



VolunteerMatch

VolunteerMatch Learning Center
Introductory Approaches

Engaging the Volunteer of the Future

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Agenda

- Moving beyond “Volunteers Needed”
- How do volunteers find you? How can you find them?
- Creating the work
- Finding the right volunteers
- Evaluating your success
- What’s next?

“Volunteers Needed”

What does your volunteer program look like to a volunteer?

Volunteers have a choice!

- Are your opportunities task based or collaborative?
- One size does not fit all volunteers
- Do you have clear roles and expectations?
- Volunteers want to know the impact and make good use of their time.
- Can you identify the “right” volunteer for the role or your organization?
- It’s as important to know when to say yes as it is to learn to say no.

This is not your mother's volunteering

Shifts in generations create a new model

- Volunteers hope to make an impact
- Volunteer task lists replaced by meaningful, targeted work, skills based

Meaningful to the volunteer, important to the organization

- Volunteers need flexibility
- Does not imply that they can't be dependable, reliable,
- accountable

Volunteers want to understand

- Answer the question "Why?"

How do volunteers find you?

80% of Volunteer Coordinators tell us the “Word of Mouth” is their #1 recruitment method

- What are your volunteers saying about your organization?
- What can you do about it?

VolunteerMatch knows:

- Lots of volunteers don't have a strong idea about where or how they want to volunteer.
- They are looking for a opportunity to make an impact and find a cause they care about. (79% and 82% Hart 2010)

Pros and Cons of “WoM”

You can create a positive experience

- Meaningful and important
- The right volunteer in the right job
- Saying no politely and professionally

Make it easier for volunteers to share

- Arm them with information
- Engage through social media
- Don't keep them in a silo

Pros and Cons of “WoM”

Passive

- You can't make your volunteers tell their friends, but you can encourage them

Depends on earned marketing/media

- Easier now than ever – but it's just as easy to share a negative experience

Doesn't bring in volunteers who don't have a connection or know who you are

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Where are you looking now?

Consider each recruitment channel

- Who would you expect to recruit there?
- What opportunity or message would be right for this channel?
- How successful has this channel been in the past?

Which opportunities or roles are harder to fill?

- Who would be/is successful at this role?
- What makes them the “right” volunteer
- Think about where you might find those skills, attributes

Think about community partnerships

- Are there channels or communities that you’re overlooking now?

Create a Recruitment Plan

Introduce your program and your work!

- Set the stage – tell your story

Have a “virtual” conversation

- Answer the question “what do volunteers do at your organization?”

Prioritize the information you share

- What does a volunteer need to know to decide if they’re the right volunteer for your program?

Find the right volunteers!

When inviting volunteers to participate in your organization finding the right fit becomes even more important

- Know who you want
- Comprehensive position descriptions: skills, experience, traits or characteristics

Create a strong foundation and manage expectations

- No bait and switch
- Policies and procedures manual, NDA, Letter of agreement

Find the right volunteers!

Screen volunteers

- For skills, but also for characteristics and fit

Understand why no is not necessarily a negative outcome

- Meaningful work
- Right fit for the position and the organization
- Focus your time on supporting the right volunteers.

Create the right opportunities

Ask why?

- Why does this work matter, why would someone want to volunteer for this opportunity?

Incorporate responsibility and accountability

- Set and manage expectations for all stakeholders
- Be clear about decisions that can be made, made with consultation, and must be brought to supervisors

Think creatively

- What could you accomplish if you weren't limited to the time and talent of paid staff?

Think about different opportunities

Just because someone can't make it to your office doesn't mean they can't contribute.

- Portable opportunities - Project based, skills based, possibly virtual
- Virtual opportunities - Done from anywhere, maybe skilled based, but not necessarily
- Peripheral opportunities with follow up
- Involvement on any level can lead to more impactful engagement

Evaluate!

What's working now, and what's not?

- Surveys – volunteers, paid staff, clients
- Informal conversations, interviews, town halls

Solicit feedback on the program, process.

- Brainstorm opportunities for meaningful engagement

Don't abandon volunteers or paid staff

- Create an ongoing plan to support, evaluate, problem solve as roles/programs change

Follow up on surveys and interviews – year over year or as programs evolve

Things to Think About

You don't have to change everything right now

- Identify the priorities or critical positions
- Start with small changes or clarify the foundations

Invite volunteers to take on leadership roles

- Volunteers want to tell you what they like (and don't like) about your program
- Invite your superstar volunteers to take the lead

Share your milestones and successes with the organization

- Manager, leadership, co-workers and, of course, the volunteers!

Thank you!

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