



Marketing Your Volunteer Program To Recruit Volunteers

LOOKING AHEAD: Mobilizing Sources and Resources for the Future

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Human services must remain humane. It is therefore necessary to analyze present trends and plan action steps for now and for the future. It is incumbent upon the human services administrator to take the lead for the careful mobilization of sources and resources, so that clients, patients and all consumers of services can be assured individualized, ongoing, quality services.

It is characteristic of our society to consider available human resources as persons who are known—persons who have served in a variety of ways over a long period of time. It is generally uncharacteristic of most administrators to look beyond and wonder, "What could be available if it becomes necessary and desirable to recruit more persons to do the job?" It is therefore important for the human services administrator to search out, know about and tap into additional and new resources and sources.

Why has this become so necessary?

1. Because the urgent pressures to be

more effective and creative are relatively recent.

2. Because often what is "out there" is not known and there is not enough experience to analyze and detect the sources and resources that might be easily available.

3. Because work is done in traditional ways, and change is initiated or welcomed only when absolutely necessary. It is a kind of collusion with the past.

4. Because we believe in or assume that we are working in stable systems, when indeed most systems are unstable. That is, most organizations are changing not only the organizational structure, but also the very foundations on which they are built, as well as their funding patterns, in constant, rapid and complex ways.

Available are persons who may be full-time or part-time employees and persons who are job sharing. Other resources include volunteers—young, middle and older, both men and women. They may be old time, dependable, ongoing volunteers, or they may be those who are relatively new and who consider themselves temporary. They include persons of all racial, national, religious and ethnic backgrounds, as well newcomers to these shores.

Also available are professional as well as unemployed persons. The human resources that can be tapped are all people who are willing to work and help others and/or can be motivated to involve themselves in services to others.

Confrontations and Opportunities

It is important to analyze some of the confrontations as well as the opportunities that face the human services administrator as she or he studies the picture of human resources utilization:

- There are large pools of unutilized or underutilized human beings, which means untapped energy, wisdom and time.

- As diverse populations come into communities, they must be involved as service providers rather than only as consumers of services.

- Unemployed or underemployed persons need and want to be involved.

- Physically, mentally or socially at-risk persons can also be recruited.

- There are more people who have discretionary time, but they do not necessarily know what opportunities there are for using this time. Indeed, many people do not know that they are really needed and wanted by human and social service programs.

The opportunities that these confrontations afford the human services administrator include the following:

- Collaboration with diverse systems, organizations, persons and groups.

- Retraining and helping people now active in the system to change their skills and update their knowledge and perceptions.

- Exercising a different style of leadership, such as functional leadership.

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shared leadership, temporary leadership and co-leadership.

- More open and flexible communications across the lines rather than only in the vertical, hierarchical pattern that is common in human services and other systems.

- Consideration of changing the type, variety and quality of services and/or programs offered. Some systems are altering their names as well as their missions to provide services in a changing society with changing values and needs.

- Analysis of alternative ways and choices. It is important to search out all possible sources and resources that may be available, to think "new," to develop different patterns of service, and to develop different textures of service providers.

Risks Involved and Skills Needed

Risk is an opportunity that can involve innovation, creativity, courage, adventure, wonderment and lack of certain predictability of outcome. There are a number of risks that should be taken, and there are some concomitant skills that need to be developed or enhanced.

1. There is the risk of different utilization patterns, which means the willingness to break with tradition and initiate change, and at the same time to learn how to handle the resistance that is an inevitable part of change. Different utilization patterns mean that those who are to be affected by changes need to be involved in influencing the way those changes take place.

Skills Needed. The skills necessary to deal with these risks include the ability to diagnose and then develop the organization. It is important to understand the variety of structures and patterns that could be developed to carry out a particular mission. It helps to be able to either call on researchers or develop the skills of action research so that fact finding *before* the change can be useful and productive.

Another needed skill is one of conflict utilization. Conflict releases and harnesses important energies if it can be heard by

all sides, if win-win solutions are sought and achieved, if third-party interventions are utilized. Then the conflict outcome becomes a positive, useful, growth-producing process rather than a hostile and debilitating one.

Certainly communication skills need to be expanded, including the management of meaning, be it written, verbal or non-verbal. It may be vertical, matrix, diagonal or in some other meaningful direction, including out of the system and into the community.

Handling of role conflicts becomes increasingly important. Every volunteer and staff person is involved in multi-roles, changing roles and multi-loyalties. This includes improving communication with other organizations, religious groups, family groups and the governmental and corporate sectors.

Implementing team work, rather than focusing on role differences, is important in maintaining sound volunteer/staff relationships. A relatively new emphasis is on the skill of transition management. It is important to help persons transit from one life situation to another. Transitions are moving from the "no longer" to the "not yet." Many organizations are in transit. So are the individuals within those organizations, and these changing and unstable situations must be understood and discussed.

It is also important to develop volunteer personnel policies and records. These should be planned by a joint volunteer and staff group. Such records facilitate the availability of data that can be utilized to refer persons from one system to another, and to document the kind and quality of work accomplished. The personnel policies also help make clear the system's ground rules. In many places it is thought that volunteer and staff records should be lodged in a human resource department.

