

Recruiting Volunteers

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Introduction

Let's face it: not everyone enjoys searching out individuals to help do a job, or in other words, asking someone to volunteer. Recruiting volunteers can be a time-consuming process. Unfortunately, it often becomes a case of looking for a "warm body", somebody, anybody, to get the job done.

Why Recruit?

- to help spread the work among members
- to keep the organization alive
- for new ideas
- to get the work done

Recruiting is:

Getting the right person in the right job, with the right skills at the right time.

A volunteer program is a two-way street: it must meet the needs of the organization and the needs of the volunteer. Everyone wins!

Recruiting volunteers should be a process rather than a problem! Securing volunteers should be done through a total **recruitment process** rather than by taking the first individual who comes along.

This Factsheet will help you better understand and use the **5 Easy Steps to Successful Recruiting**.

The recruitment of volunteers in your organization, whether it be to get someone to chair the annual banquet or run for president, should not be handled any differently from the recruitment of paid staff members.

Step 1 - Define The Job

The first step in recruiting volunteers is to define the type job to be done. This will help ensure that the organization gets the right person to fill the position. Individuals responsible for recruiting and all potential volunteers should have a clear understanding of what the job involves.

Step 2: Determine Job Qualifications

Once the job has been defined, qualifications required to do the job can be developed as a way of identifying potential volunteers.

A Job Description is a useful tool that lists all the qualifications needed to do the job. This step clarifies, for all those involved, the expectations and requirements of the volunteer position. It will give volunteers an idea of the part they play in the total picture of the organization.

A complete volunteer job description should include:

Title

This will be the volunteer's identification. Give this as much prestige as possible.

Purpose

A general statement that identifies what the job is and why it is necessary.

Responsibilities

List each duty and responsibility of the job. Be as specific as possible.

Qualifications

List the skills, knowledge and attitudes you seek. Be careful not to over-qualify the position - you could lose some excellent volunteers.

Relationships

Who the volunteer reports or is accountable to.

Time Commitment

Expectations regarding time demands of the job. Be specific! i.e., weekly, monthly, long-term basis, flexible, self-determined.

Benefits

What's in it for the volunteer? What is to be gained personally by doing the job?

Remember: Recruiting volunteers before you define the job to be done and qualifications needed, is like trying to square dance before the caller begins!

Step 3: Develop a List of Potential Candidates

Now that you understand what the job is and what sort of person is required to do it, you need to list potential candidates who may be able to do the job.

Where To Look?

Refer to sources such as your membership lists, other community organizations, welcome wagon, schools, or places where people gather (e.g., church meetings).

Useful Tip

Have your members complete a "Window of Work" when they join and refer to this information when recruiting the right volunteer for the right job. It is a primary means of locating a special place for your volunteers within the organization.

Don't forget to have your members occasionally update this valuable information. This simple tool can help to quickly identify individuals with particular skills, knowledge and connections.

Example:

Window of Work Name: John Doe

Glad Gifts	Quests	No-No's
Special skills, talents, interests you like to use	Areas you would like to learn more about	Please don't ask!
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • typing • talking to people • writing • working with youth • administrative duties • square dancing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • computers • history of organization • chairing a committee • bookkeeping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • canvassing for funds • public speaking
Things you do well and enjoy doing. Don't hesitate to list something, you'd be surprised how your talents can be utilized.	List areas of interest you may not have the skills to perform but you would enjoy learning about	Anything you really don't want to do

Adapted from Ivan Scheier, Yellowfire Press, Colorado, 1986

Remember You are not always going to find the perfect, experienced, highly qualified candidate. You should rank potential candidates based on how well they meet the required qualifications. Additional training may be an option. Be flexible, but try to select the best person for the job.

Step 4: Interview the Volunteer

This is probably the most difficult step in the process because of the fear of rejection on the part of the volunteer. However, if you've followed steps 1 to 3 of the recruitment process, then you can be assured that the person being approached is the right person for the job. In most cases, people will be flattered just to be asked.

Interview Tips:

When: As soon as possible

Where: In person at the candidate's home, office or a convenient location.

What: Have all the materials you need with you (e.g., job description, by-laws, objectives or purpose of the organization).

Who: Up to three members of recruitment committee.

A small committee reinforces the volunteer's perception that he/she has been chosen by an appropriate process, will be supported by members of the organization, and was selected because of his/her qualifications to do the job. Having more than one interviewer also ensures that all points are covered during the interview.

If you are recruiting someone for a position that must be filled by an election, (i.e., president, treasurer), you will need to explain the situation carefully. Ask the volunteer if he/she would be willing to fill an alternate position if someone else is elected.

Step 5: Appoint the Volunteer

At the end of the interview, to ensure both parties understand, summarize any decisions and actions that have been agreed upon. Once volunteers have said Yes, shake their hand and congratulate them on their decision.

It may be necessary to:

1. Have a formalized agreement, signatures, swearing-in.
2. Offer additional training.
3. Provide the volunteer with tools for doing the job (i.e., by-laws, meeting minutes, director's manual).

Once volunteers have agreed to take on positions, you will want to keep them. You can do so through additional training, reward and recognition, cooperation, and innovative programming.

Additional Recruitment Tips

- Get all active volunteers involved in thinking up new methods for recruiting. Pool these ideas.
- Use every available source - radio, television, newspapers and personal contacts.
- Offer stimulating, in-depth orientation sessions.
- Have current volunteers tell their story at meetings or gatherings of membership.
- Try to think what would interest YOU in volunteering.
- The best volunteer recruiters are volunteers who are happy with your organization.
- People are attracted to programs that utilize positive, honest, enthusiastic appeals.
- Be interested in your members, not only as volunteers but as individuals.
- Don't over-recruit. Volunteers will lose interest if they have signed up to help and there isn't a job for them.
- Involve volunteers in decision making. Make certain they feel they are an important part of the organization.
- Recognize their efforts. Saying "thanks" goes a long way.

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Final Thoughts

If you are a member of the nominating committee, the president or chairman of the organization, or if you belong to a special committee to recruit people for a specific job or program, your job is to recruit volunteers. Using an effective recruitment process will help to ensure that the organization's needs are being met and your members are satisfied volunteers.

A satisfied volunteer will

- do a good job for the organization
- have only good things to say about your organization
- give your organization a good reputation
- recruit volunteers by word and example
- be committed and enthusiastic

Remember:

There is no such thing as a bad volunteer. Just the right person in the wrong job!

Sample Job Description - ABC Agricultural Society

Title: President

Purpose: Manage the business of the ABC Agricultural Society; ensure programs are developed and implemented to fulfil the mandate and to promote a proper image of the society.

Responsibilities:

- chair regular meetings of executive/ board/general membership
- prepare meeting agenda in advance with Secretary
- be the contact for other community organizations
- be an ex-officio member of all committees
- guide goal setting and program planning
- ensure a good volunteer management program is in effect
- ensure effective liaison between district and provincial organizations
- ensure grass root opinions are expressed through resolutions

Qualifications:

- interest in people
- ability to communicate
- ability to delegate responsibility
- ability to run meetings, involve people, plan effective programs

Relationships:

- responsible to executive, board and general membership
- communicate with District and Provincial representatives

Time Commitment:

- one year
- attend monthly executive and board meetings
- attend district and annual meetings

Benefits:

- increased knowledge and skills in running effective meetings
- personal satisfaction
- opportunity to meet new people
- visibility in community/organization
- opportunity to effectively promote the goals and image of the society
- opportunity for advancement to district/provincial organization

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