



INVESTING IN VOLUNTEERS

A Guide to Volunteer Management

By Esther Hall

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Cover—Students make excellent volunteers. Here a student intern conducts a structural investigation at Upsala in Philadelphia.

Photo courtesy of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

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Volunteerism is very much alive in today's busy world with nearly 44 percent of Americans volunteering. The biggest population groups finding satisfaction in donating their time and talents are baby boomers and young adults. Americans over 75 and retired persons, too, are spending more time in volunteer activities. This is welcome news for nonprofit organizations whose worlds were essentially turned upside down in the 1970s when the traditional pool of available volunteers, women, entered the work force. The loss of these daytime workers forced many organizations to rework their volunteer programs, resulting in a more professional approach to volunteer management. Stiff competition among nonprofit organizations for available workers has produced higher program standards for both volunteers and volunteer administrators.

Preservation began as a grassroots volunteer movement. Many preservation organizations developed out of a small group of concerned citizens organizing to prevent the destruction of a familiar landmark. These volunteer efforts often evolved into successful nonprofit organizations with paid staff. They continued, however, to rely heavily on volunteers. In addition, numerous preservation groups across the country are run entirely by volunteers.

Today's volunteer may not be a tried and true preservationist but someone looking for a neighborhood project that can be "done in a day" and involve the whole family. The challenge is to create opportunities for interesting and meaningful work that furthers the goals of the organization and meets the needs of the volunteer.

MANAGING VOLUNTEERS

To successfully establish or revamp a volunteer program, the organization must commit both financial and human resources to the program. Volunteers are not "free" help.



"Save-A-Landmark" program brings hotel employees together to refurbish cultural landmarks across the country. Here volunteers work on the Harsson-Goyer-Lee House in the Victorian Village in Memphis, Tenn.

Photo courtesy of the Hampton Inns.

Some of the basic costs involved in implementing any volunteer program include training materials and staff time for training sessions, staff time to administer the program, and some type of recognition event or award. Even if an organization is volunteer run, these costs still apply. A volunteer or paid staff member will need to assume the role of coordinating other volunteers.

It is important to treat volunteers like paid staff members. Volunteers should be able to expect a job description outlining the duties and responsibilities of their role, a job interview, an orientation to the organization, ongoing training, clearly defined supervision including a performance review, and annual recognition. Volunteers need to be subject to and aware of standard operating procedures and policies. Many larger volunteer organi-

zations are drafting personnel policies just for volunteers so that all parties are clear about their roles from the beginning.

The needs of the organization—not the needs of the volunteer—should direct the program. Well-managed volunteer programs call for clear delineation of the employer-employee relationship. Unpaid staff members need to know their roles, as do paid staff. Clearly defined job descriptions should outline the scope of the volunteer's authority and role, as well as explaining where he or she fits in the overall structure of the organization. This kind of advance planning forces organizations to focus on their real needs while resisting the temptation to create a volunteer job for someone simply because he or she happens to be available on the second and fourth Thursday of the month.



A volunteer docent demonstrates needlework to a visitor at the Windsor Historic Farm Museum in Windsor, Me. Many small organizations rely heavily on the work of dedicated volunteers to run programs and special events.

Photo by Elizabeth Byrd Wood.

WHY USE VOLUNTEERS?

There are plenty of drawbacks to using volunteers: Someone will probably point out most of them during the planning process. There are an equally number of good reasons for using volunteers. A volunteer's commitment to an organization will only be as strong as the organization's commitment to that individual.

Disadvantages frequently identified are little commitment, high turnover rate, difficulty in firing volunteers, and excessive time required for training and supervision. Questions concerning cost effectiveness and limited accountability and control are also raised. The salary of a volunteer coordinator could be used instead to hire a program specialist. Although the disadvantages paint a dismal picture, most pitfalls can be avoided through early planning.

Volunteers can contribute substantially to an organization. In addition to enabling a preservation organization to accomplish

more with the limited funds available, volunteers create and strengthen ties to the community. These ties can advance the organization's cause and return dividends in fund-raising and public relations efforts. Volunteers also bring a fresh perspective to an organization's work and infuse new enthusiasm and energy. Developing volunteer leadership is a service both to your organization and your community. A volunteer recruited to help stuff envelopes may gain the experience and insight to become a valued committee or board member.

GETTING READY FOR A VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Think about why you want volunteers. Good public relations is not reason enough. If you cannot offer volunteers a real job to do, if you offer make-work projects, the good ones will melt away. You will be left with the ones who love to dress up in period costumes, who want to meet nice people, or who have time on their hands.

Think about exactly what volunteers would do. Writing job descriptions is a must at this point. Get a human resources professional to help you—if you haven't already learned by writing job descriptions for paid staff. Be very specific and avoid generalizations. How would volunteers help? Exactly what would a volunteer do? What are the limits of the job? Avoid using the volunteer for only the dull, disagreeable tasks that no one else wants to do. Volunteers can take their fair share of such jobs, but not all of them.

Think about what kinds of people and skills are required to do the things you need done. Where and how will you find them? Will you have to take every preservationist who offers to help? How will you choose? Who will do the recruiting?

Think about who will direct the volunteer program. "All of us" is not a good answer. Some groups assign a single staff member as a volunteer coordinator to manage every aspect of volunteer involvement from recruitment through recognition. The coordinator finds volunteers, trains and places them in job slots, supervises them, and is accountable for the volunteers' work.

