

Handouts

Cutting Edge Strategies for Engaging Volunteers to Meet Mission

Handout 1: Designing Volunteer Roles

**Handout 2: Six Ways to Restructure Volunteer Opportunities to
Appeal to Volunteers Seeking More Flexible and
Shorter Term Opportunities**

Handout 3: Targeted Volunteer Recruitment Worksheet

Handout 4: Volunteer Recognition Ideas from Minnesota Colleague

Handout 5: Resources on Volunteer Program Evaluation

Handout 6: Lessons Learned from Volunteer Centered Organizations

**Handout 7: Obtaining Buy-In for Organizational Changes with
Volunteer Engagement**

***Thank you to the Otto Bremer Foundation and Bush Foundation
for funding this initiative***



Handout 1

Designing Volunteer Roles

Identify new roles for volunteers at your organization

Exercise to do at your organization. Ask main volunteers and staff to:

1. Identify tasks they're doing now that they would like to give to someone else so they would have more time to do priority work.
2. Envision what volunteers could do that would help the organization more fully meet the mission and/or accomplish the strategic plan.
3. From this list, what are possible volunteer positions?

Format for position descriptions

- Position title
- Position overview
- Key responsibility
- Impact of assignment
- Training provided/needed
- Support
- Commitment (time, duration and location)
- Skills and qualifications
- Benefits to the volunteer



Handout 2

Six Ways to Restructure Volunteer Opportunities to Appeal to Volunteers Seeking More Flexible and Shorter Term Opportunities

1. **Substitution.** If it just has to be done every day, week or month, try creating the position of *substitute*: volunteers who are willing to be on-call and fill-in temporarily for volunteers in traditional jobs as their schedules permit.
2. **Job Sharing.** Why not assign two volunteers to the same opportunity? They may be given the same responsibilities or different ones depending on their individual skills. You might identify the two volunteers to job share or you could ask the new volunteer to recruit a job-sharing friend. The volunteers follow a prearranged schedule or work it out among themselves week by week.
3. **Rotation.** With this option four volunteers might take turns filling a volunteer assignment, each working for a period of just three months out of the year. Such an arrangement might work well for snowbirds or seasonal workers.
4. **Segmentation.** Can a labor intensive position be broken down into more manageable short-term opportunities? For example, a special event coordinator might be replaced by several short-term volunteers each working on one piece of the overall work plan.
5. **Team Volunteering.** Assign multiple volunteers to the same client, each having a specialized function. For example, instead of just one volunteer being assigned to a homebound senior, a care team is created. Perhaps one volunteer likes giving emotional support, another handling finances and a third doing housecleaning. No one volunteer has to do it all, making the load lighter for everyone.
6. **Telecommuting.** In this scenario, a volunteer provides the service from home or some other off-site location using technology. A good example of the application of this strategy is in the area of mentoring. School-based mentoring can be a fairly inflexible assignment. However, volunteers who cannot go into the school on a regular basis can still participate through e-mentoring, via email or video conferencing. Whether the volunteer is at work, overseas on vacation or at home, all they need to do is to get on their laptop to connect with their mentee. E-mentoring is not a replacement for face-to-face mentoring but it can be a way to involve a greater range of volunteers in the experience

From "Creating Boomer-friendly Volunteer Opportunities: Restructuring Existing Opportunities" by D. Scott Martin.



Handout 3

Targeted Volunteer Recruitment Worksheet

Volunteer job description (summary):

Skills and qualities needed to perform this job:

What types of people are most apt to have these qualities? (age, gender, educational level, experiences - what types of people have made the best volunteers in this position previously?)

What are the best sources for finding my needed volunteer(s)? (service clubs, corporations, colleges, youth clubs, etc.)

What techniques or methods would be most appropriate to gain access to them? (friend or colleague to personally ask, speak to Rotary, talk to classes at the local college, PSA on teen radio station, etc.)

What benefits will these volunteers receive by doing this job? (i.e. what exchange are we offering them: work experience, networking opportunities, making a difference?)

