

# BUILDING EFFECTIVE VOLUNTEER COMMITTEES



by

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Janie Millgard, Editor  
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Editor: Janie Millgard  
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# DEDICATION

To Jim Long, whose  
constant support and  
advice exemplifies the  
truest meaning of  
"teaching".

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Janie Millgard - for editorial patience at  
3:00 a.m.  
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Floyd Bunt - who makes the troubled waters  
calm

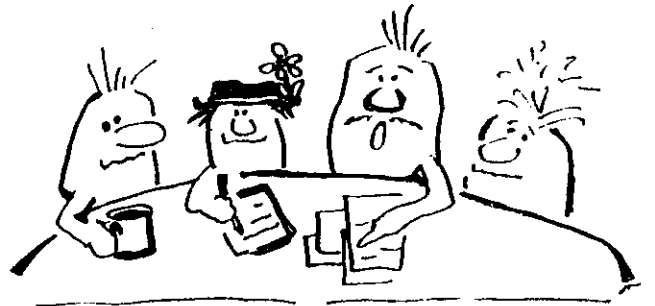
## Table of Contents

	Introduction	4
Step I	Roles and Responsibilities	6
Step II	Analysing the Needs	15
Step III	Writing Committee Guidelines	18
Step IV	Committee Member Assignments Is The Right Person on the Right Committee	24
Step V	Recruiting the Right Members	28
Step VI	Planning/Accountability	39
Step VII	Measuring Accomplishments	49
Step VIII	Evaluations	55
Step IX	Recognition	62
Step X	Motivation and Staff Responsibilities	68

## Introduction

Why is there such a glaring difference between the knowledge that strong committees can build strong volunteer organizations and the reality that in many volunteer organizations, committees are its weakest link? How can staff and volunteers build strong committees for Advisory Groups and Boards of Directors?

Everyone working with volunteer organizations states that the committee is the backbone of the organization. They further admit that committee work is often less than adequate. Chairpersons frequently are poorly trained and do not know the importance of their role as a meeting leader. Agendas are rare. The work of the committee is often not in "sync" with the goals of the parent body. Committee members frequently complain about the length of time spent in meetings and the lack of accomplishment at those meetings. When asked, members cannot describe the functions of their committee and/or its accomplishments.



This manual outlines a ten step process to build committee strength and effectiveness. It combines theories of adult education, marketing, and motivation. It begins with a process to define the roles and responsibilities of types of committees.

Step II describes techniques for determining which committees are needed. Step III offers a method of writing guidelines and job descriptions. Next is a method to ensure that the right people serve on the right committee. The critical job of recruiting and nominating people is Step V. Step VI outlines a method of planning and assigning responsibilities from goal setting to individual tasks. Techniques to measure accomplishments of a committee is the next step. Step VIII suggests ideas to evaluate the work of the group and individuals. Step IX reviews formal and informal recognition methods and the last section deals with the importance of a positive motivational climate.

The book has short narrative sections describing each step. At the end of each section are forms to assist staff and committees to begin the process. The forms are designed for easy copying. There is a bibliography that can help a volunteer or staff member further enhance their skills.

Committees are only as good as the people and plans that guide them. This book is designed to help volunteer managers plan for effective committees.

## STEP 1

### Roles and Responsibilities

Committees are the backbone of strong volunteer organizations. The effective use of volunteers in partnership with staff brings about needed programs in service agencies throughout the United States. When committees understand their role, have a clearly defined direction, an enabling staff, and organized and experienced leadership, there are no limits to their effectiveness.

Committees are not all created equal. A Board of Directors or Advisory Committee can create committees to research and recommend policies, participate in a planning process, or carry out functions that impact people who receive service.



Committees can be continuous with membership that changes on a regular basis, or can be assigned a specific task of short term duration.

Committees with narrowly defined focus may only meet once or twice. Finance Committees recommend budgets; Curriculum Committees advise school officials on the content of course offerings; Recruiting Committees plan the efforts to attract new members.

The Board of Directors of a non-profit corporation has the legal responsibility to see that a program or service is



provided. Committees are usually of three types: 1) Standing committees of the Board named in the by-laws, such as the Finance Committee or Public Relations Committee; 2) Ad Hoc committees to assist with special projects within a specific time; 3) Operational committees, usually formed by staff, carry out the most direct functions of an organization. These might include such committees as recruiting, training, or special events. Volunteers serving on operational committees report to staff. (See Form 1A)

Advisory Boards or Committees, usually serving at the pleasure of a governmental body, do not have legal authority. Their sub-committees are of two types. 1) A standing committee that carries out continuous functions such as nominations for membership or 2) Ad Hoc Sub-Committees appointed to research and make recommendations to the Advisory Board.

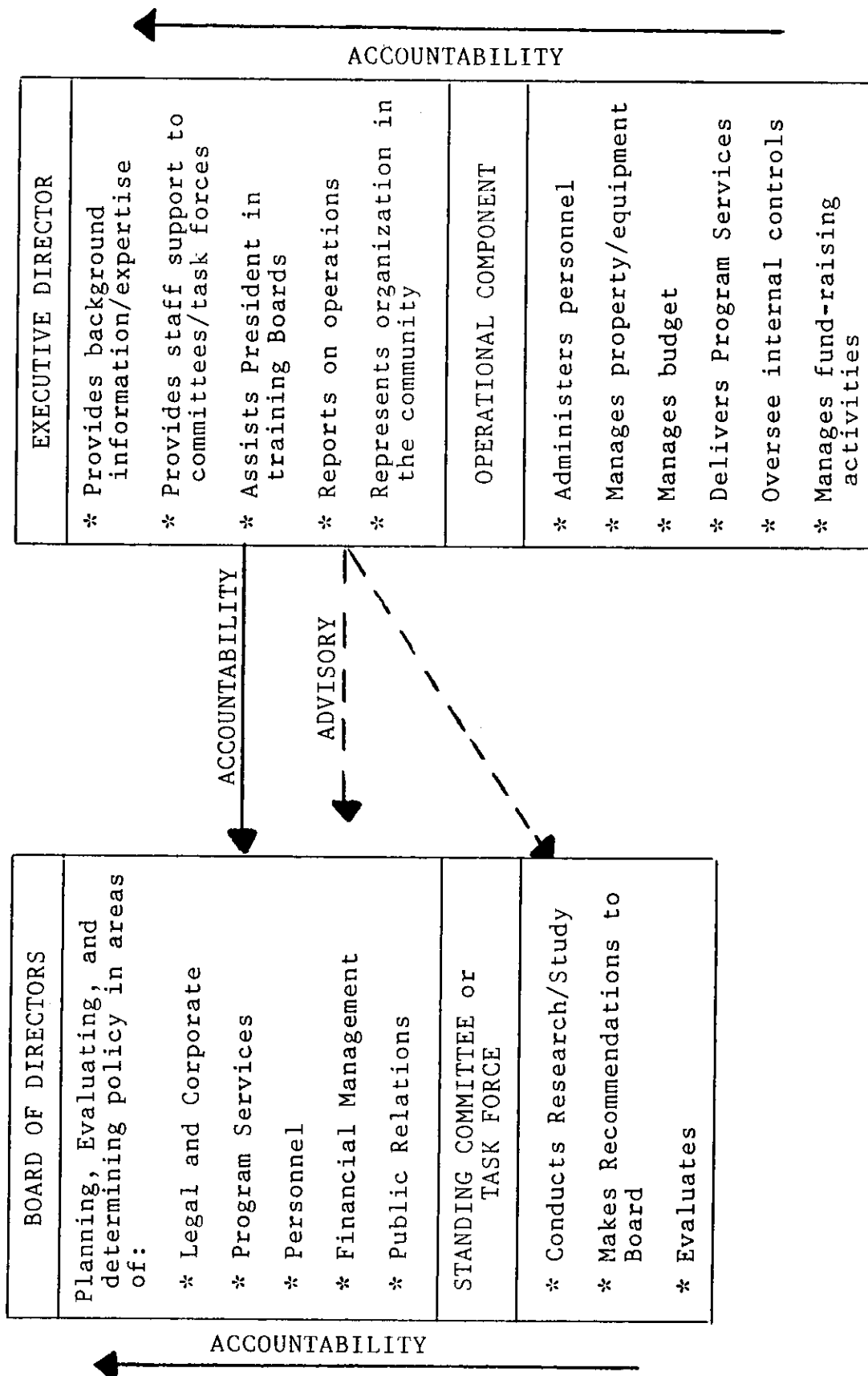
These are by no means the only types of committees. They are the most common. The committee's role is to act under the direction of the parent body. Form 1A and 1B illustrate the difference in the structure of Advisory Committees and private non-profit Boards of Directors. It illustrates where committees have lines of responsibility and accountability. Note that a distinction is made between committees appointed by the Parent body (Advisory group or Board of Directors) and operational or service delivery committees. The form also illustrates the role and responsibility of staff assigned to work with a committee.