In other volunteer programs, individual program and administrative staff are responsible for locating, training, supervising, and rewarding volunteers. Volunteer involvement is often confined to a specific program area, and organizational contacts may not extend beyond the staff and volunteers involved in that program.

In all-volunteer or single-staff organizations, a committee structure is established, which varies in complexity with the size of the organization and the range of activities involved. Board members commonly chair those committees geared to ongoing or special projects.

Sometimes a separate "association" is formed to support volunteer involvement, such as a Friends Council or Docents Association. Typically these groups adopt bylaws, elect officers and a board of directors or executive committee, and establish committees to accomplish the tasks related to the organization's purpose. This type of system shifts a large portion of the responsibility for volunteer management to the volunteers themselves.

Think about whether you are willing to pay what a volunteer program will cost, if it is to be a good one. You will need to take into account not just the salary of the director, but the time, thought, and continuing effort of other staff members who must train and supervise the volunteers.

Is there room in your office for volunteers to work? There is little point in recruiting clerical volunteers if you don't have a computer available or a place to sit. Fundraising or public relations volunteers who have no access to a telephone can accomplish little. Resolving these problems before the volunteer arrives will save frustration and resentment.

Prepare the staff. Working with volunteers takes time and planning, but above all, it takes an accepting, welcoming attitude. Let the staff know how volunteers are to be used so that they will be regarded as help rather than as a bother. Staff who may have never before had paid or volunteer assistance will need training in supervisory and management skills.

RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS

Effective recruiting can lower volunteer turnover and dissatisfaction. It involves use of the job description, varied recruitment techniques, and an understanding of the type of personality best suited for each volunteer position. Recruiting methods include word of mouth, the organization's website and newsletter, displays at local libraries or community bulletin boards, volunteer fairs, radio and television public service announcements, newspapers, and speaking engagements. Technology has afforded organizations new opportunities to reach out to prospective volunteers.

Which and how many forms of recruitment are used will vary with the program, the coordinator's time, money available, and needs. A planned system of recruitment, however, is an excellent aid to finding the best volunteers.

One of the best recruiting resources available is the volunteer program itself. If volunteers feel that their time and skills are being used effectively and are appreciated, they will attract others interested in volunteering their time to the program.

Members are also an excellent source of volunteers. When a new member joins your organization, use the membership application to find out if that member is interested in volunteering and where that person's interests and talents lie. If you discover that a new member is knowledgeable about certain aspects of your community's architecture, perhaps he or she can lead a walking tour or write an article for your newsletter.

Today's volunteers look for a variety of opportunities ranging from "done in a day" projects to a year-long commitment stemming from a desire to explore a new career. Special events are a good way to introduce your organization to new volunteers. If their experience is positive, they may opt for another level of service.

If your program needs volunteers from a certain population, identify someone from that group to serve as your recruiter. Ask that person to determine what techniques will work rather than just relying on blanket recruitment tactics. Perhaps someone from the business community could help your organization recruit other merchants for help with a downtown heritage festival, for example.

Many communities have organizations that operate as a volunteer clearinghouse to find and match volunteers with appropriate organizations. The United Way of America sponsors Volunteer Centers to match people who wish to volunteer with community organizations. The Junior League and other service clubs might also provide another source of volunteers.

Look closely at the makeup of your community to find interested volunteers. If there is a military base nearby, for example, military spouses might provide a good source of volunteers.

Your friends and family comprise another volunteer base. Involve your children in taking tickets at a special event. Enlist your friends to help stuff envelopes. A survey conducted by Independent Sector, an organization that fosters the national tradition of giving, found that volunteers are most effectively recruited when they are asked by someone they know—either by a friend or family member or someone at their church or synagogue.

The best advice in volunteer recruitment is quite simple: Ask for what you need. Ask loudly and often! The most common response is: "I didn't know they needed help. No one asked me."

JOB DESCRIPTIONS

Job descriptions force managers to define the crucial elements of the job and allow volunteers to evaluate honestly whether or not they can make the necessary commitment to the job. Job descriptions are just as important for one-time events as for ongoing service.

A job description tells volunteers exactly what they are volunteering for and what their obligations will be. It helps volunteers determine if they have the necessary qualifications for the position and helps them evaluate their performance over time.

Job descriptions help the organization identify the job needs of the program and the work that needs to be done. A well-written job description will help recruit and place volunteers effectively and will assist in evaluating the performance of each volunteer as well as the overall success of the program.

In developing a job description, ask yourself the following questions:

- Is this a real job? Can its usefulness be made clear and concrete to the volunteer?
- Can this job be done satisfactorily on a part-time basis?
- Can you provide support staff if needed?
- Can staff work adjustment be made or a "backstop" be built in if the volunteer's other priorities make this necessary?
- Does the job consider the varied interests and skills the volunteer may bring or the value of his or her community relationships?
- Are there possibilities for volunteer satisfaction in doing this job?
- Is it probable that the kind and/or number of volunteers required for this job can be recruited?
- Can you imagine a person really wanting to do this job?



Elderhostel offers service learning trips where participants can volunteer to work on specific projects ranging from repairing bridges at CCC camps to participating in an archeological dig. Here volunteers with Elderhostel partnered with Rebuilding Together and the National Trust for Historic Preservation to paint a home in New Orleans' historic Holy Cross neighborhood.