Who is the best person to do the recruitment and why?



Hand Out 4

Volunteer Recognition Ideas from Minnesota Colleagues

Thank yous

- Keep a log of when you hear a volunteer has done something especially good. Then call, e-mail or send a note to the volunteer to commend them.
- Send personal handwritten cards
- “Thank You” said daily

Small gifts

- Give out candy bars with a note related to candy such as for Tootsie Rolls - “Appreciate the role you play in our success” or with a mint “You are worth a mint”
- Goody treasure bag at work (i.e. candy, pencils, etc.)
- Pictures, certificates, personal achievements

Recognition when volunteering

- Have ribbons for the volunteers to wear at work to draw attention to them
- Communicate birthday/accomplishment to other staff and volunteers so that they are aware to offer congratulations

Personal attention

- Send birthday cards
- Pick a nice e-card, then send it out to all the volunteers on their birthdays
- Get well/sympathy cards
- Seek personal moments
- Anniversary card (when they started)
- At anniversary, call and talk about how their volunteering is going

Public attention

- Do public acknowledgement
- Have a “Volunteer Hall of Fame”
- Take a picture and post for all to see
- Highlight volunteers in newsletter
- Nominate volunteers for awards

Extra responsibility

- Ask volunteers who do an especially nice job to mentor newer volunteers
- Promote to more challenging tasks

Social opportunities

- Offer opportunities for group interaction
- Provide lunch and a chance to visit with other volunteers

Learning

- Offer training
- Send to a conference

Nice working conditions

- Providing a welcoming atmosphere
- Provide them with their own work space
- Access to equipment, and technology needed and the training required
- Name tags
- Introduce to all
- Provide treats daily

Share organizational success

- Send e-mails when organization is in the media to look for it
- Let know about organizational successes

For a project

- Include results in a thank you card and in a newsletter
- Make sure paid staff are aware of the results of the project
- Present them with a special specific recognition based on that project
- Separate rewards at project intervals and upon completion of project goals
- Team incentive/friendly competition

When other staff are the direct supervisor

- Make up a chart for supervisor of times to check in with volunteers (45 days after start, six months and anniversary)

To learn what would like

- Use SurveyMonkey to ask volunteers what they would like for recognition
- Ask in initial interview



Handout 5

Resources on Volunteer Program Evaluation

Books

Eystad, Melissa. Editor **Measuring the Difference Volunteers Make: A Guide to Outcome Evaluation for Volunteer Program Managers.**

Ellis, Susan J. **Volunteer Management Audit**, Energize Inc., 2003. (Order at <https://www.energizeinc.com/store>)

McCurley, Steve and Sue Vineyard. **Measuring Up: Assessment Tools for Volunteer Programs**, Heritage Arts, 1997. (Order at <https://www.energizeinc.com/store>)

Articles and Downloads

Graff, Linda, "Recognizing the Value of Volunteer Work"
<http://www.lindagraff.ca/Past%20Musings/Musing%20-%20Reconceptualizing%20The%20Value%20Of%20Volunteers.pdf>

Cravens, Jayne. "What Are Your Volunteers Saying?" e-Volunteerism Journal, Vol 111, Issue 2, Jan-March 2003. (www.e-Volunteerism.com)

Goodrow, Tony "Calculating the ROI of Your Volunteer Program – It's Time to Turn Things Upside Down," e-Volunteerism, Oct. 2010, <http://www.e-volunteerism.com/volume-xi-issue-1-october-2010/feature-articles/888>

Keyboard Roundtable. "Is Assigning a financial Value to Volunteering a Good Idea? Vol 111, Issue 2, Jan-Mar 2003. (www.e-Volunteerism.com)

McCurley, Steve, "Valuing Volunteer Time". e-Volunteerism Journal, Vol 1, Issue 2, Winter 2001. (www.e-Volunteerism.com)

"Making It Count: How to Measure the Impact of Volunteerism," Starbucks Coffee Company, January 2011, http://missionmeasurement.com/files/Making%20It%20Count%20-%20Measuring%20Volunteerism_MM_Starbucks_Jan2011.pdf