In some cases it is facilitating and advising and in others it is supervisory. It is critical that volunteers and staff understand the type of committee on which they serve and the role they play. Form 1C provides a frame work for outlining your organizational structure. Complete the form to see if your committees and governing body have clear lines of responsibility.

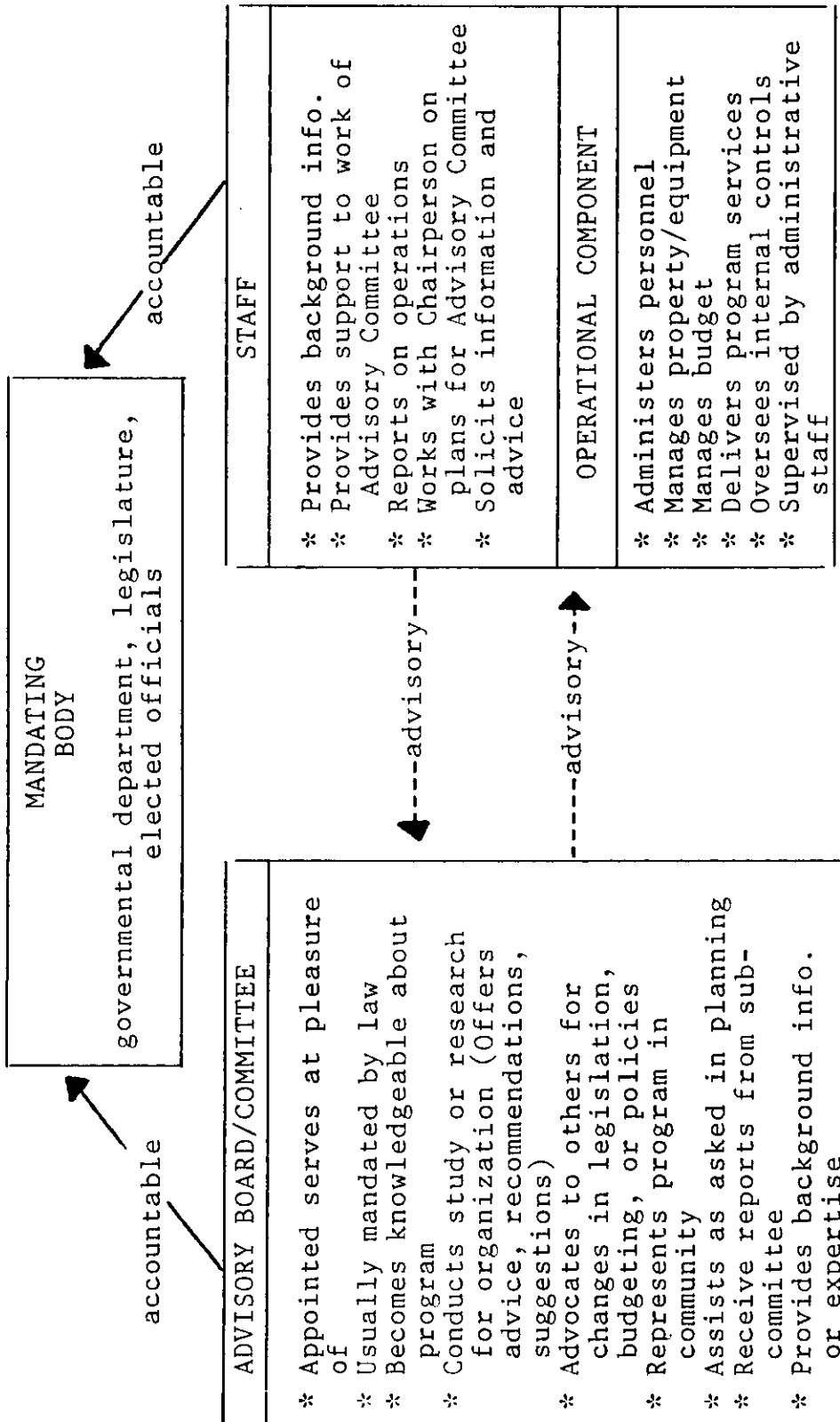
Volunteer managers need to be sure that there are clear lines of authority and responsibility between their Board of Directors or Advisory group and the committees in the organization. The level of understanding must reach the volunteers. Staff and volunteers who do not share the same understanding of committee roles and responsibilities are on a collision course. New committees are formed and existing ones revised as volunteers and staff evaluate the current needs of your organization. It is useful to review the committee structure and membership periodically. Nothing in volunteer America stays the same, including the Finance Committee.

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

FORM 1A



ADVISORY BOARDS/COMMITTEES  
ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES



NAME \_\_\_\_\_

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px; text-align: center;"> (MANDATING BODY) </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p style="text-align: center;">(POLICY SETTING GROUP)</p> <p>(List their responsibilities)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. _____</li> <li>2. _____</li> <li>3. _____</li> <li>4. _____</li> <li>5. _____</li> </ol> </div> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p style="text-align: center;">STANDING COMMITTEES</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. _____</li> <li>2. _____</li> <li>3. _____</li> <li>4. _____</li> <li>5. _____</li> </ol> </div> </div>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p style="text-align: center;">STAFF/JOB</p> <p>1. Title (assigned leadership)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Duties:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. _____</li> <li>B. _____</li> <li>C. _____</li> <li>D. _____</li> <li>E. _____</li> </ol> </div> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p style="text-align: center;">PROGRAM OPERATION</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(Name Committees)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. _____</li> <li>2. _____</li> <li>3. _____</li> <li>4. _____</li> <li>5. _____</li> </ol> </div> </div>
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FORM 1D

WHOSE JOB IS IT?

Roles and Responsibilities  
of  
Advisory Board Members and Staff

Directions: From the following list, fill in the appropriate word or words for each blank space: staff, volunteers, both volunteers and staff, others.

1. The \_\_\_\_\_ provides support to all committees or task group.
2. The budget is reviewed by the \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Establishing goals and objectives for Advisory Board activities is done by \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Personnel policies are reviewed by \_\_\_\_\_.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ provides background information on all functions of the organization.
6. The \_\_\_\_\_ discuss policies of the organization.
7. Technical advice is provided by \_\_\_\_\_.
8. Advice, recommendations, and suggestions are provided by \_\_\_\_\_.
9. The \_\_\_\_\_ can advocate for changes in the budget.
10. The \_\_\_\_\_ supervises programs developed by the Advisory Board.

