demands, a lack of clarity about the work to be done, unreasonable workloads and repetition of duties. Compared to the time and effort taken to recruit a volunteer and the time and effort the volunteer will donate on behalf of the club, the creation of a job description is a very small but essential task. The benefits are obvious: clearly defined and realistic responsibilities and results, and clarification about who does what.

Job descriptions should be done by both the volunteer and the club, to ensure that the needs and expectations of both will be met. Here is a sample step-by-step process for developing a job description.

1. Agree on a job title
2. Outline the general description of the work
3. Clearly define what is expected
4. Decide on whom the volunteer reports to and if any written report is expected
5. Identify the skills needed to complete the job

Orientation

Orientation begins with the first contact between the volunteer and the club. The primary purpose of orientation is to bring the new volunteer "on-side". The club wants a productive volunteer and the volunteer wants to be helpful, competent and to get on with the work.

The volunteer needs to know the following:

1. A clear expectation about duties and responsibilities
2. A tour of the facilities from top to bottom
3. To be brought up-to-date on other aspects of the club that are often not put into writing, i.e. politics

Volunteer Recognition

1. Do our volunteers feel well recognized for their efforts?
2. Do they know they are appreciated?
3. Do we promote ongoing "personal" recognition for our volunteers?
4. Do we have an organized and well-publicized plan for recognition?
5. Are we careful to make an appropriate match between the form of recognition and the recipient?

Recognition, whether subtle or substantial, is an art. When practiced sensitively and honestly, it can ensure that volunteers feel acknowledged, accepted, praised, identified as being special. Most people appreciate recognition and for volunteers who are giving freely of their time and energy, recognition can be a highly potent motivator. Different individuals will benefit from different types of recognition. Part of the "art" of recognition involves determining the best type to use for each volunteer.

Personal Recognition

Personal recognition is the responsibility of all volunteers. It involves simply saying a genuine 'thank you' for work accomplished for your club. This is the least expensive and easiest form of recognition and if your club does nothing else you must say THANK YOU!

Public Recognition

Public recognition of your volunteers can be delivered in many forms:

1. Words — letters, public thanks
2. Awards — plaques, trophies, certificates, photo albums, inductions into prestigious groups e.g. Hall of Fame, special presentations
3. Rewards — free tickets/passes, out-of-town travel, training workshops, T-shirts, mugs, personal notepaper, identification pins
4. Events — banquets, "roasts", tributes, special occasions/ events
5. Special Attention — TV programs on local cable stations, newspaper articles, newsletter articles, and radio programs

Here are some tips to help your recognition program:

- Name one person to be responsible for supervising both personal and public recognition.
- Keep track of previous awards given so that you can create an historical perspective.
- Celebrate your recognition system.
- Build an aura of prestige around your major awards so that people winning them feel the significance of their achievements.
- Be aware of the impact of subtle forms of recognition such as involvement in decision-making, the discussion of important issues, or inclusion in senior policy discussions.
- Keep in mind that a recognition system is a way to say "thank you" for volunteers' efforts. Too many recognition "wares" can reduce their meaning and value to recipients.
- Remember to match the appropriate form of recognition to the right person.

101 Ways to give Recognition to our Volunteers

Listed below are 101 possibilities gathered from hither and yon. The duplication at 1 and 101 is for emphasis. The blank at 102 is for the beginning of your own list. It is important to remember that recognition is not so much something you do as it is something you are. It is sensitivity to others as persons NOT strategy for discharging obligations.