Photo by Walter Gallas.

WHAT MOTIVATES VOLUNTEERS?

Understanding what motivates applicants to volunteer is the key to a successful volunteer program. Most volunteers are motivated by one of three main reasons: achievement, affiliation, or power. Once you know the applicant's motivation you can greatly increase the chances of a good fit between the volunteer and his or her assignment.

Achievement. Individuals who volunteer for achievement reasons generally aspire to success in situations requiring excellent performance. Typically, this volunteer exhibits a concern with excellence, desires complete involvement, wants to outperform others, looks for a unique accomplishment, and is restless and innovative. This individual thinks about how to do a job better, how to attain goals, and how to remove obstacles.

Power. Volunteers who are motivated by power generally aspire to having influence or having an impact. Typically this person exhibits a concern for reputation and posi-

tion, wants his or her ideas to predominate, has strong feelings about status, needs to influence others, and is verbally fluent. This individual thinks about the influence and control he or she has over others and how to use it to win arguments, change people, and gain status and authority.

Affiliation. Volunteers who are motivated by affiliation generally enjoy being with others and having a mutual friendship. These volunteers want to be liked and accepted, enjoy warm friendly relationships, and have a concern about being separated from others. This individual wants to be liked and thinks about consoling and helping others.

To further illustrate these three motivations, think about a common volunteer activity, stuffing envelopes. To entice individuals motivated by affiliation, invite them to an "envelope stuffing party." To attract those volunteers motivated by achievement, ask them to participate in an "envelope stuffing contest." And to attract those persons motivated by power, appoint them "co-chairs of the mailing committee."

Keeping in mind these three motivations, how can you use this information to match a volunteer with a job that will be satisfying? If an applicant seems to be achievement-motivated, try to select tasks that allow a flexible work pace and manner, allow for help and direction from others when necessary, require errorless and efficient performance, challenge abilities and ideas, and allow for clear, unambiguous feedback about performance.

For an applicant who seems to be motivated by power, try to select tasks that allow an opportunity to direct co-workers, permit time for personal interaction while working, require opportunities to deal directly with superiors, allow personal control over work pace and work methods, and permit flexibility in leaving the work area without a reprimand.

For those applicants that appear to be motivated by affiliation, try to select tasks that allow many people to interact, require cooperation of co-workers for successful task accomplishments, allow time for personal non-task interaction while working, and permit for the maintenance of stable working relationships.

The questionnaire on page 11 will help you analyze what motivates an individual. The answers can help you and the applicant determine what job might be satisfactory for both the volunteer and the organization.

INTERVIEWING VOLUNTEERS

The interview is always a two-way street. Even if there is not a good match, it is a public relations opportunity for the volunteer to learn more about your organization. It is also the appropriate setting to clarify what the job is not, e.g., a "warm up" for paid employment. Careful interviewing will lead to successful placement of volunteers and help lower the turnover rate due to volunteer dissatisfaction.

Be flexible in your interviewing. Let potential volunteers tell their story and express ideas and then probe those areas that are important and need fuller explanation. An unvarying interview routine dulls your perceptions and thwarts the volunteer applicant.

Be comprehensive in your interviewing. Make sure that you get all the information you need to determine an applicant's qualifications. Explore technical and social skills. Other desirable traits to look for include good communication skills, a positive attitude, and enthusiasm.

Provide the applicant with information about the position. You will need to explain the job duties and responsibilities. In addition, you will need to ask the individual whether or not he or she is interested in the job.

After the interview, especially if a number of volunteers are being interviewed, write down a summary of the interview, including an assessment of the applicant's qualifications. Make a note of any unusual talents or hobbies that you might want for future reference.

ORIENTATION

The first orientation to your organization is a critical one. If it is handled well, with complete and clear information, the resulting positive impression will last a long time and will ensure a continuing and growing interest.

During the orientation, give the new volunteers an explanation of the purpose and function of the organization. Why does it exist? What does it do? What are the results of its work? Is it always successful? Where does it fit in the total pattern of community service?

Provide volunteers with a clear understanding of their contribution to the organization. How do they help? What does this mean to the paid staff? What does it mean to the organization's constituents?

GUIDELINES FOR ORIENTATION

1. History of the organization
2. Purpose and objectives of the organization and its role in the community
3. Administrative structure
4. Funding
5. Personnel policies
6. Rules and regulations governing volunteers

Give the volunteer a tour of the organization's office and/or properties. Introduce the volunteer to your staff.

Give volunteers printed information that they can use in explaining, and maybe happily boasting, about their work to family and friends.

Clearly explain the demands to be placed on the volunteer such as regular attendance and promptness, personal appearance and behavior, organization rules and regulations, and the role of the organization's supervisor.

TRAINING

Training for routine jobs is probably best provided on the job. A staff member can explain and work along with the volunteers until they gain knowledge and confidence.

Working with constituents usually requires some preliminary learning which most volunteers welcome. Explain why constituents come to your organization and how the organization helps the community. Discuss how the volunteer's contribution can be a part of the total service. Discuss difficulties the volunteer may encounter.