Answer Key: 1) staff; 2) volunteers; 3) volunteers; 4) others;  
5) staff; 6) volunteers; 7) both; 8) volunteers; 9) volunteers;  
10) staff.

FORM 1E

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

COMMITTEE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES QUIZ

Directions: Read each statement. If you agree with the statement, circle YES. If you disagree, circle NO.

- |     |    |     |  |
|-----|----|-----|--|
| YES | NO | 1.  | Committees make recommendations to the Board.  |
| YES | NO | 2.  | The agenda for committees is set by assigned staff.  |
| YES | NO | 3.  | The Board of Directors establishes committees to carry out the short-term aspect of its responsibilities.                |
| YES | NO | 4.  | Committees can be short-lived.   |
| YES | NO | 5.  | Committees work with staff to implement the program and procedures of the Board of Directors.                            |
| YES | NO | 6.  | Committees should have only members from the Board of Directors.   |
| YES | NO | 7.  | Some committees of a Board of Directors are in the staff line. (The committee reports to and works with a staff member.) |
| YES | NO | 8.  | Standing committees should conduct their business based on the goals of the agency.                                      |
| YES | NO | 9.  | Committees should leave research to staff.   |
| YES | NO | 10. | Committees are responsible for evaluating the area of their responsibilities.  |

FORM 1F

COMMITTEE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

ANSWER SHEET

1. YES Committees can make recommendations on changes of policy or procedure, financial issues, or major program changes.
2. NO Agenda items should be determined by staff and the chairperson of the committee.
3. YES The Board is responsible for establishing committees to carry out the more routine work. Boards set policy. They should not act as a committee of the whole.
4. YES All committees should be examined for effectiveness and appropriateness at regular intervals. Committees should have "sunset laws".
5. YES Staff and committees work in a partnership to accomplish the mission of the agency.
6. NO Committees are enriched by members who may have special skills, but are not members of the Board.
7. YES Some committees do the operational work of an organization. They deliver the program, which is a responsibility of the Executive Director.
8. YES Committees should draft objectives and work plans based on the goals established by the Board of Directors.
9. NO Research can be done by committee members. Sometimes they are the best people to do it.
10. YES Committees should always set objectives and then evaluate their work. Evaluation is a critical part of all committee work.



## STEP II

### Analyzing the Needs

Begin by listing the various tasks required to carry out the functions of the organization. Then list the committees who are assigned this task. All committees should be listed with their assigned jobs and functions. The purpose in doing this is to identify who does what. (See Form 2A).

Be clear in direction to committees on the scope of their task. Two committees, for example finance and personnel, could disagree over who has responsibility for determining salary increments for paid staff. Decide if this is a function of the Personnel Committee with recommendations to the Finance Committee or is it a function of the Finance Committee as they are drafting the budget?

Clear job description can be used to negotiate with other committees to reclaim former areas of responsibility or to give away inappropriate jobs. It is easy to get myopic when you have been on the Finance Committee for five years. Members and staff can forget other committees exist. Form 2A is a method to help the committee see where they fit in the organization.

The most effective method of completing this form is to fill it out during the regular committee meeting or by members before they arrive at a meeting. It can be a task for an Ad Hoc committee of the Board of Directors or Advisory group who might undertake a review of the total committee structure. It is

important to remember that involving volunteers in identifying their own committee function gives a greater sense of ownership and commitment.

FORM 2A

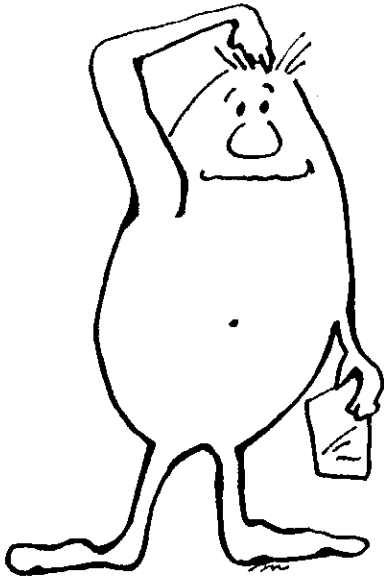
ASSESSING COMMITTEE FUNCTIONS

WHAT TASK NEEDS TO BE DONE?	WHAT COMMITTEE IS IT ASSIGNED TO?	IS IT THE APPROPRIATE COMMITTEE?	WHAT COMMITTEE SHOULD DO IT?
(financial management, public relations, budgets)			

### STEP III

#### Writing Committee Guide Lines

Many times volunteers assume they know what committees are



supposed to do. Someone signs up for the Public Relations Committee and thinks their job is to get publicity for the organization. In some cases this is true and in others it is not. To ensure clarity for volunteers and staff, all standing committees of a Board of Directors or an Advisory group should have guidelines. These guidelines can

be used to help people understand the work of the committee before signing on as a participant. They can also be used in orientation and training sessions to assist volunteers in understanding their tasks.

Committee guidelines should include the name of the committee, a general statement of its function, a list of tasks the committee performs, and approximate time of year when those tasks are completed. Additional information might include: to whom the committee reports in the structure of the organization, the approximate size of the committee, the staff with whom the committee can expect to work (named by title), and the expected time commitment.

An effective means to create committee guidelines or revise

old ones is to involve the committee in the process. This can be done by the entire group at a regular meeting. It might also be accomplished by a subcommittee charged with creating or revising the guidelines and then sharing them.

Sometimes committee guidelines must be ratified by the Board of Directors, Advisory groups or Governmental Bodies. In this event the committee chair would submit a new or revised draft to the approving body.

It is important to remember that volunteers who are expected to complete tasks should have ownership over the decisions relating to those tasks. Periodic review of committee assignments is one way to ensure understanding and agreement about the job to be done.

Form 3A is a worksheet designed so that committee members and staff can work jointly to determine their tasks. Completion of this form provides the basic outline of the committees work. Form 3B is a sample committee guideline. It illustrates the way Form 3A should be completed.

#### Job Descriptions

In addition to committee guidelines it is useful to have job descriptions for the chairperson and committee members. The job description is designed to give specific information about qualifications of committee members, the number of meetings per year, training available, and performance expectations for the chairperson and members. This can usually be done on the same

form. (see Form 3C)

It is important that the job description be short and to the point. It is something that can be developed by the committee when they are reviewing their task, (see Form 2A). Volunteers doing the job are often the best people to describe what needs to be done.

FORM 3A  
COMMITTEE GUIDELINES  
WORKSHEET

Committee Name:

Committee Function:

TASKS

DATES

1:

1:

2:

2:

3:

3:

4:

4:

5:

5:

6:

6:

Committee reports policy and procedural recommendations to:

Recommended committee size:

Assigned staff:

Time Commitment:

Other information:

FORM 3B

PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE  
GUIDELINES

Committee Name: Public Relations

Committee Function:

1. Review all publicity material
2. Assist in media contacts as needed.
3. Develop new P.R. campaigns to support programs
4. Evaluate P.R.
5. Develop P.R. guidelines

TASKS	DATES
1: Review all publications designed for the public for consistency and appropriateness.	1: As needed
2: Assist staff in publicizing agency/organization events.	2: on a monthly basis.
3: Review annually public relations calendar with staff.	3: December
4: Arrange for specialized publicity/News stories as needed.	4: N/A
5: Arrange a process for committee members to assist other functional areas and/or committees of the agency in their development of publicity.	5: N/A
6: Develop yearly committee work plans in line with agency goals.	6: January

Committee reports policy and procedural recommendations to:  
The Board of Directors

Recommended committee size: five to seven

Assigned staff: The assistant director

Time Commitment: 3 hours each month

Other information:



FORM 3D

PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE  
COMMITTEE MEMBERS/CHAIRPERSON  
JOB DESCRIPTIONS

Qualifications:

1. Committee members should have experience and/or high degree of personal interest in public relations.
2. Members should have a working knowledge of the mission, programs, volunteers, and staff of the organization.
3. Members should have a willingness to participate in publicity and public relations functions or work on behalf of the agency.
4. Members must be willing to attend 6 to 8 committee meetings per year.
5. Chairperson should have one year previous experience on the committee and/or excellent working knowledge of media and/or the agency and an interest in developing P.R. skills.
6. Chairperson must be willing to meet with assigned staff to plan committee meeting on a regular basis.
7. Chairperson should attend meetings of the Board of Directors.
8. Members of the committee must attend orientation and training sessions once per year.

