

Volunteer Recruitment and Motivation

Having a successful Cleanup is a direct result of good planning, good event organization, strong community partnerships and a large, involved and motivated volunteer base. Developing your volunteer network takes time and constant “care and feeding” of this valuable resource. This section provides background information on what motivates people to volunteer, what makes for a successful volunteer program, and provides some guidelines to ICC coordinators in recruiting volunteers and expanding the volunteer network. The information presented here is not exhaustive and just because a currently used technique is not presented here does not mean it is not valid or successful.

WHAT MOTIVATES PEOPLE TO VOLUNTEER?

In many cultures volunteering is a way of life. An Independent Sector survey reported that “an estimated 83.9 million adults formally volunteered approximately 15.5 billion hours in 2000.” (1) The survey also revealed that 44 percent of adults are annual formal volunteers, and 69 percent of adults volunteer on a regular basis. Volunteering provides a variety of personal benefits and satisfaction, in addition to the benefits received by various organizations and society as a whole. Typically, people volunteer because they feel compassion for a cause, have an interest in the activity or work, want a new perspective on things, and recognize how important the activity is to the people that the volunteer respects.

People typically reported three different ways of learning about their volunteering activities. Someone asked them, they participated in an organization, or they got involved through a family member or relative.

Knowing why volunteers get involved and understanding where a program’s volunteer base is coming from makes recruiting volunteers easier for ICC coordinators. Volunteers seem to follow a basic cost/benefit analysis in deciding whether to volunteer. Benefits might include meeting a community need, the job itself (work the volunteer enjoys or would like to learn about), the people involved (Friends, family, or co-workers) or some personal benefit (philosophical or religious commitment, educational, or work experience, etc.). Costs might include the time commitment, any monetary expense, logistical complications, or even doubt that the volunteer will be able to meet their commitment.

Every volunteer has a different reason as to why they want to become involved in a particular cause or event. However, there are underlying reasons people, at different phases in their lives, seek or need volunteer opportunities. Having a better understanding of these needs will allow ICC coordinators to better anticipate what types of activities are appropriate to each age group, and the type of supervision or recognition may be required of those volunteers.

WHAT MAKES FOR A SUCCESSFUL VOLUNTEER PROGRAM?

Volunteers are the backbone to a successful Cleanup. Without a healthy, diversified and energetic volunteer force, state and country coordinators will have a harder time increasing the scope of their cleanup and getting things accomplished. For example, having dedicated zone or site captains, who participate year after year, is truly a gift to the often exhausted and overextended ICC coordinator. It takes time, however to develop relationships with volunteers that will encourage them to come back, year after year.

ICC coordinators have two major concerns when it comes to developing and evaluating a volunteer program: Are the needs of the ICC being met, and are the needs of the volunteers being met? Managing volunteers is a challenging, difficult position, but its inherent rewards make it potentially the most satisfying and significant job in the human service field.

Reasons People Volunteer (in no particular order)

1. To fill time
2. To set an example
3. To find happiness
4. To right a wrong
5. To have fun
6. To be an agent of change
7. To test leadership skills
8. To express beliefs
9. To acquire self-confidence
10. To use otherwise unused skills
11. To work as a family
12. To meet people
13. To be a good neighbor
14. To gain credit
15. To explore new ideas

Volunteer Job Description

CHANGING STYLES OF VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT

Volunteer involvement can be separated into three categories: 1) Long Term, 2) Short Term, and 3) Required Term. Recognizing the difference between these different styles of volunteer involvement can help state and country coordinators develop better volunteer "job descriptions" and recruit the best type of volunteer for the job at hand.