Many agencies have a manual for use by their volunteers. It might include a map of the building or site, if finding the various areas is difficult. It should spell out all of your rules, regulations, and requirements—at least those that apply to volunteers. It might include names of staff members the volunteers should know. In addition, each volunteer needs specific information about schedules and dos and don'ts for the particular job. Volunteers need information about the little things that will make them feel comfortable and at home in the building—rest room locations, where to eat lunch, and where to leave valuables, for example.

Training is never finished. In-service training for volunteers is as important as it is for staff. Workshops, films, discussion groups, and lectures contribute to sustained interest and continuing growth. If the staff is reading an interesting new book or discussing a controversial article about the kind of work your organization does, share this with the volunteers too.

BASIC ELEMENTS OF A VOLUNTEER TRAINING SESSION

1. An overview of the position for which training is given.
2. General characteristics of the group of individuals who the volunteer will be assisting.
3. Defining objectives to be met through volunteer assistance.
4. Specific activities to be carried out to meet the objectives.
5. Materials, games, and ideas that the volunteer will use.
6. Defining the volunteer's role in relation to paid staff.
7. Definition of the staff member's role in relation to the volunteer.

Not all volunteers want or will use this degree of involvement, but there are always some who, five years from now, will be members of the city council or, in some other way, opinion-molders, and who will make very good use of any knowledge you can offer them.

Recent studies have shown a troubling increase in the level of volunteer turnover. Volunteers will not spend their time or lend their talents to organizations that don't manage them effectively.

DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE VOLUNTEER STAFF RELATIONSHIPS

Volunteers work with paid staff in a variety of ways. The three working relationships that occur most frequently include the *direct service volunteer* who is assigned to a staff person who supervises the volunteer's work and possibly that of several others. The *administrative volunteer* is usually the board president or the chief executive of an organization. And finally, a volunteer can chair a *special committee*, such as for a special event, and work with the staff person assigned to the event.

Each relationship is different because of its place in the organization's structure and the task to be done. All three relationships, how-

ever, have several things in common. Each relationship depends on mutual respect between the volunteer and staff, a mutual understanding of the organization's goals and of the task to be done, a clear definition of each person's role and responsibility, a clear understanding of procedures or rules necessary to the task, and frequent opportunities to meet and share in planning, evaluating, and deciding on future courses of action.

Sometimes volunteers are seen as a threat to a staff position or looked on as being more of a nuisance than a help to the program. When setting up a volunteer program, be sure to consult with your staff. Staff involvement functions as reassurance that the volunteer will not take over paid staff territory by presenting volunteers in their proper perspective. It may be that staff members are hesitant to work with volunteers because of past experiences that have been less than desirable. The chances are that if the staff sees a well-managed program with well-defined jobs and responsible recruitment, they will accept a volunteer as a viable part of the program. Volunteers are also the beneficiaries of a well-managed program.

SUPERVISING VOLUNTEERS

Supervision is often equated with coaching. By providing guidance and encouragement to volunteers, the supervisor encourages successful work performance. For many managers, this form of supervision is easy. Giving positive reinforcement for productive accomplishment comes naturally.

The difficult part of management involves confronting volunteers whose performance is less than expected. The last thing a manager wants to do is reinforce negative performance. Managers, however, often unintentionally reinforce inappropriate behavior through both verbal and nonverbal messages.

Be sure to chat with volunteers on an informal basis at least four times a year to see how things are going. If a volunteer fails to do what was promised, contact that person immediately. Usually the person would simply rather be doing another task. If you notice a faithful volunteer behaving differently, he or she is probably bored or tired of the job and

doesn't know how to tell you. Regular contact and feedback are a must and should be recorded in each volunteer's file. This makes it easy to provide job references and recommendations. Feedback is also helpful in redesigning job descriptions or training if needed.

Everyone tends to put off tasks that are unpleasant. Most people want to get along with the people they work with on a daily basis. Managers have the same need. For this very reason, managers tend to ignore behavior that needs to be corrected. When we ignore inappropriate behavior, we are telling the volunteer that this behavior is acceptable. We rationalize our inaction by saying things like, "It won't happen again," or "He was just having a bad day." Rarely does unacceptable behavior correct itself. If allowed to continue, these situations tend to get worse, not better. When finally confronted, the volunteer may actually be surprised. No one had ever told that volunteer that his or her performance was unacceptable.

If a volunteer's actions are unacceptable or inappropriate, target the person's performance, not the individual. The corrective process should allow volunteers to maintain or even enhance their self-esteem and produce a more satisfactory job performance.

If there is no solution to the problem it may be necessary to reassign the volunteer. As with paid staff, unpaid staff may be terminated for violation of policies and procedures that are clearly defined.

Remember, meeting the needs of the volunteer is usually not the primary goal of your organization. Your real goal is to provide a service to the community.

Some volunteers have needs that the organization cannot fill. Such volunteers sometimes sidetrack an organization from meeting its goals. Frequently, persons with tremendous needs for belonging or attention join an organization as volunteers. Because they are always seeking fulfillment of these needs, they cannot be effective workers. If the organization were to meet these volunteers' needs, it would take too much time from the organization's actual mission. It is

THE CORRECTION PROCESS

- Confront the problem as soon as possible. Inappropriate behavior gets worse when left unchecked.
- Talk with the volunteer in private. Praise in public; correct in private.
- Give the volunteer positive strokes. Let the person know you recognize his or her good performance.
- Specifically identify the unacceptable behavior. Using qualifiers only minimizes the behavior in the eyes of the volunteer.
- Explicitly state the desired result. We are often told what we did was wrong, but rarely given the supervisor's expectations about how to do it right.
- State your belief in the volunteer's ability to correct the unacceptable performance and reinforce his or her value to the organization.

important to recognize when this situation occurs and not allow the volunteer to prevent the organization from doing its work.