Number of meetings per year: 6 to 8

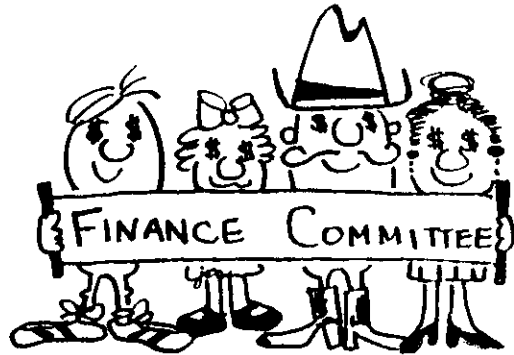
Time commitment: 1 to 4 hours per month; approximately 25 hours per year.

## STEP IV

### Committee Member Assignments: Is the Right Person on the Right Committee

It is not enough to know the jobs the various committees should be doing. You must also know who the people are that serve on those committees and what special talents and skills they bring to the group.

If a committee is using this manual to conduct a self-assessment, they will now have some sense of the skills needed to accomplish the work of a particular committee. A current member assessment should be completed to see if skills/interests match the tasks to be accomplished by the committee. An overall assessment of all committees of an organization/agency would provide the data to see if individuals are appropriately placed on committees. Committees must have balance to be successful.



Form 4A (Skill/Interest Assessment) is designed to help you assess committee assignments. There is a space for members names. List committee needs and determine which members have those skills/interests. Remember! Do not prejudge individuals abilities. A local youth agency recruited a prominent clergyman for their camping committee. He was an effective member because

of his personal interest and participation in hiking and back-packing programs. Don't assume a housewife is not knowledgeable about financial management, etc..

This form can be completed by the President and Executive Director as they prepare committee assignments or by the chairperson of an advisory group in consultation with assigned staff. (see sample completed Form 4B) It can also be done by the chairperson of the committee and staff. Under some circumstances, it could be effectively used during a committee evaluation meeting, (See Step VIII).

# FORM 4A

## Skill/Interest Assessment

COMMITTEE:

Committee  
Needs

Members Skills (List members)

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

FORM 4B

Skill/Interest Assessment

COMMITTEE: Public Relations

Committee Needs	Members Skills (List members)				
	Sam	Joe	Judy	Sally	Bob
1.Experience in P.R.	X			X	
2.Personal Interest		X		X	
3.Working Knowledge		X	X		X
4.Willingness to participate	X		X	X	X
5.Able to attend meetings	X	X	X	X	X
6.	knows media corp.	knows media corp.			
7.			strong leader		
8.	creative				artistic
9.		graphic experience			

## STEP V

### Part 1

#### Recruiting the Right People

The most effective committees are those in which the function of the committee and its tasks are matched to the skills and interests of the members. It is more likely that a committee will function efficiently if its members possess the skills/interests to accomplish the task. Imagine a Public Relations Committee without members experienced in writing press releases or producing public service announcements. It would take considerable time and effort to train those individuals. The task would be simplified for the committee if some members already possessed those skills.

In seeking the best committee members, it is necessary for those responsible for nominations, selection, and appointments to develop a method of matching function to skill. This task, once completed, clarifies on which committees current volunteers might best serve.

Form 5A permits those with nomination, selection, and/or appointment responsibilities to identify potential committee members. The function of the committee and its tasks are listed. Then the skills necessary to complete those tasks are listed. By seeing functions and skills side by side, it is easier to identify potential committee members.

Potential members can come from a variety of sources. The

committee can review membership rosters for potential candidates. Members can contribute names of friends and colleagues who have the necessary skills. Staff can make recommendation of other individuals in the organization who have the necessary skills and/or interests.

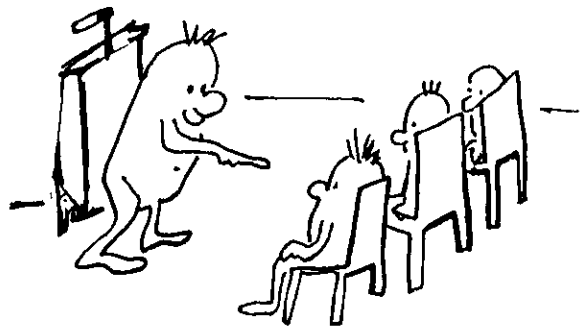
Form 5A can also be used as a self-assessment. It is a means to identify lack of skills. Using the earlier example, a public relations committee with individuals lacking press release writing skills could quickly see the deficiency. Having that information would allow some choices: 1) Recruit a new member with those skills; 2) Bring someone to the committee to train everyone; 3) Have someone currently on the committee trained.

## Part 2

### Nominations, Selection, Appointments

The methods of getting people to serve on committees are as varied as committees themselves.

Sometimes a committee regenerates itself, other times members are appointed by a governing body (such as a Board of Directors or Advisory group). In some cases



people are appointed without any choice of placement. Other times volunteers are asked which committee they prefer.

Unfortunately all these methods can exist within the same organization.

An agency should determine a method of creating and sustaining committees that is consistent. When there is confusion in the mind of volunteers about the organizational structure of an agency, there might also be a lack of commitment to task. Whatever the style chosen, it needs to be used throughout the agency.

### Nominations

Members of Boards of Directors/Advisory groups are often required to serve on a Standing Committee. Sometimes nominees are asked to apply for a committee. Sometimes nominees are not contacted in advance about their committee choice. The most effective nomination process for volunteer committees is to give the potential candidate a choice.

Nominating bodies can prepare a post card sized preference checklist to distribute to potential candidates. This card with an accompanying sheet describing, briefly, the functions of each committee is often sufficient to assist people making committee choices.

Form 5B shows a sample post card that could be returned to a nominating body with preferences marked by potential candidates. It also provides information for the mailing list.

Form 5C is an example of a committee description list which



would accompany the post card. Some candidates might wish more detailed information. This can be done easily by mailing to them a set of committee guidelines and job descriptions. (See Form 3B and Form 3C)

### Selection

One common method of recruiting committee members is their nomination by staff. This is a limiting and dangerous technique. Staff friends and acquaintances are limited in number. It is more productive for staff to involve volunteers in the selection process.

Current committee members have a wide circle of friends and colleagues to draw from. They also understand the workings and demands of the committee. The best recruiters of volunteers are other volunteers. The staff can support the volunteer selection process and contribute the names of potential candidates.

If a committee is responsible for selecting new members, it can determine its own needs by using the first 4 steps of this manual. Once there is a list of potential candidates, a variety of techniques can be utilized to solicit their interest in joining the committee.

A letter of inquiry drafted by staff could be sent to a potential member. It should include committee guidelines, a job description sheet, and information about the organization. Someone should be assigned the responsibility to make a follow

up telephone call to determine the person's interest. Do not leave it to the nominee to call the office or staff. If the committee is genuinely interested in the potential candidate,



they must express their interest with a personal invitation to serve. Studies show that the most effective recruiting technique is a volunteer asking someone to serve.

If the above method seems cumbersome or time consuming, the direct approach might be best. Volunteers can telephone potential candidates. It is critical, however, that they have committee guidelines, job descriptions, and information about the agency when talking to a potential candidate. Too many volunteers are lost because the recruiter is unclear about the task and time commitment.



