

VOLUNTEERS: Best Practices

Teresa M Norton nortrod@sbcglobal.net

how to recruit - how to engage - how to troubleshoot - how to manage, plan and coordinate

MYTHS

1. Volunteer work is only that which staff doesn't want to do
2. Volunteers are free
3. Volunteers want only what you want
4. You can never have too many volunteers

TRUTH 1: Volunteers are a mission critical resource:

- serve a core strategic function; can help organization address priorities
- can lead to increased membership, donors,

TRUTH 2: Volunteers are an investment

- Cost of swag, meals, mileage, staff time to manage, background check, training and more.

TRUTH 3: Volunteers are motivated for many reasons which varies by age/stage of life. [See list below.](#)

TRUTH 4: Goldilock Rule: you want to have it 'just right'

Too many- volunteers feel unappreciated have a bad experience lose them

Too little- event/organization suffers, volunteers get burned out or have a bad experience

REASONS TO VOLUNTEER

Youth

motivated by **community service**, **skill acquisition**, interest in **learning** a career or school requirements, club activities affiliate with cause-based organizations.

Young Adults

civic-minded and motivated by social justice and **causes**, to **meet people**, have fun, test out **career options**, be recognized, be part of team; **work with a mentor**

Adults

Develop or **utilize personal leadership** ability, **career transition**, develop new skills, receive professional training, be creative and to have fun, **provide mentorship**.

Retirees

stay connected to community, **share knowledge**, learn new skills, stay active, and want to give back, **provide mentorship**.

Corporate and Business Groups

work for **community involvement**, **team building**, community image, service opportunities and lend their **skilled human capital**.

FUN FACT: National Rate of the value of a skilled volunteer for 2019 \$25.43/ TX \$25.10 per hour

VOLUNTEERS: Best Practices

Teresa M Norton nortrod@sbcglobal.net

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Prepare for Volunteers

- Identify service opportunities and define positions with clear job descriptions
- Provide reasonable shift lengths and times based on the tasks; overlap schedules to allow time for volunteers to update each other from shift to shift
- Determine staffing level- Goldilock rule. Establish minimum and maximum for each task.
- Identify policy and liability issues includes waivers, background checks, minimum age, level of supervision needed.
- Determine Record keeping system: quantitative/qualitative measures
- Develop Volunteer onboarding process: registration, screening, assignments, training, communication strategy, evaluation.

Recruit

- Target recruitment for various positions- jobs requiring longer training time recruit earlier & staff with skill-based volunteers. Fill these and other critical positions first before opening up the other positions requiring less skills – you can fill with last minute registrants.
- Find like-minded groups, clubs, corporate, college, professional groups, alumni associations, schools, Boy/Girl scout troops, Jr League, Young Professionals, Senior Source, AmeriCore, etc.
- Community Service Hours- High Schools, church youth groups and Sororities/Fraternities and National Honor Societies require volunteer hours. As do court appointed volunteer hours. Check with Voly.org
- Application process - Consider WIFM- what's in it for me (the volunteer). What incentives do you provide? T-shirt, meal, mileage? Free performance?
- Screening and Orientation process

Engage

- Match volunteers to opportunities
- On-the-job training
- Feedback for continuous improvement

Recognition

- Swag
- Thank you! verbal/notes/emails
- Recognize continued service
- Volunteer Event formal recognition w/ staff

Retention

- Create a good match to the position
- Build partnerships with businesses and like-minded organizations to retain skilled volunteers
- Report achievements to the volunteers
- Communicate regularly with volunteers
- Celebrate success e.g. end of shift, end of event, meet and greets