Do not be afraid to say we don't fit. Do not get caught in the trap of believing that your organization has something for every volunteer or of promising a kind of fulfillment in a job that probably does not exist.

Do not be afraid of a having a volunteer resign. If volunteers discover that a job does not fit their needs, or if you confront volunteers with problems that you see, be prepared for the volunteers to leave the organization. You have not failed if every volunteer is not perfectly happy. You have failed if volunteers prevent your organization from carrying out its mission.

Set a limit. Decide for yourself when the agency can no longer afford the time it takes to meet the particular needs of a volunteer. Stick to this limit.

Be aware of the results of your efforts to meet volunteer needs. In trying to meet these needs, we often remake volunteer job descriptions to the point where major adjustments are required in our own and other volunteers' jobs. Awareness of the

total volunteer picture and the implications of each change made can help us know when to stop revamping for a volunteer.

RECOGNITION

Recognition is an often overlooked but essential part of every volunteer program. Volunteers are not paid a salary, usually receive no expense reimbursement, and often spend money as well as time to do their jobs. It is often assumed that giving freely of time and money to help others is all some volunteers need to be satisfied and happy. Most volunteers, however, need positive reinforcement for the value of their work in order to continue to be a vital force.

In order to keep morale high, turnover rate low, and receive maximum benefits from the volunteer program, it is important to recognize the contributions of volunteers. Include volunteers in staff meetings and other activities when appropriate. This helps to demonstrate that the volunteer is as important to the program as the paid staff. Volunteer input can be as valuable as that of the rest of the staff.

Volunteers should be recognized for the work they do and receive feedback on how well they do their jobs. This can range from being warm and friendly toward the volunteer on a day-to-day basis to holding an annual awards banquet. The organization's newsletter is an excellent way to recognize the efforts of volunteers. Feedback can be given after each task is completed or at regularly scheduled intervals during the project.

Fitting the award to the individual is important. Observe the volunteer and decide what type of award would be best received. Some programs will attract individuals who respond well to an awards banquet or receiving a letter of thanks at the end of the project. Others simply want to know how well they are doing their jobs without much fanfare.

Many preservation groups host an annual party or event to thank volunteers. Volunteers at house museums often receive discounts or gift certificates for the property's gift shop, if there is one. Other organizations remember to send a birthday greeting to volunteers as a way to offer additional thanks.

Of course, how much money is available affects what method of recognition is used. Regardless of the type of recognition—a banquet, a plaque, a certificate of recognition, a thank-you letter, or a frequent pat on the back—it is important to recognize volunteers in a way that is meaningful to them personally.

VOLUNTEER BOARD MEMBERS

Ideally, encouraging volunteers to rise to leadership positions will produce a continuing source of hardworking, knowledgeable, committed board members. As leaders they will have an intimate understanding of what the organization does and why, as well as a clear grasp of the human and financial resources needed to get the job done. Many board members, however, for a variety of reasons, are recruited through other channels and can contribute much to the organization in the form of skills, expertise, and community and business connections. The organization has a right to expect a board member to work as hard as any other volunteer. It is also responsible for providing the kinds of training, information, and support appropriate to that position.

Board members drawn from outside the organizational fold require orientation about goals, objectives, programs, policies, and procedures. They need to know in advance how much time they should expect to spend in meetings and when these meetings are scheduled. And they should know if they must contribute financially. Don't let the cash contribution be a surprise at the end of the fiscal year. If a two-year capital campaign is about to begin, which will call for continuous personal fund-raising contacts by board members to the business community, say so. New board members shouldn't discover during their first meeting that the organization is in the middle of a dire fiscal or directional crisis.

THE VOLUNTEER JOB PORTFOLIO

The range of volunteer jobs is limited only by the imagination of the organization involved. Volunteers can fill a wide range of administrative positions, conduct educational and outreach activities, handle professional duties, and manage large-scale special events. With sound planning, volunteers can tackle the same responsibilities as a paid staff person.



Special events, such as conferences, exhibits, and fundraising galas, require many hands to make them successful. Volunteers at the National Trust's annual National Preservation Conference help with registration, tours, and educational sessions.

Photo courtesy of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

BOARD MEMBERS ARE VOLUNTEERS TOO

The same basic steps should be followed in managing a successful, productive board of directors. They are volunteers too and need the following structure:

- job descriptions to clarify expectations
- interview to determine a match between the organization's mission the prospective volunteer's interests.
- orientation to provide an overview of the organization
- evaluation of board member's effectiveness
- recognition of retiring board members and thanks to entire board.

Following are examples of ways to use volunteers in a broad spectrum of tasks. Some special considerations related to particular kinds of volunteer involvement are noted. The resource guide at the end cites references to materials that deal at greater length with specific concerns of specialized volunteer assignments.