Some other techniques used by volunteer organizations include the following:

- a. Advertise in agency newsletters, the newspaper or other appropriate publications.
- b. Establish the expectation that volunteers leaving a committee will replace themselves.
- c. Solicit potential candidate names from professional organizations, employers, or individuals familiar with people in a specific field.
- d. By reviewing current membership list, the committee might find names of potential nominees.

## Appointment

An individual's appointment or election to a committee should be made official. This might include a formal letter of appointment, a telephone call from the chairperson, or an official communique from the president of the organization. The appointment process should include a packet of information about the agency and the work of the committee.

Another important element to a new committee member is information on training. New members should have a standardized orientation to the committee. This training can range from a formal presentation with manuals, notebooks, and audio-visuals, to an informal luncheon meeting with a current member of the committee, preferably the chairperson. (see Form 5D)

Training opportunities for committee members should not be limited to newcomers. Anyone serving on a committee can enhance their skills and increase their knowledge.

One way to enhance the motivational climate for volunteers is to involve them in planning and delivering training to other members. Someone with special skills and experience could be asked to share those at an in-service meeting.

Another motivational technique is for the committee to request a modest sum for training. This money can be used to send volunteers to local or regional workshops in their area of interest. For example, a member of the public relations committee could attend a workshop on writing press releases; a

member of the finance committee might attend a fund raising workshop.

Agencies that spend money to train volunteers communicate their respect for the job volunteers are asked to do. It is a good motivational technique.

Staff members with responsibility for training must be aware of adult learning techniques. No volunteer wants to sit through boring, repetitive, or inappropriate training sessions. Training must have a purpose, be interesting, and fun. Many books are available on the teaching and training of adults (see bibliography). Another source of assistance is at your local county extension office. Extension staff are highly skilled trainers of adults. If they are unable to offer personal assistance, they can refer you to experts in adult education at the university level in your state.

WHO SHOULD BE DOING THE JOB

[illegible]

FORM 5B

GOOD TIMES AGENCY

Thank you for agreeing to serve

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Listed below are the committees of our organization.  
Please list in order (1,2,3) you committee preference.

\_\_\_ Publicity  
\_\_\_ Nominations

\_\_\_ Budget  
\_\_\_ Recruiting

FORM 5C

SAMPLE

Committee Descriptions  
Good Times Agency

The following are standing and operational committees of our organization with a brief description.

PUBLICITY:

Review publicity and public relations material, contact news media for coverage of events, develop P.R. campaigns, assist other committees, and evaluate P.R.

NOMINATIONS:

Assess current members of Advisory Board, determine candidates to meet needs of Board, select and recommend candidates to Commissioners and assigned staff.

BUDGET:

Review budget, advise on budget planning direction, make recommendations to Advisory Board, meet with funding sources (Public and Private) as needed.

RECRUITING:

Review paid and volunteer staff recruiting plans, recommended changes, study changes, recommend policy areas of study to Advisory Board.

More detailed information can be provided by calling 555-7182.

FORM 5D

Training/Orientation

Checklist

1. Housekeeping:  
Explain things such as parking, location of bathroom, coffee room, and where to hang the coat.
2. Tour Of Facility:  
Orientation to physical plant, and when possible seeing the actual work of the organization.
3. Introductions To Key People:  
Determine who your committee should know (Director, President, Supervisors, Managers, Secretaries).
4. Time For Questions:  
Encourage volunteers to ask anything that comes to mind.
5. Paperwork:  
Training to complete confidentiality forms, handbooks, policies and procedures.
6. Orientation for New Members:  
Training sessions from 1 to 4 hours, depending on the complexity of the committee's function.
7. Follow Up Training:  
Log types of training offered for committee each year.
8. Work Plan Process:  
Explain procedure committee uses to establish work plans for the year. (see Step VI)
9. Monitoring and Evaluation:  
Describe process used to keep committee focused on its plan and how work is evaluated.
10. Use Effective Adult Education Methods:  
Evaluate every training for members and strive to improve.



## STEP VI

### Planning/Accountability

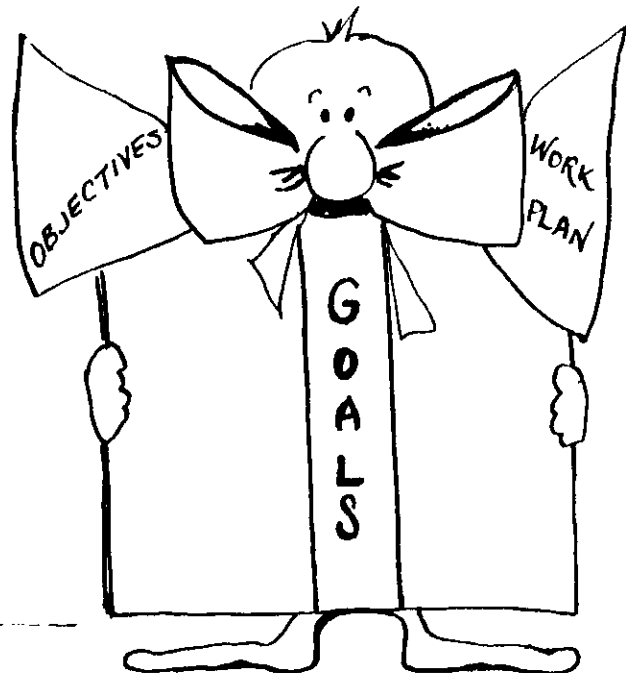
Organizational goals are specific areas of endeavor that will be attempted in the near future. For most volunteer organizations, a two year goal would be optimum. It must be achievable, measureable, observeable, flexible, and demanding.

Committee objectives and work plan should be tied to the established goals and objectives of the organization. Strategic planning provides the framework for committees by having established goals.

When an organization has a goal to increase membership by 12% over the next calendar

year, a committees work plan should relate to that goal. Each committee examines how it contributes to meeting that goal. When a committee drafts its objectives based on organizational goals, it means that all elements of the organization are working in the same direction.

The method of planning outlined here has three purposes. 1) It involves the volunteers in designing their own activities and develops a sense of ownership; 2) it provides a record of



work; and 3) it provides a system of accountability. Chairpersons or staff members who introduce this technique should acknowledge a committee's existing efforts at planning. A new method should be introduced as a means to enhance that which already exists. Working committees might be offended if they thought their efforts to coordinate and plan were unrecognized.

Sometimes a governing body such as an Advisory Committee or Board of Directors does not have established goals for the organization. This does not mean that a committee cannot use this method of planning. Committee members need to have a sense of direction and of accomplishment about the work they do. Even if organizational goals do not exist, committees can establish working objectives. They should also urge the governing body to begin a system of strategic planning and organizational goals.

## Part 1

### Setting objectives

Members of the committee begin by establishing objectives for work. This seemingly simple task can be frustrating. Objectives must have 5 characteristics. They should be: 1) measurable, 2) achievable, 3) flexible, 4) demanding, 5) observable. Form 6A can be used to practice writing committee objectives. Members can then critique the objectives and rewrite them.

Sometimes a committee will think the following is an objective. "TO MAKE THE WORLD SAFE FOR DEMOCRACY." While a noble sentiment, that statement is neither a goal nor an objective. Committee members need to understand the fundamentals of writing objectives before being asked to produce work plans.

An organizational goal is:

To increase participation at training sessions  
by 15% by (date).

An objective for the Finance Committee might be:

To increase budget for training expenses  
(child care, transportation, materials, etc.)  
by 10% by (date).

Staff and chairpersons need to carefully assess the current skills of members. It would be insulting to present this type of exercise to a committee of professional people already familiar with the process and terminology of strategic planning.