2. Another risk is the teaming of volunteers and paid persons in a variety of patterns. It is time to think beyond volunteer/staff relationships and look at the utilization of human beings in order to deliver a given, clearly defined service. This may

take different combinations of volunteer, volunteers and professionals, professionals, para-professionals and volunteers, interdisciplinary teams, as well as cross-systems teams. These combinations may be ongoing, or they may be temporary, but the core of these groups and teams is to utilize the beauty of difference to produce a better product. If teams are to function smoothly, it is imperative to have clear job descriptions and clear lines of accountability and responsibility.

Skills Needed. Among the skills that are needed is the need to understand the changing power balances, the opening of turfs heretofore closed, the facts that relationships will be altered. There is also the need to help persons who are involved in changing relationships understand that, and perhaps to have additional training in the new ways of work.

As new teams are developed, it is necessary to learn how to handle resistance, lack of skill, knowledge of available resources and supports, the ambivalence to share knowledge and turfdoms, and the natural competition between persons.

The human services administrator can initiate training for the skills of problem solving and team building of all the persons involved. The administrator is the key to this kind of professional development. Indeed, if such teaming is developed, it is helpful to have a skillsbank, resource file and records of time spent, accomplishments and knowledge of all persons involved. Such systems must be simple and easy to use, and available to all persons.

3. Another risk is to utilize more pluralistic resources. It cannot be emphasized too often that it is absolutely necessary for today's human services administrator to know and to know how to tap into the pluralistic resources of the community. The easy way is to utilize the people who already are involved who can recruit people just like themselves. The risk is to go beyond the incumbent group and consciously seek persons with different backgrounds, different values, different skills and time availabilities.

Handling of role conflicts becomes increasingly important. Every volunteer and staff person is involved in multi-roles, changing roles and multi-loyalties. This includes improving communication with other organizations, religious groups, family groups and the governmental and corporate sectors.

Skills Needed. Useful skills are community analysis and organization, as well as a large repertoire of interviewing skills—both one-to-one and group interviewing—and the ability to collaborate with other systems in the community. Special training may well be needed here.

4. To take risks, adequate funding must be insured. Therefore, it is necessary to find creative funding sources and resources. As funds are differently distributed and many old-time sources are no longer available, new ways of keeping funds coming are essential if a system is to survive.

Skills Needed. The skills of resource development should be part of the administrator's tool kit. Finding ways to discover new approaches to old sources, as well as discovering and harnessing new resources, becomes essential. It also means finding individuals and groups and integrating them so that they can be utilized as supporters, as well as initiators, of new funding ideas and actions.

5. It is necessary to learn to utilize new and different emerging technologies. This includes multi-media as well as computers and word processors.

Skills Needed. The important item here is to know what is needed to streamline a particular system and/or service, as well as to know what is not needed.

The knowledge most useful now is how to tap into the resources of persons who know these technologies intimately, and can advise and consult on what would be necessary to acquire, what the costs are, what alternatives exist, and how staff and volunteers can integrate new technology into ongoing systems. Specialized consultation and training are usually required to make persons "technology friendly."

6. Learning new ways of recruitment, training and maintaining of volunteers and staff is vital to the lifeline of a system. If the administrator and the decision-making body are clear on what the goals of the system are, the next step is to design an action plan for achieving those goals. Whether the system operates on a two-, five-, or ten-year plan, it usually becomes abundantly clear that additional and different groups and persons need to be involved to achieve new goals. It calls for recruiting from new places and spaces.

Skills Needed. Much needed are presentation skills, particularly by human services administrators. This includes the ability to represent rationale and to consider the feasibility of the use of volunteer/staff teams for such groups as top management, union leadership, community organizations, the corporate and academic worlds. It becomes important, therefore, to have both knowledge and skill in the use of the appropriate media for presentation to particular population targets and groups.

Other useful abilities are how to design, plan and conduct productive meetings of all kinds, including orientation, training, recognition, support and separation meetings as well as board, committee and annual meetings.

7. The last risk is planning for identification, utilization and development of future resources. As goals and plans are made, it becomes important to establish the kind and number of persons needed to implement them. So often adequate plans are made, but there is a lack of analysis of how to implement those plans and an inability to choose the appropriate persons and paths to get the system working to-

ward achieving the objectives and goals that have been outlined. Often systems focus on pain and problems of the present, rather than possibilities and visions of what can be.

Skills Needed. Necessary skills include careful selection of appropriate persons to be involved, orientation and training in future planning and in the missions of the present and the future.

Another useful skill here is to know ways to involve the recruited persons so that they can feel satisfied and productive in helping the system move from ideas to actions.

The Pay-Offs

What are the pay-offs, the positive results of improved utilization of human resources? Pay-offs may happen rather quickly, even before all the goals are achieved. They include the following:

- Increase in the quality of human services
- More financial resources
- Increased and more varied human resources
- Volunteer and staff participants feeling better about themselves and their contributions
- Confrontation of traditions
- New perspectives, ideas and actions
- Increased energy and creativity
- More democratic ways of work
- Increased involvement of everyone who cares

In the humane human service organization, there will be a stronger version of democratic visions translated into actions. The administrator will be the leader, the initiator, and the key implementer of new ways of work supported by enthusiastic staff and volunteers.