ADMINISTRATIVE VOLUNTEERS

Administrative volunteers represent both extremes of the volunteer hierarchy. Members of the board of directors or trustees are on one end of the spectrum, making policy decisions that affect the goals and direction of the entire organization. The other end is anchored by volunteers who perform routine clerical, behind-the-scenes tasks.

Board members rarely appear during regular work hours; clerical volunteers often work at those times when staff or other volunteers are available to supervise their efforts. Organizations typically go out of their way to accommodate the schedules of board members; administrative volunteers are usually expected to fit their schedules to those convenient to the organization.

The most traditional type of administrative volunteer is the clerical volunteer, available during regular working hours to answer telephones, stuff envelopes, type, collate and

staple newsletters, and carry out other office tasks. Retirees may be a good fit as they have solid skills and availability during business hours. Many volunteers enjoy this kind of work and the office camaraderie that comes with it. Care should be taken to integrate them into the staff environment and to show them appreciation.

Creative alternatives do exist for recruiting volunteers to assist with routine tasks. High school students taking business courses frequently must complete a work-study program that could be adapted to an organization's clerical needs. College and junior college students studying retailing could be volunteers with gift shop operations. Another option is recruiting volunteers who have specifically requested this kind of assignment through a local volunteer clearinghouse.

It is important that staff or volunteers managing these projects be readily available to deal with problems or questions. Their visibility will serve to prevent volunteers from feeling that they've been saddled with a project that no one else will do. The more tedious the project, the more important it is to emphasize its value to the organization.

Another category of administrative volunteers includes those who assist in cataloging and indexing records, photographs, slides, books, artifacts and other types of historical documentation, such as library aides or registrars of collections.

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH VOLUNTEERS

Education and outreach workers are another traditional type of volunteer. While docents, guides, interpreters, and tour leaders who provide information to the general public are usually associated with the indoor museum environment, a similar function is performed by volunteers who conduct neighborhood tours. In the past these volunteers were primarily limited to speaking with groups or individuals during daytime hours. Opportunities for evening and weekend volunteers have expanded through increased public demand for these services and the need to accommodate education volunteers unable to participate in daytime programs.

Volunteer training for a typical education program is structured around lectures, required reading, and practice delivery sessions. A novice guide can work with an experienced volunteer during the training period to learn how to present information geared to a specific tour group. Remember that not everyone interested in the organization and its work will be interested in or comfortable speaking to groups. And some volunteers may enjoy talking with adults but not schoolchildren.

Outreach volunteers can also gather information or provide services. Door-to-door canvassers can conduct attitude surveys or identify perceived needs throughout a neighborhood or business district. Volunteers can contact residents to organize crime prevention campaigns or neighborhood improvement projects. Many neighborhood organizations provide services to the elderly and infirm through volunteer outreach workers.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Special events serve a wide variety of purposes, including educational, social, fundraising and publicity functions. Most would be impossible to manage without the help of scores of volunteers.

Fortunately, volunteers for special events are among the easiest to recruit and train. A relatively short-term commitment for an array of jobs is required, and all efforts culminate on the same target day or days. Special events frequently attract substantial media coverage—a plus for volunteers as the coverage gives their efforts, or at least the results of their efforts, public visibility.

Economies of scale apply in recruiting volunteers for large special events. Social, service, or other community organizations can be approached to handle specific functions. Volunteer committee chairs can be charged with recruiting their own friends and acquaintances to carry out tasks. Media public service announcements may attract volunteers.

All these new short-term volunteers will not only provide services during the special event but will also have an opportunity to learn more about your organization and its

work. They can be added to mailing lists for membership and fundraising campaigns and for subsequent special events. A tracking system, no matter how simplified, should be developed to keep in touch with this new-found wealth of manpower.

Volunteers who participate only in special events need especially to be recognized. Begin with a thank-you note, even if it must be a form letter, to each participant to reinforce the positive feeling engendered as part of the special event. Some more personal form of recognition is advisable for committee chairs and others whose efforts were substantial. Many organizations celebrate volunteer contributions with a party or reception.

While extensive training for volunteers at a special event may not be necessary, at a minimum they should know:

- name and purpose of the sponsoring organization,
- name and identity of the person to whom they will report,
- responsibilities of their task, and
- limits of their authority.

This information can be conveyed through a general meeting of volunteers or through the committee chairs or an information packet or flyer.

Special events come in all shapes and sizes and with as many purposes. There are grand openings, fairs, house tours, exhibits, heritage festivals, park cleanup projects, and house repair drives. The examples below are only a few of the ways to use volunteers for special events.

ALL-VOLUNTEER OPERATIONS

A complex structure of volunteer committees is common in large organizations with few or no paid staff. Smaller unstaffed or single-staff groups tend to have a single focus and are less likely to operate through a system of committees. In either case, the following examples demonstrate that tremendous accomplishments are possible with strong volunteer organization and minimal support from paid staff.



Volunteers with the Arizona Site Steward program are selected, trained, and certified by the state historic preservation office and the Governor's Archaeology Advisory Commission. The volunteers monitor archeological and paleontological sites and report on any vandalism to the land manager.

Photo courtesy of the Arizona Site Steward Program.

YOUTH VOLUNTEERS

Youth volunteers can and will do almost anything that adult volunteers can. High school and college students have the particular advantage of being available at times when working adults are busy.

Many states require community service for graduation from high school providing a steady stream of energetic volunteers. These students have a chance to explore potential careers through relevant hands-on experience.