## Part 2

### Committee Work Plans

Translating good intentions into deeds is a challenge for most committees. A lack of productivity on the part of a committee can occur because people don't know how to begin. This situation has a ready solution in work plans.

If the committee has clear goals from the governing body (a

board of Directors or Advisory group) and has drafted objectives for each goal, it is time to write committee work plans. The work plans provide an outline for collective and individual efforts by volunteers and staff.

In writing work plans, committees often make the mistake of listing the details of how a project should be carried out. The committee's responsibility is to see that a task is completed and services delivered. If a committee has the responsibility of seeing that a pot luck supper is held, listing how many salads and deserts is not part of the work plan. The committee's task is to see that the event occurs and to delegate detail decisions to the person organizing the event.

Form 6B can be used to implement work plans. Volunteer committee members list the objectives they have established, then identify those tasks needed to accomplish the objective. The work plans should meet the same criteria as objectives. (See Form 6A)

If a board of directors has established a goal to increase membership by 10% over a 2 year period, an objective for the Recruiting Committee might be to increase membership in a specific target market (school, age group, specific program participation) by 15%. The objective is then developed in the work plans. Examples of the type of items listed in the work plans might include:

1. Determine current level of participation (by date).

2. Evaluate current recruitment effort (by date).
3. Draft recruiting plan for target area (by date).
4. Implement recruiting plan (by date).
5. Evaluate quantity and quality of recruiting effort (by date).

An advisory committee or board can use a similar process. If an Advisory group has a sub-committee on Legislative Issues, work plans for the committee might look like the following:

1. Determine which Legislators are knowledgeable and sympathetic to issue (by date).
2. Determine Legislative committees with control over issues relevant to your area of interest in the issue (by date).
3. Bring members up-to-date on current status of issue.
4. Draft plan for legislative information packet to be shared with Advisory Board (by date).
5. Monitor all pertinent Legislation during session.

Individual steps in the work plan should be assigned to a member of the committee. This does not mean that the committee member does the work alone! It indicates the individual responsible for seeing that the work is done. This allows the chairperson to use a monitoring process that makes members accountable. (See Step VII)

### Part 3

#### Individual Work Plans

When a committee develops work plans it is easy to assign

tasks to complete the process. The work plan is broken into smaller tasks and members of the committee, including staff, take responsibility for completing their assignments. One way for committee chairpersons and staff to help volunteers get organized is to use Form 6C. This form allows volunteers to record those things they agreed to do during the meeting. This process is often done informally. However, it is easier to help volunteers know their assignments by providing a worksheet.

Volunteer and staff work plans need to relate to the committees work plans. For example, the committee objective might be to increase membership in a target population by a certain date. The work plan might say gather current membership information and statistics (by date). The volunteer and/or staff activity plan might include the following:

1. Call Bob Finch at high school to get current enrollment figures.
2. Get enrollment figures to staff (by date).

This could be the only assignment for an individual member.

By using this system the chairperson can insure a more equitable distribution of work assignments. Members also may select those tasks in which they are interested. Absent members could then be contacted by the chairperson or staff to receive specific assignments.

By accepting responsibility for individual tasks, members have a sense of ownership over the outcomes. They are more apt

to be motivated to complete the tasks if they understand the need for their specific assignment. Committee members who cannot explain what their committee does are not apt to be motivated.

If a planning process is being used by a committee, it is easy enough for staff to record who volunteers to do what and then distribute it to members. Staff introducing a more formalized committee planning process should not throw out the current one but help volunteers improve on it. Volunteers need to feel that the quality of their work is already good and the suggestions being made are designed only to enhance the work being done.

Like many of the suggestions in this manual, the work plan process can be introduced in increments. Introducing a formal planning process over time will gain greater acceptance and participation by volunteers. Remember don't insult anyone's intelligence.

FORM 6A

O B J E C T I V E S

must be

1. measureable

3. flexible

2. achieveable

4. demanding

5. observable

Write one to three objectives you would like to achieve in the next year. Be sure they meet all of the above criteria.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



FORM 6B

COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE WORK PLANS

NAME

Goal: \_\_\_\_\_

Committee Objective: \_\_\_\_\_

Steps to accomplish this objective?

Assigned to

- |          |       |
|----------|-------|
| 1. _____ | _____ |
| 2. _____ | _____ |
| 3. _____ | _____ |
| 4. _____ | _____ |
| 5. _____ | _____ |

Goal: \_\_\_\_\_

Committee Objective: \_\_\_\_\_

Steps to accomplish this objective?

Assigned to

- |          |       |
|----------|-------|
| 1. _____ | _____ |
| 2. _____ | _____ |
| 3. _____ | _____ |
| 4. _____ | _____ |
| 5. _____ | _____ |

Goal: \_\_\_\_\_

Committee Objective: \_\_\_\_\_

Steps to accomplish this objective?

Assigned to

- |          |       |
|----------|-------|
| 1. _____ | _____ |
| 2. _____ | _____ |
| 3. _____ | _____ |
| 4. _____ | _____ |
| 5. _____ | _____ |

FORM 6C  
INDIVIDUAL WORK PLANS

Committee Work Plan: \_\_\_\_\_

My Assignment	Date Due
1. _____	1. _____
2. _____	2. _____
3. _____	3. _____

Committee Work Plan: \_\_\_\_\_

My Assignment	Date Due
1. _____	1. _____
2. _____	2. _____
3. _____	3. _____

Committee Work Plan: \_\_\_\_\_

My Assignment	Date Due
1. _____	1. _____
2. _____	2. _____
3. _____	3. _____

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## STEP VII

### Measuring Accomplishments

One challenge for staff and chairpersons of committees is to keep members on task and feeling that their work is making a contribution. The monitoring process is often overlooked.

Staff members work daily with programs and people. They see results on a regular and continuing basis. Volunteers rarely spend more than 6 hours per month involved with the work of a committee. Staff members must help the chairperson see the importance of keeping committee members well informed about the quantity and quality of their work. There are a variety of techniques for monitoring accomplishment. There is no one correct method to do this. The best choice depends on the chairperson, committee members, their expectations, the task at hand, and time constraints for both volunteer and staff.

The following are some suggestions that might be used in the monitoring and assessment process.

- 1) A committee may not need formalized minutes, but a brief one page meeting summary can remind participants of work accomplished. It is also a useful tool to keep absent members informed about the activities of the committee.



- 2) Attached to the minutes is a list of items members volunteered to do. This then becomes a record for the chairperson to monitor progress on a regular basis at meetings. It also serves as a reminder of the varied tasks accomplished by individual members throughout the year. (see Form 7A).
- 3) Committee members are expected to attend the meeting of the larger governing body - the Board of Directors or Advisory Board.
- 4) A chairperson needs to convey the importance of the work the committee does. This can be accomplished through regular reports on the tasks for which the committee is responsible. A Public Relations committee would get a monthly report of all P.R. activities by volunteers, staff, and clients. A recruiting committee would receive up-to-date figures on membership. Volunteers need to see the results of their efforts.
- 5a) Committee work needs to be seen by an ever widening circle of individuals in the agency or organization.
- 5b) There should be an opportunity for volunteers to report on a regular basis to the governing body. Depending on the committees function this report could occur monthly, quarterly, or bi-annually.

Financial statements are usually available at each board meeting. It is equally important to see reports of program participation, a recruiting report, or a Public Relations report on the number of media contacts made each month.

