

Membership and Volunteers

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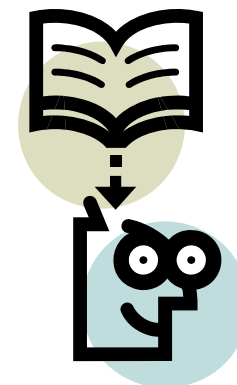
Morrison Nonprofit Transitions

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Recruiting Volunteers

1. Is your office open, friendly and conducive to creativity? Is it chaotic and free flowing, or is it value-driven and more rigid? Are employees open and friendly, or do they present a cold demeanor? Are employees relaxed about job security, or do they appear to be tense and worried? These factors can have an impact, one way or the other, on whether individuals choose to volunteer.
2. Match the nonprofit's culture to potential volunteers. The culture will determine the type of volunteer you should recruit. For instance, a highly structured organization needs to recruit followers, not leaders.
3. Conversely, an office that is more loosely organized might look for self-starters who don't need much guidance.



Prepare

3. Prepare for volunteers. Encourage management to support volunteer work and show appreciation for the services these individuals can provide. Instruct staff members to be prepared and willing to help with interviewing, orientation and supervision. Create job descriptions to help volunteers meet expectations.
4. Take the time needed to prepare recruiting materials such as brochures, flyers and a volunteer handbook. Set aside a place for volunteers to work with supplies and equipment. Finally, establish procedures and recordkeeping systems for volunteers.

Obstacles

5. Resolve potential legal obstacles. Review with your attorneys any legal and liability issues relating to volunteer activities. Install a system for evaluating the performance of volunteers and the outcome of recruiting initiatives. Obtain approval from counsel relating to your recruitment activities.
6. Make sure your staff is prepared to respond to volunteer inquiries. They must be able to speak knowingly about the organization and its objectives. Note: Even if you are not specifically recruiting, people who want to do volunteer work may contact you. Pay prompt attention to these call-ins. They should not have to call you back; show interest by reaching out to them.

Staff Involvement

7. Educate your staff on recruiting volunteers. Undoubtedly, your employees have contact with potential volunteers every day. Do they know about the opportunities available? How do they refer interested individuals? Your organization could be missing out on key recruits if your employees are not properly trained.

Types of Recruitment



Three categories – warm-body recruitment, targeted recruitment, and word-of-mouth recruitment.

Finding Warm Bodies

The "warm-body" technique is most useful when you need lots of people with no particular skill set on a short-term basis, like general staffers for a charity golf tournament.

The best way to find these warm bodies is to post printed materials anywhere large groups of people gather, run public-service announcements, and mention the need at any public-speaking engagements.



Targeted Recruitment

Define carefully what type of person you're looking for and think about what would motivate this person to get involved.

- The best volunteers make the best recruiters, so always make sure you encourage them to get out there and tell their story.
- For jobs that are particularly challenging to fill, word of mouth can be the best approach.
- This sort of strategy will provide a steady stream of volunteers if cultivated religiously. One weakness to this approach is that your volunteer base can easily become a little too homogenous.

Word of Mouth Recruitment for Volunteer Needs



It is important to communicate with different populations in the ways that are most meaningful for them.

With younger crowds, your message needs to be high-tech, flashy and immediate, while with seniors a more traditional approach is warranted.

- Pay attention to language and jargon. "Volunteer" as a term is unoriginal and overused. Try something creative, like "Experienced Fisherman Needed" to attract men for youth mentoring relationships.
- Make sure you use images in your advertisements that help people realize, based on what they see, that there would be a place for them in your organization.
- And consider how friendly your organization is to volunteer prospects. Be sure that it is easy to reach volunteer service staff directly by phone, email or walk-in.



Use Your Current Volunteers

- Create a task team to include a mix of volunteers, coordinators, staff who will work with volunteers, and management staff.
- Written job descriptions and procedures for orientation, training, supervision, evaluation and recognition are a must. Be very clear about what you want volunteers to do, and if there are parts of the job that can be tricky or stressful, let people know up front.

- Track how volunteers find your organization. This will tell you which recruitment strategies need improvement, as well as where you might want to strengthen ties.

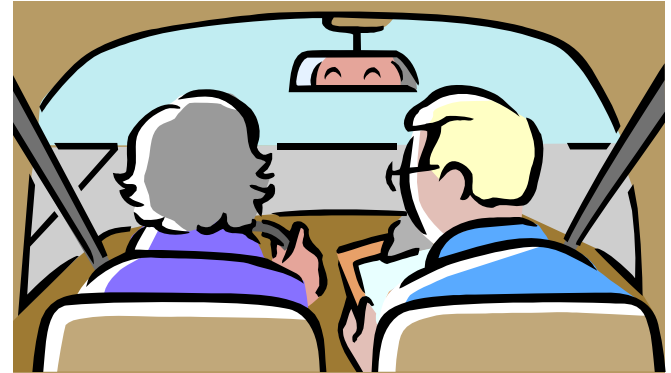


Attributes That Retain Volunteers

- **Structure**
Volunteers like to be a part of an organized group that has structure, but allows for flexibility.
- **Responsibility**
Volunteers like being one's own boss and not having to double check all decisions.
- **Reward**



Volunteers like to be rewarded appropriately for a job well done. A good program will emphasize positive rewards rather than punishment.



- **Risk**
Volunteers like a sense of
- challenge and permission to take calculated risks.
- **Warmth**
The feeling of good fellowship in the work group atmosphere is also important. It helps if a program has a prevailing mood that is friendly and informal, without cliques.
- **Support**
A good program fosters a sense of mutual support; helpfulness on the part of managers and others in the group.

- **Standards**

The emphasis should be on doing a good job.

- **Conflict**

A difference in
opinion
shouldn't be



considered a liability. Problems should be aired and resolved, not ignored. Other opinions are heard and valued.

- **Identity**

A volunteer likes the feeling of belonging to a group and being a valuable member of a working team.

- **Evaluation**

Volunteers deserve to know where they stand so the experience is a growth experience.

