

VolunteerMatch
Learning  Center

engage
the
volunteer
of the
future

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What are we talking about?

- Moving beyond “Volunteers Needed”
- How do volunteers find you? How can you find them?
- Creating the work
- Finding the right volunteers
- Evaluating your success
- What’s next?



“Volunteers Needed”

What does your volunteer program look like to a volunteer? Volunteers have a choice!

- Are your opportunities task based or collaborative?
 - One size does not fit all volunteers
- Do you have clear roles and expectations?
 - Volunteers want to know the impact and make good use of their time.
- Can you identify the “right” volunteer for the role or your organization?
 - It’s as important to know when to say yes as it is to learn to say no.



This is not your mother's volunteering

Shifts in generations create a new model

- Volunteers hope to make an impact
 - Volunteer task lists replaced by meaningful, targeted work, skills based
 - Meaningful to the volunteer, important to the organization
- Volunteers need flexibility
 - Does not imply that they can't be dependable, reliable, accountable
- Volunteers want to understand
 - Answer the question "Why?"



How do volunteers find you?

80% of Volunteer Coordinators tell us the “Word of Mouth” is their #1 recruitment method

What are your volunteers saying about your organization? What can you do about it?

Pros and Cons of “WoM”

- You can create a positive experience
 - Meaningful and important
 - The right volunteer in the right job
 - Saying no politely and professionally
- Make it easier for volunteers to share
 - Arm them with information
 - Engage through social media
 - Don't keep them in a silo



Pros and Cons of “WoM”

- Passive
 - You can’t make your volunteers tell their friends, but you can encourage them
- Depends on earned marketing/media
 - Easier now than ever – but it’s just as easy to share a negative experience
- Doesn’t bring in volunteers who don’t have a connection or know who you are

How can you find volunteers?

VolunteerMatch by the numbers:

95,507 Active opportunities nationwide

9,496,042 Connections since 1998

3,500 Average referrals a day

Around 300 during peak hours

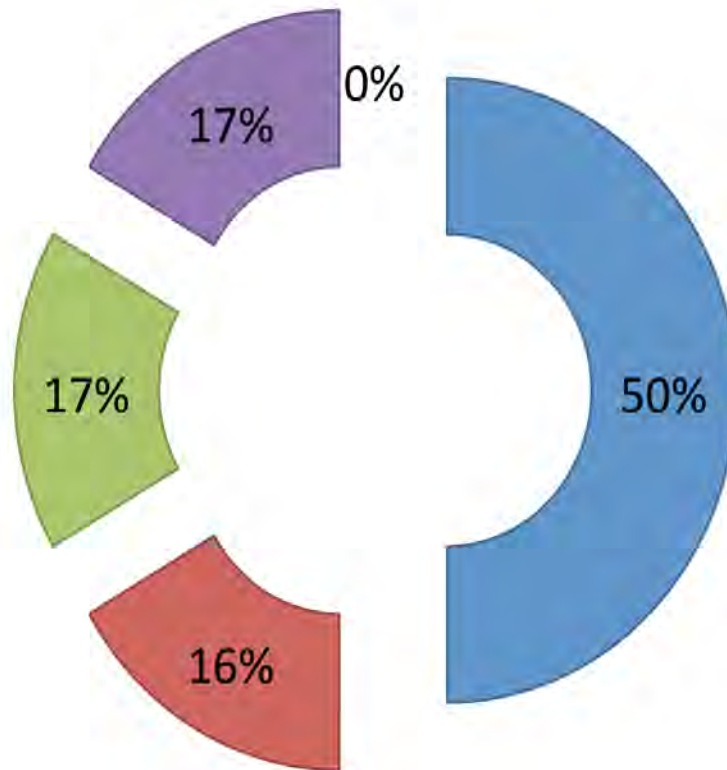
2-3 Referrals for each visitor

Lots of volunteers don't have a strong idea about where or how they want to volunteer.

They are looking for a opportunity to make an impact and find a cause they care about. (79% and 82% Hart 2010)



Why Didn't You Take a Library Opportunity?