Web Sites

<https://independentsector.org/value-of-volunteer-time-2018/> - Independent Sector's, "The Value of Volunteer Time"

<http://www.pointsoflight.org/tag/reimagining-service> - Reimagining Service supports and disseminates research aimed at highlighting effective volunteer engagement practices and policies and their impact on the core mission of the organization

<http://performwell.org/> - Urban Institute's Perform Well aims to provides information and tools to measure program quality and outcomes



Handout 6

Lessons Learned from Volunteer-Centered Organizations

Minnesota Association for Volunteer Administration (MAVA) leader Judie Russell has pondered a question for years of how organizations that historically have made the decision to deliver most of their services through volunteers are different than organizations that deliver services primarily through staff, with a volunteer department as an add on. Now, when the pressures of tight budgets and increased demand for service have created openness in some organizations to engage volunteers in new ways, the time seemed right to explore this question for strategies useful to organizations trying to rely on volunteers in new ways. MAVA gained many insights from several focus group discussions with organizations that deliver the majority of services through volunteers, which are outlined below.

Factors for success in delivering most of services through volunteers

- The value of volunteers is embedded in the organizational culture – everyone honors, trusts and values volunteers.
- The role of staff is to support volunteers. If staff is not supportive of the value of volunteers they are in the wrong place.
- The organization acts on volunteers' ideas and gives volunteers a voice.
- Volunteers are involved in high responsibility roles and leadership roles.
- A good organizational structure is in places with well-defined roles for volunteers. The best practices for engaging volunteers followed.
- A focus is on building relationships – between volunteers and volunteers, volunteers and staff, volunteers and people served.
- The organization stays in tune with changes in who volunteers and how volunteers' expectation change, and adapts to the changes.



Handout 7

Obtaining Buy-In for Organizational Changes with Volunteer Engagement

Many leaders of volunteers understand the changes needed to more fully engage volunteers in their organization. However, they realize the changes will only happen if the organization buys into the opportunities presented by today's volunteers, and is willing to change to new forms of volunteer involvement. Approaches to consider for obtaining organizational buy-in:

- Find opportunities to learn more about specific challenges staff are facing to build your understanding of their perspectives and to create the working relationship for implementing change.
- Run ideas by staff you trust and who trust you to get their input/suggestions to build your case.
- Anticipate staff resistance and be prepared to share benefits for the organization.
- Identify possible barriers to the changes needed to more fully involve volunteers and strategize ways to overcome the barriers.
- Identify who in the organization needs to know how to better involve volunteers.
- Know your audience and customize your message.
 - Executive level can help build an environment/culture of volunteerism in the organization.
 - Middle management level can make or break your efforts. Need to demonstrate impact/value volunteers can bring to accomplishing a specific outcome. They are usually concerned about the bottom line.
 - Supervisors/line staff need to be involved in the planning and development of the new opportunities with you. You can guide the creative process in order to incorporate the components of a quality opportunity.

Asking questions:

- Talk with your Executive Director, a member of the management staff, or a Board member (whichever is the most appropriate for the organization) to ask:
 - How do you see volunteers impacting mission the most?
 - How could volunteers have more of an impact on mission?
 - What is coming up for the organization and how volunteers might help?
- Prepare for focused conversations with staff. Use "discovery" questions for a focused conversation.
 - Permission: Would it be all right if I asked you some work-related questions?
 - Fact Finding: What projects are not being completed due to staffing resources?
 - Feeling Finding: What do you believe will be the impact of the decision?
 - Best/Least: What seems to be working well? What would you change?
 - Magic Wand: If you could snap your fingers and fix everything, what would be different?
 - Tell-me-more: Can you tell me more about the results you are looking for?
 - Catch-all: What else should I ask you about?
 - Third Party: One of the managers in another area feels that managing new volunteers is a key issue, what do you think?
 - Paired: Can you tell me the development target for the team and what it will mean to the organization's bottom line?
 - Checking: If I understand you correctly, your greatest concerns are...?