1. Smile
2. Put up a volunteer suggestion box
3. Treat to a pop
4. Reimburse assignment-related expenses
5. Ask for a report
6. Send a birthday card
7. Arrange for discounts
8. Give service stripes
9. Maintain a coffee bar
10. Plan annual ceremonial occasions
11. Invite to staff meeting
12. Recognize personal needs and problems
13. Accommodate personal needs and problems
14. Be pleasant
15. Use in an emergency situation
16. Provide a baby sitter
17. Post Honour Roll in reception area
18. Respect their wishes
19. Give informal teas
20. Keep challenging them

21. Send a Thanksgiving Day card to the volunteer's family
22. Provide a nursery
23. Say "Good Morning"
24. Greet by name
25. Provide good pre-service training
26. Help develop self-confidence
27. Award plaques to sponsoring group
28. Take time to explain fully
29. Be verbal
30. Motivate agency VIP's to converse with them
31. Hold rap sessions
32. Give additional responsibility
33. Afford participation in team planning
34. Respect sensitivities
35. Enable to grow on the job
36. Enable to grow out of the job
37. Send newsworthy information to the media
38. Have wine and cheese tasting parties
39. Ask client-patient to evaluate their work-service
40. Say "Good Afternoon"
41. Honour their preferences
42. Create pleasant surroundings
43. Welcome to staff coffee breaks
44. Enlist to train other volunteers
45. Have a public reception
46. Take time to talk
47. Defend against hostile or negative staff
48. Make good plans
49. Commend to supervisory staff
50. Send a valentine
51. Make thorough pre-arrangements
52. Persuade "personnel" to equate volunteer experience with work experience
53. Admit to partnership with paid staff
54. Recommend to prospective employer
55. Provide scholarships to volunteer conferences or workshops
56. Offer advocacy roles
57. Utilize as consultants
58. Write them thank you notes.
59. Invite participation in policy formulation
60. Surprise with coffee and cake
61. Celebrate outstanding projects and achievements
62. Nominate for volunteer awards
63. Have a "Presidents Day" for new presidents of sponsoring groups
64. Carefully match volunteer with job
65. Praise them to their friends
66. Provide substantive in-service training

67. Provide useful tools in good working condition
68. Say "Good Night"
69. Plan staff and volunteer social events
70. Be a real person
71. Rent billboard space for public laudation
72. Accept their individuality
73. Provide opportunities for conferences and evaluation
74. Identify age groups
75. Maintain meaningful life
76. Send impromptu fun cards
77. Plan occasional extravaganzas
78. Instigate client planned surprises
79. Utilize purchased newspaper space
80. Promote a "Volunteer-of-the-Month" program
81. Send letter of appreciation to employer
82. Plan a "Recognition Edition" of the agency newsletter
83. Colour code name tags to indicate particular achievements (hours, years)
84. Send commendatory letters to prominent public figures
85. Say "we missed you"
86. Praise the Sponsoring group or club
87. Promote staff smiles
88. Facilitate personal maturation
89. Distinguish between groups and individuals in the group
90. Maintain safe working conditions
91. Adequately orientate
92. Award special citations for extraordinary achievements
93. Fully indoctrinate regarding the agency
94. Send Christmas cards
95. Be familiar with the details of assignments
96. Conduct community-wide, cooperative, inter-agency recognition events
97. Plan a theater party
98. Attend a sports event
99. Have a picnic
100. Say "Thank You "
101. Smile
102. Start your own list

Sample Volunteers Slogans

- Volunteers: our greatest natural resource
- Volunteers: partners in tomorrow
- Family volunteering: handing down the strength of tomorrow
- Your child, your coach, and your neighbours: volunteers without name tags
- The most important donation: your time
- Thank a volunteer: build for tomorrow
- Volunteers: unseen but never forgotten
- Empower yourself: be a volunteer
- Volunteers make it happen
- Volunteers: people helping people
- Volunteers: the key to our success
- Learn new skills. Make new friends. Update your resume. Volunteer today!
- Volunteers are ordinary people doing extraordinary things
- Volunteers add that special touch
- Volunteers put unity in community

Favourite Quotes

You give but little when you give of your possessions. It is when you give of yourself that you truly give. - Kahlil Gibran, The Prophet

Everyone can be great, because everyone can serve - Martin Luther King, Jr.

Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, things aren't going to get better, they're NOT! - Dr. Seuss, The Lorax

You have not lived until you have done something for someone who can never repay you. - Unknown

The best way to find yourself, is to lose yourself in the service of others. - Ghandi

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