- 6) Another method of monitoring work and giving credit for accomplishments is for the chairperson to review work plans and individual assignments at the beginning of each meeting. It can be as simple as saying "How are you doing with that enrollment report, Margaret?." It can also be a written report. If this method is selected members should be notified in advance. This could be done by telephone or by a written agenda.
- 7) All committees should have a starting point where work plans and individual activities are drafted, and an event to signify closure and accomplishment. For committees with on-going assignments this can be a challenge. The chairperson and staff need to plan an end of year, end of season, or end of task event where the objectives, work plans, and activities are reviewed. It should be fun and informative. Be sure to include handouts with statistics on the tasks completed. A short slide show illustrating the work of the organization can be effective. Members of the committee should be asked to report. If high participation is wanted, then the staff needs to take a low profile. All

the volunteers should have a role during this meeting. This could be held at a restaurant or private home where a meal or beverages are served. Volunteering is not just hard work, it should be fun.

FORM 7A

Sample Highlighted Meeting Summary

Public Relations Committee  
May 18

1. Bob Goodheart will contact the editor of the Herald to set up training on media relations for staff and volunteers.
2. Sally Staff and Chuck Chairperson will conduct phone survey of local radio stations to see how they would use locally produced PSA.
3. Mary Member agreed to get publicity to office by June 1 on July 4 fund raising event in City Park.
4. Chuck Chairperson will meet with Paula President and Eugene Executive about getting committees to bring P.R. up-to-date sooner when planning events.
5. Next meeting is June 16

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FORM 7B

Committee Monitoring Process

Checklist

	Yes	No	Comments
1. Do People on my committee know what is expected of them?	_____	_____	_____
2. Is a meeting summary sent to remind members of their commitments to work plans for activities?	_____	_____	_____
3. Does the chairperson and/or staff have a conscious monitoring plan to keep the committee on task?	_____	_____	_____
4. Are members expected to give reports regularly?	_____	_____	_____
5. Is there a formal review of the committee's activities annually?	_____	_____	_____
6. Are records kept from year to year and used to illustrate the progress a committee is making?	_____	_____	_____
7. Are members of the committee informed about the effects of their work on clients and services?	_____	_____	_____
8. Is an informal recognition system used when members perform above minimum standards?	_____	_____	_____
9. Is there a method of recognition by a governing body (Board of Directors or Advisory Committee) for the work done by the committee?	_____	_____	_____
10. Are committee members publicly commended for their committee work?	_____	_____	_____

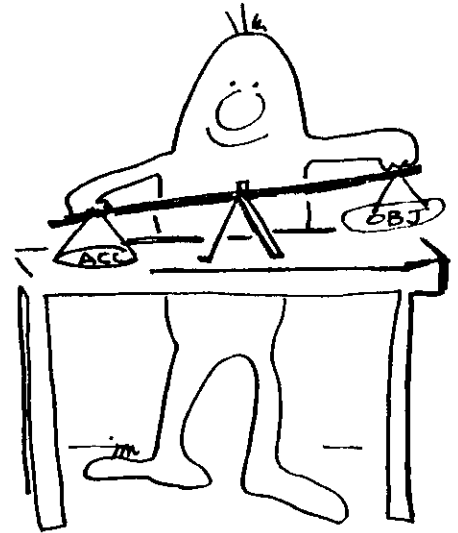
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## STEP VIII

### Evaluations

The work of a committee of volunteers can be evaluated in two ways. First, the accomplishments of the committee are measured against the original objectives. Second, committee members' performance is assessed. By evaluating function and performance, volunteer committees can move forward to new objectives.



The process of evaluating committee objectives, work plans, and activities can be simple if a strategic planning process is used. At an evaluation meeting, distribute original objectives and work plans. Volunteers review each objective and work plan to determine if they are completed.

Staff contributions are critical to this endeavor. Sometimes a staff member knows of activities by an individual volunteer that are unknown by the rest of the group. Communicating this information ensures that volunteers see their individual efforts as a part of the whole. Form 8A is a means for volunteers to evaluate objectives and work plans. Abandoning a plan in September that was drafted the previous January may happen because additional information indicates this is a wise choice. Volunteers should be helped to understand that plans are only guidelines and not written in stone.

Suppose, for example, a Camping Committee of a youth agency had established an objective to increase day camping opportunities for youth during the summer months. During the evaluation process they discover that while all the work has been completed by the committee, there has been little increase in enrollment. This information might indicate the need for an assessment to determine if day camp is a needed community service. Today's volunteers are too busy to waste their time on programs needed in 1967 but not today.

Evaluation should be accomplished at one meeting. The process needs to be quick and effective.

Another area of evaluation involves examining the work of the members assigned to a committee. This must be done with sensitivity.

Volunteer managers usually evaluate the efforts of direct service volunteers. The individual, who works with developmentally disabled adults, should have the opportunity to learn if their efforts are effective.

Evaluation of committee members is distinctly different from the evaluation of a direct service volunteer.

Committee chairpersons and staff must use techniques to help volunteers assess their own performance. Adults learn more effectively when they engage in self-diagnosis. The following are some techniques for evaluating members of a committee.

1. Volunteers are asked to list those activities

they agreed to complete. They can indicate whether the task was complete, or pending and make comments. This evaluation remains private. At this meeting volunteers who wish might discuss incomplete or discontinued tasks with other committee members, soliciting their advice and/or assistance to complete the work. Self evaluation is undoubtedly one of the most effective techniques.

2. Another technique that can be used is a series of questions and discussion about individual assignments. Form 8B suggests the types of questions that can be used by the chairperson. This open evaluation process needs to be conducted by a skilled volunteer chairperson who has the trust and confidence of the entire committee. It is most effective where the majority of members have worked together for a long period of time and there is well developed communication. It is most appropriately done by volunteers. Staff should avoid making individual judgements. This is a time for volunteers to evaluate themselves.

3. A more personal evaluation technique is for the chairperson of the committee to contact each individual and ask for their assessment of their work during the previous year. (The questions

would be similar to those on Form 8B) The purpose of a personal evaluation is to help the chairperson and staff improve the working environment for volunteers. These discussions could be done in person, at coffee or lunch, or by telephone. This depends on the relationship the chairperson has with each individual. Informality can enhance communication. This method can be used to help a member determine their contribution to the work of the committee. It also affords a privacy that the other methods might not.

These techniques can be used separately or together. Their purpose is not to be harsh or judgemental. Committee volunteers often feel a different mission than direct service volunteers. Their work should be evaluated in such a manner that they determine their effectiveness to the organization. The role of the chairperson is enabler, not judge. Staff members are in a good position to advise the chairperson.

Staff participation in evaluations should be neutral. They can compile suggestions from the evaluation and submit a summary to the group. They can make general observations about things which blocked effective work. But, they should not be judgemental about the work of volunteers serving on committees. Their role is as a facilitator to help adults come to their own conclusions about their effectiveness.

Volunteers appreciate being helped to analyze their work and make judgements about how to improve it. A person who facilitates personal growth is often credited by the individual as being instrumental in "making a difference in my life." Loyalty to the organization and to the staff is greater when volunteers have a sense of ownership over their own activities.

# FORM 8A

## Committee Evaluation

Objective \_\_\_\_\_

### Steps to complete

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

### My Tasks

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Objective \_\_\_\_\_

### Steps to complete

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

### My Tasks

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

complete  
incomplete  
discontinued

comments


FORM 8B

Evaluation Questions

1. What tasks have been completed to accomplish this objective?
2. What tasks have been abandoned? Why?
3. What tasks still need to be done? Why?
4. How could we plan better to complete tasks?
5. Do we need to organize the committee to complete the assignment on time?
6. Does someone need help with a specific assignment?
7. Have you recorded your efforts so someone can take over your job next year?
8. What would have helped you do your job more efficiently?

## STEP IX

### Recognition

Volunteers who serve on committees should receive recognition for the work they do. Formal recognition is an organized system for individuals to receive rewards based on a standardized set of criteria. Rewards of an informal type can be given by anyone and are usually more personal.

