

MAKING THE VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE COUNT

Presented by:

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Why Would Anyone Want to Volunteer with YOUR AGENCY?

- It's all about your Mission!



What is Your Mission?

- Do you know your mission statement?
- Why is your mission important?
- Who does your mission serve?
- What do you think makes your mission appealing to (and sets it apart from) others?
- Find out what volunteers find appealing about the mission? (this could be way different than your idea)
- Without a clear mission, it is impossible to make the experience count

Is it Easy to Get Involved in Your Mission?

- Is it easy to get involved?
- Can the volunteer see the connection between what they are doing and how it relates to your mission?
- Are you accessible through local transit? Do you have transit maps or know what routes come by and when?



Setting Expectations

- What does the experience entail?
- What types of skills are needed?
- What level of skills are needed?
- How long is the opportunity for?
 - 1 time volunteer (like an event)
 - Time of day or day of week needed
 - A project
 - A season (3-4 months)
 - Long term (open ended)
- Is there training or other opportunities to learn?
- Who is the boss? Is there a different boss for different people?

Content

- It takes content for your volunteer to be content!



Defining Roles

- What is the volunteer doing?
- Is there a written description?
- Will the volunteer do the same thing every time?
- If the volunteer needs a change, how does he or she go about it?



What If?

- What if it turns out that the volunteer discovers he or she can't do the job as expected?
 - They aren't really at the skill level they thought they were at
 - They physically can't do the job
 - Their idea of a job well done doesn't match yours... in fact it's not even close
- What if the volunteer decides it isn't for them?

What If?

- Training was available
 - Would they welcome training?
 - Are they trainable?



What If?

- ❑ What if the volunteer decides it isn't for them?
- ❑ Exit Interview
 - Learn from the interview
 - Refer to other agencies when appropriate
 - End on a positive note and thank them for their service



Defining Times

- ❑ When a volunteer shows interest in volunteering with your agency, you need to be honest about the time expectations
- ❑ How many hours is a shift?
- ❑ Do you need them 1 time?
- ❑ One shift per week
- ❑ Will you allow them to give you their schedule and you will "plug them into opportunities?"
- ❑ On call
- ❑ Does your agency require a minimum commitment? (hours, shifts, weeks or months)

Defining Limitations

- ❑ Are there things they can't do?
- ❑ Does the opportunity only exist if they are there?
- ❑ Could the opportunity be an online opportunity
- ❑ Is it time sensitive?
 - Example: You have a great volunteer who hardly ever makes a mistake...but this volunteer is VERY slow. You also have a volunteer who is very quick, but they make a lot of errors. Do you use one of these volunteers and hope for the best or look for another volunteer to fill the need?
- ❑ When is it time to offer the volunteer the option to volunteer in a different capacity or step down?

Online Volunteer Opportunities

- ❑ Just a note: I don't use the term virtual volunteer to describe someone doing online work. Virtual really means not real. **ONLINE VOLUNTEERS ARE NOT VIRTUAL, THEY ARE VERY REAL.**



Always Have Group Opportunities Available

- ❑ Always try to have a list of miscellaneous opportunities for when groups come in.
- ❑ You want to make sure you can engage different types of groups.
- ❑ You want to have something available for groups that may have members who are too young to physically volunteer at your site(s)

If the Shoe Fits...

- ❑ Children under a certain age aren't allowed to volunteer on your agency site. Could they bake cookies or make hand written thank you cards?
- ❑ You most likely couldn't use a group of 100 teenagers to volunteer for stuffing envelopes, but this type of group would be great for a race, door hanger campaign or other large event
- ❑ Think about possible limitations within the group. Could you accommodate everyone in the group?

Referring to Other Agencies

- ❑ If you don't already do this, you NEED to start!
- ❑ It shows your willingness to partner with other community agencies
- ❑ When you can't serve a volunteer's needs, but you point them to another agency that can, that volunteer will not forget it and will send volunteers your way.
- ❑ This can actually build your volunteer base

Follow Up

- ❑ After a volunteer has completed their first shift, touch base with them so you know if it was a good experience.
- ❑ Call a group leader and thank them again. Ask if you can send a survey to evaluate their experience.



Continue the Relationship

- ❑ For an individual volunteer, schedule a second shift. Follow up after a second shift and schedule the magical third shift
- ❑ For groups, ask the group leader if you can include them on your group opportunities email list or ask them if they are open to volunteering again.
- ❑ Meet with HR heads to see if you can establish a continued relationship that includes volunteering on a regular basis

Volunteer Match Programs

- ❑ If businesses offer matching gift programs. Contact the HR department. Ask if they offer to their employees a list of local non-profits and confirm that you are on this list.



Saying Thank You in a Way that Hits Home

- ❑ Have a volunteer recognition program in place for your regular volunteers
- ❑ Make sure you are following that recognition program
- ❑ When a group comes in to volunteer, if at all possible, introduce them to your awesome volunteers and thank the group for coming to help in front of your regular volunteers
- ❑ Send a thank you letter to the group leader or if feasible to the entire group

The Most Important Things

- ❑ Make sure the experience is meaningful
- ❑ Make sure you thank your volunteer(s)
- ❑ Make sure that you follow up
- ❑ Make sure you invite to volunteer again