LONG TERM	SHORT TERM	REQUIRED TERM
Strong ties to organization; involved over a long period of time; willing to do "behind the scenes" work	Connected to cause; involved with a variety of organizations	Typically trying to meet requirement from another institution; probably unfamiliar with cause and organization
Recruited by self-commitment	Recruited by specific job, event, or friend	Motivation is extrinsic and not self initiated
Shapes own job	Wants well-defined job; concentrates on specific task	Due to short stay, low-level, well-defined job only option; does the dirty work; may resent volunteering
Motivated by affiliation and group achievement; compares self to peers; prefers organized recognition	Motivated by individual achievement; prefers outside recognition	Motivated to fulfill requirement; recognition is through release of obligation

It may appear strange to advocate the use of a written job description when referring to unpaid, volunteer assistance, but in fact the use of a clearly defined description has been very helpful in recruiting and maintaining the right type of volunteer that a ICC event requires. A volunteer job description “outlines the work that needs to be done by the volunteer...the description forms the basis for your recruitment effort because it defines the assignment, skills, abilities, and interests necessary to perform the task successfully.” (2) Volunteers must have jobs that actually accomplish something, as well as are interesting and challenging to the volunteer. Job descriptions can be specific or they can be general, depending on the type of volunteer they are targeted at. A volunteer is more likely to be successful if they know ahead of time what is expected of them. ICC coordinators may need to have several different job descriptions prepared for the myriad of tasks volunteers may be asked to perform. For example, zone or site captains will require a detailed job description that outlines their responsibilities and skills needed for the position. On the other hand, volunteers recruited to pick up trash probably don’t need a formal job description.

A volunteer position description outlines the work that needs to be done by the volunteer and defines the assignment, skills, abilities and interests necessary to perform the task successfully. Although there are a number of ways to develop task assignments, the following items reflect key components of the assignment guide.

Position Title: A specific, descriptive title that gives the volunteer a sense of identity and helps the salaried staff and other volunteers understand the assigned role.

Work Location: Where the individual will be working.

Volunteer Impact: The purpose of the overall project and/or program and how the volunteer’s work will impact the project’s outcome, clients, or mission. It is critical to identify expected impact so volunteers will be aware of the importance of their work.

Responsibilities and Duties: List responsibilities and duties that are specific and clearly define what the volunteer is expected to do on the assignment.

Qualifications: List qualifications required for the position. Include education, personal characteristic, skills, abilities and/or experience required.

Commitment Required: Commitment asked of the volunteer in terms of the minimum length of service, hours per week, and any other special requirements.

Training: Indicate nature and length of all general and position-specific training required for the assignment.

Date: The date the description was written or the date that it was most recently updated.

Volunteer Supervisor’s Contact Information: Who to call for more information about the opportunity.

Work Setting Supervision, and Training

The work setting is as important to volunteers as it is to paid workers. It is essential that a new volunteer be made to quickly feel as though they are ‘one of the group.’ A volunteer who is not welcomed and integrated in the social framework of the organization is a volunteer who will never feel as though they are part of the organization and who will rapidly separate themselves from the organization. Supervision is important to volunteers.

A good volunteer supervisor tries to proactively communicate with volunteers, or at least be regularly available to talk. The supervisor also needs to help the volunteer keep linked with the organization, updating them on events that the volunteer might have missed. Good supervision includes challenging and assisting a volunteer to meet quality standards.

Volunteer Recruitment, Screening, Selection, Placement, and Evaluation

Volunteers can be found in almost any place; the trick is to link the right type of volunteer to the right type of position. Don't take volunteers for granted once you have recruited them. Instead, view them as customers who will have needs that must be met on a continuing basis. It is also crucial to match volunteers to the type of work that needs to be done, identifying both interest and ability. Most volunteers will not continue doing work for which they are not suited.

Volunteer Recognition

All volunteers need recognition, both on an individual and organizational level. Some will prefer to be thanked by the coordinator or a fellow volunteer, some to be recognized within the corporate structure through a letter to their boss. Others will prefer to be recognized among their peers, or family, or church group. One size and shape of recognition does not fit all. *Source: 1995, Vineyard and McCurley, 101 More Ideas for Volunteer Programs*

HOW AND WHERE TO FIND VOLUNTEERS

Once you have determined what type of volunteer you need, for how long, and know what you need those people to do, it is time to start the recruitment process. There are many different techniques and strategies for identifying and recruiting volunteers. The most productive route for volunteer recruitment is one-to-one, face-to-face personal request about a specific volunteer job. This technique is even more effective if the person doing the asking is himself or herself a volunteer (which demonstrates credibility) or is personally known to the person being asked.