Internship and work-study programs offer consistent, intensive volunteer activity during daytime hours, with the bonus of academic training in a skill area that can be applied to the volunteer assignment. Work-study programs can generate clerical or bookkeeping assistants. Interns can range from retailing students working in gift shops to museum education students developing interpretive tours to business administration students who might take on a marketing plan as a class project.

Youth are also source of seasonal volunteers. When adult interest is low—people are on vacation or overwhelmed by holiday activities—students often have time on their hands. Salaried summer jobs that offer experience in chosen career areas may be scarce, making an interesting volunteer position an attractive option. Students also are a frequently untapped volunteer pool for holiday special events that coincide with school vacations.

Using young volunteers also enables your organization to influence and educate this group about the importance of preserving neighborhood, historical, and cultural resources, while emphasizing the need for volunteer service in the community.

There is almost no end to the ways to use volunteers. As preservation and neighborhood organizations become increasingly imaginative in the face of shrinking financial resources, the range of volunteer activities grows. While some volunteer jobs may become more exotic, the rules of planning, training, and motivation still apply.

The need for volunteers to help achieve the goals of preservation groups and neighborhood organizations continues to increase. Efficient and effective programs to attract and manage those volunteers must be tailored to the human, environmental, and financial resources of individual organizations. Whether the service your organization offers is to individuals or the community, whether the recognition received is private or public, or the commitment is for one day or one year, you can find people who are willing to help. To reap the benefits of volunteer involvement, your organization has only to create the framework to stimulate and reward that desire.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Esther Hall has been a community volunteer for more than 40 years and has worked in volunteer administration for over 30 years. She is the past president of the North Carolina Association of Volunteer Administrators and has been a consultant for the National Trust for several years in the area of volunteer management.

RESOURCES

The Points of Light & Hands On Network is a national nonprofit offering a wealth of information, publications, and resources specific to managing volunteer programs. For more information go to www.pointsoflight.org.

The American Association of Retired Persons provides valuable advice to older volunteers on what to expect from the volunteer experience, as well as advice to organizations on the special needs and abilities of older volunteers. For more information go to www.aarp.org/makeadifference/volunteer.

The American Association for Museum Volunteers, an umbrella organization for volunteer groups in a variety of museum settings, seeks to promote professionalism among volunteers. For more information go to www.aamv.org.

The American Association for State and Local History publishes several publications on managing a volunteer program. For more information go to www.aaslh.org.

Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts provides free and low cost arts-related legal assistance to nonprofit arts organizations. For more information go to www.vlany.org

Internal Revenue Service Publication 526, "Income Tax Deductions for Contributions," provides an exhaustive review of both deductible and nondeductible out-of-pocket expenses associated with volunteer service. Copies can be obtained from your local IRS office or online from <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p526.pdf>.

The United Way provides programs for prospective volunteers and for organizations interested in working with volunteers. Contact your local United Way for information on local programs or go to www.unitedway.org.

TIPS TO STAFF ON WORKING WITH VOLUNTEERS

1. **Treat volunteers as paid staff.** There is no need to beg them to perform their volunteer duties. If you are asking them to do something out of the ordinary or something beyond their regular duties, ask if they have the time and interest in doing it. Then give them the right to refuse.
2. **Recognize the value of volunteers in providing a different perspective.** If a staff member works on a project every day or at frequent intervals, it is often easy to overlook subtle changes that might be more noticeable to someone working on the same project on a less frequent basis.
3. **Volunteers can be a source of fresh ideas.** A staff member who is familiar with a certain approach might welcome a new idea if it is presented in a non-threatening way. Volunteers coming from a different perspective and with different experiences can be a source of creativity and expertise, depending on the volunteer/staff relationship.
4. **If you arrive at a novel approach to a volunteer situation, share it with other staff members.** It might be the shot in the arm that someone else needs.
5. **Volunteers are not working for free.** Their rewards come in forms other than monetary; job satisfaction is one of the most important. Volunteers need positive feedback and positive criticism that will make them more effective and enthusiastic. Let them know when they are doing a good job.
6. **Be approachable to your volunteers.** If you give the impression that you don't like being bothered with a lot of trivial questions, chances are that volunteers will stop coming to you. If you honestly feel that the questions are trivial, sit down and discuss the general situation and why there are so many unanswered questions. If the questions are valid and just hit you at the wrong time, encourage the volunteer to jot down questions and set aside a certain time for all questions.
7. **Honest, open, two-way communication is the key to valuable volunteers.** Someone once said: "There are no bad volunteers—only volunteers in bad situations." Often the worst situations are caused by some kind of communication breakdown: the volunteer was not fully aware of what was expected or what the policies were or who to call in an emergency. If staff members put themselves in the place of volunteers, it will improve the flow of information to the volunteer. Don't presuppose anything.
8. **Remember that volunteers are an important source of community support,** not only in direct goods and services contributed, but as important citizen advocates in the community for your organization.

The Corporation for National and Community Service is the national volunteer agency of the federal government. For more information go to www.nationalservice.org.

Various colleges across the country have volunteer management courses and programs. Check with community colleges and universities in your area for workshops, institutes, credit and noncredit courses in volunteer management.

The American Society of Association Executives (ASAE) offers numerous publications relating to nonprofit management. For more information go to www.asaecenter.org.

