

Best Practices

Working with Volunteers

Recruiting, Orienting & Training and Supervising

*Summaries from Pittsburgh United Way volunteers book
by Randy Strothman*

The following includes ideas, research and concepts summarized from three chapters of the United Way handbook, **Good Neighbors, Nonprofits and Volunteers**.

RECRUITING

3 recruiting techniques:

1. Direct: personal, face-to-face
2. Indirect: using the media of publicity
3. Delegated: for short term projects, with volunteers recruited by another organization

from **11 Motivational Tips** article: be motivated yourself, be clear/honest, be positive, ask

from **1987 American Red Cross research** (article)

- public belief that volunteering is a good thing to do; people volunteer to make a difference
- involve community leaders in recruiting 'new' volunteers (eg. minorities)
- best method of recruiting is to simply ask one-on-one
- 'hands on' opportunities are easier to recruit for than telephone solicitation, etc.
- emphasize altruistic reasons to volunteer, rather than personal benefits
- 'personal attachment' is good, eg. a friend or the volunteer experienced the benefits of ____
- show how your organization is 'community-based' ie local

from **Recruiting Volunteers for the Long Haul** (article)

- break up a big job into smaller ones handled by a 'team'
- advertise to saturate the community
- targeted recruitment, too... what are the common factors among current volunteers?
- solicit 'friends'... former clients, their families, friends and relatives... to 'give back'
- use volunteers to recruit volunteers--person-to-person recruitment is most effective
- offer a 30-day trial period

from **Recruiting for Diversity** (article)

- organization should reflect the community it serves
- find the 'bridges' into the community, eg. the leaders
- people who are asked to volunteer are 3 times as likely to do so as those not asked
- African-Americans, Latinos, 18-24 year olds, and 65+ are four times more likely to do so, with a "yes" rate of 90%!

ORIENTING & TRAINING

Training relates to a specific job.

Orienting concerns the agency as a whole. Orient to: programs, goals, clients, policies, the Big Picture

What do you say after you say hello? (article)

- orientation is an ongoing process; need to meet the needs of both the organization and the volunteer

Types of orientation

- to the organization, including updating procedures
- to the service/ department, including importance and basic values
- to the job, including responsibilities, authority, tools, staff support, reporting, appraisal;
management support is critical to increase readiness to learn; it should be visible to the volunteer

Presenter's Guide: The Nine-step Model (article)

- | | | |
|------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. recruitment | 2. interview | 3. placement |
| 4. acceptance | 5. first day | 6. orientation session |
| 7. on-the-job training | 8. 30-day followup | 9. ongoing communication |

- lots of information about 'getting ready' for the orientation here

Consider a **Volunteer Agreement Form**

- *Organizational agreement*
 - provide adequate information, training & assistance
 - provide diligent supervision... and feedback
 - respect skills, dignity and individual needs of volunteers
 - be receptive to comments from the volunteer
 - treat the volunteer as an equal partner
- *Volunteer agreement*
 - perform to best of ability
 - adhere to rules and procedures
 - meet time and duty commitments

Preparing for the Volunteer's First Day (article)

- first day will have a lasting impact on long-term commitment
- welcome them warmly, including at a reception
- prepare the work well and ahead of time
- provide good, initial instructions; write out basic procedures
- remain accessible to the volunteer
- review performance and provide feedback
- thank the volunteer and verify next time/opportunity

SUPERVISING

Tips for Supervising Volunteers (article)

supervision is an issue of human productivity, not a pay check
(studies show it's not about money)

"What spurs them on is their enjoyment of their job assignment, feeling recognized by those in authority, feeling some control over their work, and other intrinsic motivators."

people want:

- fairness
- support
- a degree of independence
- feedback
- clear instructions
- loyalty
- respect
- a pleasant manner
- recognition

unique aspects of supervising a volunteer

- it is inconsiderate to waste a volunteer's time
- they deserve a clearly designated work space
- they need accessibility to a supervisor or mentor
- it is important to update them on changes, new things
- volunteers are allowed to say "no"
- break down tasks into 2-5 hour shifts
- recognition should be continuous
- correct poor performance
- expect the best, skilled performance

What Makes an Effective Volunteer Administrator? (article)

Basic answers from 6 experts:

- volunteer 'ownership' of the program
- empowering the volunteer to make decisions
- eliminate staff vs. volunteer mentality
- communicate well with all constituencies about volunteers
- formalize the volunteer job, including description, opportunities for 'promotion', etc.

Run your volunteer program like a business, including high qualifications for volunteers

Evaluation of performance is essential

People volunteer to 1) meet people, 2) contribute to a special cause, 3) learn new skills.

Read between the lines to determine the appropriate 'pay check' for each volunteer

Involve staff in creating job description., recruitment, screening, orientation, training

Communication about change is critical

Empowering the volunteer: giving up control without giving up standards

Good supervision requires:

- open communication between supervisor and volunteer
- clearly defined responsibilities for each
- sensitivity to the things that motivate individuals
- a firmness in pointing out mistakes... letting them know when actions are not acceptable
- a willingness to listen to volunteers' ideas

Benchmarking is a process for searching out best methods, best practices