Who Are You Looking For?

Often ICC Coordinators have the most recruitment success when they select specific target groups within their community to recruit from. The more specifically a group can be defined the more effective a recruitment campaign is likely to be.

Where Can They Be Found?

Determine where your target audience can be found. Are there businesses they patronize, neighborhoods they live in? Are there clubs they belong to? Are there particular radio stations they listen to or newspapers they read?

How Do You Reach Them?

Decide what medium of communication to use. Should someone make a speech, put articles in the paper, hand out brochures, set up a booth, go door to door, hang up posters, or run public service announcements on the radio? This decision will be strongly influenced by where the target volunteers can be found.

What Are the Needs Of the Target Group?

Identify some of the strong motivational needs of the target group. These might include needs such as belonging, power, respect, independence, or fame. The ICC coordinator should discover what the concerns of the group are. What do they value? What causes them to take action?

What Do You Say?

Determine what to say and how to craft your message to the target group. How should the ICC coordinator craft their message to speak to the motivational needs of the target group? What kind of statement or need will they likely respond to? What kind of job would they like to do? What kind of volunteer benefits would appeal to them? What fears will need to be addressed? Once the message is crafted, test it on a small group of representatives of the target group and incorporate their suggestions.

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OBTAINING FEEDBACK FROM YOUR VOLUNTEERS

The following questions are designed to help you talk with a volunteer about their own growth and development in their volunteer position. The questions give you information and insight as to the level of satisfaction the volunteer has in their volunteer position and whether and where the volunteer might better be motivated. The questions are intended as a guide for discussion, not as a form to be completed and ignored.

Work Satisfaction Questions

- What were you hoping to

NEEDS OF VOLUNTEERS

Adolescents (Teens)

Groping for identity

Peer group members are the best recruiters

One time or short-term projects

Young Adulthood (early 20s)

Have a need for intimacy

Looking for first employment/resume building

Exposure to different careers

Adult Transition (mid 20s-30)

Internal strife

Dealing with career switches

Volunteering can indicate self-worth

Adulthood (30-45)

Settling down with independence

Providing leadership opportunities is the reward

Tangible rewards and formal ceremonies

Mid-life Transition (45-55)

The time of facing "inner demons".

Likes opportunities like the Peace Corps

Do not need the visibility, but the necessity to "give"

Middle Age (50s-60s)

Mentoring seen as civic responsibility

Attracted to opportunities to teach younger generations

Older Adulthood (70s-80s)

Find short-term repetitive assignments appealing

Like the socialization

Reaffirmation of self-worth

Nefretiti Makenta, "TITLE" in *Non Profit Times* August 1996. Parsippany, New Jersey

- accomplish in your ICC work this year?
- What were your greatest accomplishments while volunteering for the ICC this year?
- What was your greatest frustration while volunteering this year?
- What would you do differently if you were to do your volunteer work over again this year?
- What strengths, skills, or talents did you discover or strengthen this year?
- How challenging and interesting do you find your work at this time?

Personal Satisfaction Question?

- What do you find the most rewarding about volunteering for the ICC?
- What new friendships did you make through the ICC this year?
- How well do you think we accomplished our mission?
- What is your vision for what we ought to be doing to be more successful in the next five years?

Future Growth Questions

- What do you want to accomplish with your cleanup next year?
- What do you want to accomplish personally next year?
- How can we best help you accomplish these goals?
- What kind of volunteer work would most help you attain these goals?
- What training or experience can we offer you to make you better able to run your cleanup?
- How can we make your time with the ICC more fulfilling

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- 1) Independent Sector, Giving and Volunteering in the United States: Findings from a National Survey, 1999 and 2001 edition. Washington, DC
- 2) Texas Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service December 1998.
<http://www.txserve.org/mgmt/volrec/>