- Non-Library Opportunity Matched My Skills/Interest Perfectly
- No Library Opportunities Near Me
- Library Opportunities Didn't Interest Me
- Did Select Library, Never Heard Back



Did Your Library Volunteer Opportunity Lead to Other Forms of Support?

- 60% told friends about what the library has to offer
- 30% introduced friends to volunteer opportunities at the library
- 10% gave money to support the library
- 5% asked friends to give money to support the library
- 5% attended a rally or other meeting in support of the library



Where are you looking now?

- Consider each recruitment channel
 - Who would you expect to recruit there?
 - What opportunity or message would be right for this channel?
 - How successful has this channel been in the past?
- Which opportunities or roles are harder to fill?
 - Who would be/is successful at this role?
 - What makes them the “right” volunteer
 - Think about where you might find others with
- Think about community partnerships
 - Are there channels or communities that you’re overlooking now?

Create a Recruitment Plan

- Introduce your program and your work!
 - Set the stage – tell your story
- Have a “virtual” conversation
 - Answer the question “what do volunteers do at your organization?”
- Prioritize the information you share
 - What does a volunteer need to know to decide if they’re the right volunteer for your program?

Find the right volunteers!

When inviting volunteers to participate in your organization finding the right fit becomes even more important

- Know who you want
 - Comprehensive position descriptions: skills, experience, traits or characteristics
- Create a strong foundation and manage expectations
 - No bait and switch
 - Policies and procedures manual, NDA, Letter of agreement



Find the right volunteers!

- Screen volunteers
 - For skills, but also for characteristics and fit
- Understand why no is not necessarily a negative outcome
 - Meaningful work
 - Right fit for the position and the organization
 - Focus your time on supporting the right volunteers.

Keys to Creating Volunteer Engagement

- Develop work that is meaningful to the volunteer and important to the organization.
- Create a connection between volunteers, clients and your mission
- Establish the foundation necessary to support a diverse program of volunteer engagement
- Know and share the impact of the work volunteers do

Create the right opportunities

- Ask why?
 - Why does this work matter, why would someone want to volunteer for this opportunity?
- Incorporate responsibility and accountability
 - Set and manage expectations for all stakeholders
 - Be clear about decisions that can be made, made with consultation, and must be brought to supervisors
- Think creatively
 - What could you accomplish if you weren't limited to the time and talent of paid staff?



Think about different opportunities

Just because someone can't make it to your office doesn't mean they can't contribute.

- Portable opportunities
 - Project based, skills based, possibly virtual
- Virtual opportunities
 - Done from anywhere, maybe skilled based, but not necessarily
- Peripheral opportunities with follow up
 - Involvement on any level can lead to more impactful engagement



Start with a plan

What will your volunteer corps look like in 5 years?

- What do you envision your program looking like?
- What will it look like if you just maintain it?
- Who are your stakeholders, and how are they involved now? Who/how would you like them to be?
- Start with evaluation and build evaluation points into your plan.

Evaluate!

- What's working now, and what's not?
 - Surveys – volunteers, paid staff, clients
 - Informal conversations, interviews, town halls
- Solicit feedback on the program, process.
 - Brainstorm opportunities for meaningful engagement
- Don't abandon volunteers or paid staff
 - Create an ongoing plan to support, evaluate, problem solve as roles/programs change
- Follow up on surveys and interviews – year over year or as programs evolve



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Things to Think About

- You don't have to change everything right now
 - Identify the priorities or critical positions
 - Start with small changes or clarify the foundations
- Invite volunteers to take on leadership roles
 - Volunteers want to tell you what they like (and don't like) about your program
 - Invite your superstar volunteers to take the lead
- Share your milestones and successes with the organization
 - Manager, leadership, co-workers and, of course, the volunteers!



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Resources

Learning Center

Find upcoming webinar dates, how-to videos and more

<http://learn.volunteermatch.org>

Volunteer Engagement Blog

Visit Engaging Volunteers, our nonprofit blog

blogs.volunteermatch.org/engagingvolunteers/

Upcoming Related Webinar Topics:

- Where do I go from here? Engage Volunteers in New Ways
- Developing a Strategic Plan for Volunteer Engagement
- Build Staff Buy-In for Volunteer Engagement



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