Energize, a national training, consulting and publishing firm, offers numerous publications on using volunteers. For more information go to www.energizeinc.com.

The National Trust's Preservation Books series includes several booklets that address working with volunteers. For more information go to www.preservationbooks.org.

MOTIVATION ANALYSIS

Each of the following questions has three choices. Choose the one in each question that most closely fits your own motivation. Remember, there are no wrong answers. Place an "X" before the letter of each choice.

1. ☐ a) When I do a job, I seek feedback.
☐ b) I prefer to work alone and am eager to be my own boss.
☐ c) I seem to be uncomfortable when forced to work alone.
2. ☐ a) Status symbols are important to me.
☐ b) I am always getting involved in group projects
☐ c) After starting a task, I am not comfortable until it is completed.
3. ☐ a) I work best when there is some challenge involved.
☐ b) I would rather give orders than take them.
☐ c) I am sensitive to others—especially when they are angry.
4. ☐ a) I am eager to be my own boss.
☐ b) I accept responsibility eagerly.
☐ c) I try to get personally involved with my superiors.
5. ☐ a) I am comfortable when forced to work alone.
☐ b) I prefer being my own boss, even when others feel a joint effort is required.
☐ c) When given responsibility, I set measurable standards of high performance.
6. ☐ a) I am very concerned about my reputation or position.
☐ b) I desire to outperform others.
☐ c) I am concerned about being well liked and accepted.
7. ☐ a) I enjoy and seek, warm, friendly relationships.
☐ b) I attempt complete involvement in a project.
☐ c) I want my ideas to predominate.
8. ☐ a) I desire unique accomplishments.
☐ b) It concerns me when I am being separated from others.
☐ c) I have a need and desire to influence others.
9. ☐ a) I think about helping and consoling others.
☐ b) I am verbally fluent.
☐ c) I am restless and innovative
10. ☐ a) I set goals and think about how to attain them.
☐ b) I think about ways to change people.
☐ c) I think about my feelings and the feelings of others.

Motivational Analysis Key

- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|--|
| 1. a) Achievement
b) Power
c) Affiliation | 3. a) Achievement
b) Power
c) Affiliation | 5. a) Affiliation
b) Power
c) Achievement | 7. a) Affiliation
b) Achievement
c) Power | 9. a) Affiliation
b) Power
c) Achievement |
| 2. a) Power
b) Affiliation
c) Achievement | 4. a) Power
b) Achievement
c) Affiliation | 6. a) Power
b) Achievement
c) Affiliation | 8. a) Achievement
b) Affiliation
c) Power | 10. a) Achievement
b) Power
c) Affiliation |

TEST YOUR PERFORMANCE

A Self Assessment Guide for anyone responsible for working with volunteers

1. Do you always think out exactly what you want a volunteer to do?
 - a) always
 - b) sometimes
2. When a volunteer writes or telephones offering help, do you
 - a) reply at once?
 - b) reply after a few days?
 - c) reply after two weeks? or
 - d) because you are not in need of volunteers do you make no reply?
3. Do you take the time to tell your volunteers about
 - a) your organization—its aims and achievements?
 - b) office hours?
 - c) when best to reach your organization?
 - d) who's who in your organization?
4. Do all of your volunteers know how to claim reimbursement for their expenses?
 - a) yes
 - b) no
5. Do you encourage volunteers to feed back information to you
 - a) at regular intervals?
 - b) when they need help?
6. Do you give volunteers adequate guidelines on when to seek your advice and help?
 - a) yes
 - b) no
- 7.1 Do you listen to volunteers' comments?
 - a) yes
 - b) no
- 7.2 Do you encourage volunteers to express their views?
 - a) yes
 - b) no
- 7.3 Do you take up their suggestions for giving better service, or where this is not possible, explain why?
 - a) yes
 - b) no
8. Do you always remember to thank your volunteers?
 - a) after a particularly good job has been done?
 - b) on leaving?
 - c) on offering their services?
9. Do you know your volunteers' addresses and telephone numbers and have you a written record of these?
 - a) yes
 - b) no
10. Do you try to find out why volunteers leave when no reason is given?
 - a) yes
 - b) no
11. Do you provide:
 - a) some preparation for the job?
 - b) some continuous training?
 - c) suggestions for visits of observation, books to read?
12. Do you:
 - a) provide opportunities for suitable volunteers to progress to take more responsible jobs?
 - b) discover their special skills—then make the best use of these?
13. Do you help volunteers to feel part of your organization by:
 - a) including them in staff meetings when appropriate?
 - b) having a volunteer notice board/newsletter?
 - c) insisting on good work standards?
 - d) informing them of plans and progress?

How did you do?

1. a) 2 b) 1	3. a) 1 b) 1 c) 1 d) 1	5. a) 1 b) 1	7.1 a) 1 b) 0	7.3a) 3 b) 0	9. a) 1 b) 0	11. a) 1 b) 1 c) 1	13. a) 1 b) 1 c) 1 d) 1	30-37	Excellent
2. a) 3 b) 2 c) 1 d) 0	4. a) 2 b) 0	6. a) 2 b) 0	7.2a) 2 b) 0	8. a) 1 b) 1 c) 1	10. a) 1 b) 0	12. a) 2 b) 2		25-29	Good
								20-24	Fair
								0-19	Poor

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