Attracting & Keeping the Best Volunteers

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Note: This paper is from a session on volunteer management. For more information on having this session presented at your organization, contact Mariner Management & Marketing.

Overview

Provide Closure, Satisfaction & FUN! Match what a person CAN & WANTS to do!

1. Understanding What You Need
    a. Begin with THE PLAN *[Getting something worthwhile done]*
    b. Then identify the SKILLS needed to get the plan accomplished
    c. Map out your VOLUNTEER FRAMEWORK
    d. Write JOB DESCRIPTIONS which become your volunteer contracts

2. Recruitment Strategies
    a. Attract good volunteers.
    b. Match your needs to people – work in opposite direction identifying needs and then looking for people with requisite skills
    c. Match volunteers to job – keep good volunteers through effective job matching; avoid the Peter Principle: don't over-promote
    d. Be inclusive – all can join a committee, then look for those who rise to the top for the leadership positions (chair, board position)
    e. Convert members into volunteers – identify opportunities that match members' needs
    f. Create a welcoming environment

3. Training
    a. Orientation to organization - Policies & Procedures
    b. Orientation to job
    c. Skill development
        - General volunteer skills
        - Job Specific skills

4. Motivating Volunteers and Ongoing Assessment
    a. Coach/Mentor (by predecessor, leader, others); gives constructive feedback tackling positives & negatives
    b. Reward volunteers – *Meaningful Reward = what is of value to volunteer + affordable/appropriate for organization*
    c. Reprimand volunteers – Requires having the PLAN
    d. Re-purpose volunteers to avoid burn-out

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Volunteer Management Worksheet: Where Do Volunteers Fit In?

YOUR ORGANIZATION'S VISION

_____

_____

_____

YOUR ORGANIZATION'S MISSION

_____

_____

_____

YOUR ORGANIZATION'S KEY PROGRAMS/SERVICES & KEY HUMAN RESOURCE NEEDS

Program/Service	Resources Needed

TASKS IDENTIFIED FOR VOLUNTEERS

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

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Volunteer Management Worksheet: How's Your Volunteer Program Doing?

Following are the basic elements of volunteer program. Rate each of these elements for your organization using this scale:

1. It exists and it is effective.
2. It exists but needs improvement.
3. It doesn't exist and we must have it.

Elements of an Effective Volunteer Management Program	1	2	3
Mission & Vision for the volunteer program			
Written plan for volunteer program (inc. size, scope & expectations)			
Brand for your volunteer program			
Separate budget for volunteer program			
Written position descriptions for volunteers			
Each volunteer position has a supervisor			
Recruitment for volunteers			
▪ Written recruitment plan			
▪ Recruitment marketing & media relation materials			
▪ Recruitment presentation			
▪ On-going networking plan (with volunteer centers, frequent sources etc)			
Formal interview process for potential volunteers			
Formal screening process (inc. reference checks, criminal record checks, etc., as appropriate)			
Probationary or trial period for new volunteers			
Written volunteer agreement with policies clearly stated			
Written Volunteer Handbook			
Formal volunteer orientation to both the organization & position			
Formal volunteer training session			
Scheduled evaluation sessions with all volunteers			
Written volunteer recognition policy & program			
Insurance coverage for volunteers			
Formal volunteer exit interview			
Formal training program for staff working with volunteers			
Annual review of volunteer program			

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Volunteer Management Worksheet: What's Your Volunteer Program Vision?

If we had all the money we needed, would we still use volunteers?

_____

_____

What is the value of having a volunteer to the task?

_____

_____

If you had to hire someone to do the job, would you?

_____

_____

How does your organization define a volunteer?

_____

_____

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5 Cool Ideas for Attracting a Volunteer ✯

1) Imprint your logo and volunteer message on colorful balloons to hand out at community events and watch your name float by all who attend! *(Cool idea from Judy Esmond, author of Count Me In – 501 Ideas for Recruiting Volunteers)*

2) Offer a "No obligation trial period" for new volunteers to give them a chance to see if they like the job (and you!). This can allay their fears and help you assess them. *(Cool idea from Steve McCurley & Rick Lynch's book Essential Volunteer Management)*

3) Spread the word about your organization at business networking events like your local Chamber of Commerce. Many have networking breakfasts or luncheons where you can give your 30-second pitch one-on-one to dozens of people. *(A working idea from Laurel Advocacy and Referral Services volunteer recruiter)*

4) Write a short, simple recruitment "slogan" that becomes your volunteer brand and weave it into every communication from your organization from letterhead and business cards to speeches and advertising.

5) Connect with larger local businesses to develop a relationship that promotes your volunteer opportunities to their workforce. Consider asking them to "sponsor" a specific event or activity by supplying volunteers or simply encouraging their staff to support your volunteer needs.

For more ideas and resources on non-profit organizations, check out the Tip of the Month at www.marinermanagement.com.

✯ "More than 50% of people who volunteer do so because they are asked to by a friend, co-worker or acquaintance."

- Nora McClintock, *Quick tips for Volunteer Management*

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Resources for Volunteer Management

Organizations

Volunteer Center for Anne Arundel County
www.volunteerannearundel.org

Association for Volunteer Administration
www.avaintl.org

Websites & E-Letters

www.energizeinc.com – Energize, Inc. is an international training, consulting and publishing firm specializing in volunteerism with cool tools and neat links, including low cost e-books!.

www4.compasspoint.org2 – Board Café is the electronic newsletter exclusively for members of nonprofit boards of directors. Short enough to read over a cup of coffee, Board Café offers a menu of ideas, information, opinion, news, and resources to help board members give and get the most out of board service. Published by CompassPoint, a consulting firm in CA.

www.mapnp.org/library/staffing/outsrcng/volnteer/volnteer.htm – The Management Assistance Program (MAP) for Nonprofits, in St. Paul, Minnesota, hosts this Free Management Library which offers a host of information, tips and links.

www.volunteertoday.com – Volunteer Today is an e-newsletter for those who manage the work of volunteers in nonprofit, government or corporate programs.

http://www.nsgvp.org/– National Service Resource Center's list includes resources and links on volunteerism and volunteer management

http://nonprofit.about.com – About.com was founded in 1997 with a simple premise, that people are the best Guides to the Internet. When you read an article on About.com, you are tapping into a powerful network of 475 Guides. They now have this site especially for nonprofit and voluntary programs covering topics such as how to start a nonprofit, the latest non-profit news, and how to raise money.

www.nonprofitbasics.org – The Nonprofit Good Practice Guide is a one-stop shop for widely-accepted and innovative nonprofit practices offering Preferred Practices and Pitfalls, Glossaries, Resources, Trends and Web site Profiles within ten topic areas.

Books & Articles

The (Help) I-Don't-Have-Enough-Time Guide to Volunteer Management, Katherine Noles Campbell & Susan J Ellis, an E-book published by Energize, Inc!, www.energizeinc.com – the title says it all! It covers all aspects of volunteer management and includes assessment tools.

Nonprofit Market Analysis, Bill Nissim, 2004, BloodhoundNetwork.com, http://nonprofit-organizations.bloodhoundnetwork.com/ – this short article focuses on conducting a market analysis which will help you make better volunteer management decisions.

Episodic Volunteering: Organizing and Managing the Short-Term Volunteer Program, Nancy Macduff, MBA Publishing, www.volunteertoday.com– this book covers the basics of integrating short-term volunteer opportunities and people into the existing program.

Volunteer Management Catalog, Points of Light Foundation, www.PointsofLight.org/catalog – publications on many topics including marketing and media.

Your Presenters – Contact Us!

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