

Engaging the Volunteers of the Future

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?

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"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.

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Volunteer History Learning Center

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?"

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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?

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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

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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

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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)

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Why Didn't You Take a Library Opportunity?

Reason	Percentage
Non-Library Opportunity Matched My Skills/Interest Perfectly	50%
No Library Opportunities Near Me	17%
Library Opportunities Didn't Interest Me	16%
Did Select Library, Never Heard Back	17%

2013/2014 Library Survey Results, Carla Lehn

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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

2013/2014 Library Survey Results, Carla Lehn

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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?

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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?

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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

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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.

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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

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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?

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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

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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.

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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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VolunteerMatch Learning Center 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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Thanks for attending!

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