#### Formal Recognition

Large national organizations, like Boy Scouts, Camp Fire, and the Red Cross have standardized formal recognition programs. The criteria are spelled out in written material and the nomination and selection process includes volunteers. However, many local and governmental organization do not have formal recognition. Certificates and plaques are awarded in a haphazard fashion.

A formal recognition program is one which has written guidelines and standards that are available to everyone in the organization. Anyone can nominate anyone else. The tangible evidence of the award is also standardized. This type of reward system is incremental. For example, the first year volunteer, who has been nominated and meets the criteria, might





receive a certificate. A volunteer with many years of outstanding service would receive a trophy or plaque. Form 9A is a checklist to ensure that your program meets the criteria of a formal awards program.

If the chairperson and staff of a committee are concerned about the lack of a formal awards program, there are several tactics they can adopt. First collect data on the service of their volunteers (years of service, donation of skills or money, projects completed, other success stories). Report this data to the administration or Board of the organization and suggest formalizing the recognition for these hard-working people. Second, the chairperson or staff member can describe formal recognition programs that exist in other agencies. This will help the leadership understand that there is no need to re-invent the wheel. The last step is to volunteer to work on a task force of agency volunteers to create a volunteer award system.

Studies on motivation show that volunteers want and need recognition, both formal and informal. But they can spot sham at 100 paces. If staff are nominating and presenting awards, volunteers reward their friends, or plaques are passed out with unknown criteria, the recognition is no longer a motivator. To be effective, the formal recognition program is planned out and everyone within the organization is eligible. It should also include volunteers in the decision making process.

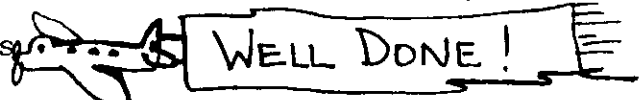
Form 9B is a sample award criteria form that describes qualifications. Included is a model nomination form. (Further information on formal recognition is described in "Volunteer Recruiting and Retention: A Marketing Approach", by Nancy Macduff, 1985)

### Informal Recognition

Informal recognition is a way to say thank you that is more personal and based on what one person thinks of the job done by another. Chairperson or staff can send flowers/balloons, write a personal note, get public recognition, such as a newspaper article on the individual. Recognition is not based on established criteria. If everyone on a committee has worked hard during the last month, a chairperson could bring a special treat, like flowers, balloons, a plate of brownies, or a certificate to the next meeting.

Informal recognition needs to be personal and specific. It is not "Great job!" It is "You did a wonderful job on that TV interview, Sunday. The way you explained the mission of our agency was clear and compelling. I don't think I could have done as well. Can we meet for coffee so I can say thank you."

It is clear, specific, and lets the volunteer know exactly what they accomplished. Form 9C is a list of suggested informal recognitions.



FORM 9A

Is It a Formal Recognition Program?

Checklist

DIRECTIONS: Answer yes or no to each statement. If all the answers are yes, you are running a formal recognition program, if you have more no's than yes'es, you need to assess whether it is truly a formal program.

- ..... 1. Each award has a name that sets it apart from the other awards.
- ..... 2. Award are incremental. The highest awards are reserved for people with long tenure and distinguished service.
- ..... 3. Some awards are reserved for people who give short term or one time service to the organization.
- ..... 4. Criteria for receiving the award is written.
- ..... 5. Awards and their outward symbol (certificate, pin, plaque, etc.) are consistent from year to year.
- ..... 6. Award criteria and nomination forms are distributed to volunteers
- ..... 7. The nomination process involves volunteers in selection of recipients.
- ..... 8. All award nominations are handled with confidentiality.
- ..... 9. There is an official time when formal awards are presented to recipients.
- ..... 10. Volunteers who are former award recipients are involved in the presentation of awards to new winners.
- ..... 11. A permanent record of award recipients is kept on file in the office.
- ..... 12. The formal recognition system is regularly reviewed for appropriateness.

FORM 9B

Formal Recognition

Sample Criteria for Awards

Big Bend Award:

1. Served as volunteer with agency for at least 5 years
2. Served as direct client volunteer
3. Served on committee for 2 years
4. Served in leadership capacity on Board of Directors
5. Provided outstanding and distinctive service.

Houston Award:

1. Currently a direct service volunteer.
2. Served in that capacity for a minimum of 2 years.
3. Provided outstanding leadership to the direct service program clients.
4. Gives excellent service at all times

\* \* \* \* \*

Sample Nomination Form

Nomination for Big Bend \_\_\_\_\_ or Houston \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Years of Service: \_\_\_\_\_

Positions held in the organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to clients served ----- High 1 2 3 4 5 low  
Evidence: \_\_\_\_\_

Leadership skills ----- High 1 2 3 4 5 low  
Evidence: \_\_\_\_\_

Nominated by: \_\_\_\_\_

FORM 9C

Recognition When a Formal Award Program Does Not Exist  
For Members of a Committee

1. Plan a yearly recognition with certificates for members.
2. Have a no-host dinner for volunteers to close the year. Present small gifts.
3. Develop an incremental system of recognizing committee volunteers. Write it down. (Example: 1st year - certificate; 2nd year - pin; 3rd year - pen set)
4. Nominate committee members for local, state, and national awards given specifically to volunteers.
5. Find out if the company a volunteer works for recognizes employees for volunteer service. Nominate them for this award/recognition.
6. Send letters each year to the employer or spouse of a volunteer thanking them for their support of the person, who gives time to the agency.
7. Contact the media to do a feature story on the volunteer.
8. Have a recognition pot-luck for all committee members.
9. Have clients/members write out a thank you for the work of the committee. (Try a lawn sign during National Volunteer Week)
10. Get other staff members to host a tea or luncheon for all committees.
11. Join with other committee chairpersons to sponsor a big recognition event with an award for one person from each committee.
12. Keep lobbying for a formal award program for everyone.

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## STEP X

### Motivation and Staff Responsibilities

The theories of motivation are one of the most studied human behaviors. Psychologists, anthropologists, and social scientists have long wondered what drives humans. What motivates volunteers in human service agencies to give free time? What role does staff play in the motivation of volunteers who serve on committees? Can their roles and responsibilities affect the functioning of a committee?

The answer to this last question is a resounding YES!!! While psychologists cannot agree on the specifics of human motivation, they do know that the person working most closely with the individual has the greatest influence on the motivational climate. Staff members who understand human motivation and carry out their roles and responsibilities in light of motivational theories, are more apt to work with exciting, productive, and useful committees.

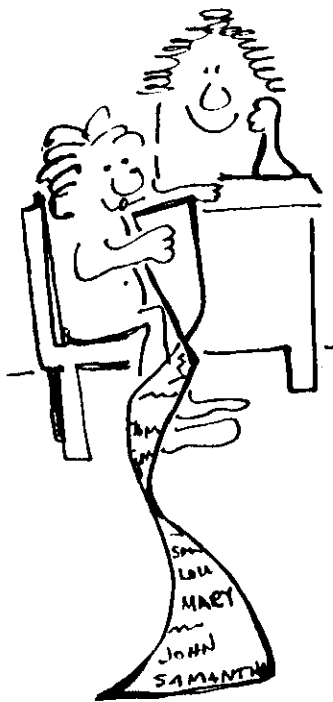
In many ways the things that motivate volunteers are similar to the things that motivate employees. There is a common thread of motivational theories about how to increase productivity and effectiveness. People want to feel that they belong, work in a safe environment, have valued opinions, are recognized for the work they do, have meaningful work, and have a part in the decision making process. Managers of volunteer programs who know and apply these principles will enhance the

motivational climate and find their own jobs easier and more fulfilling.

What types of activities are appropriate for staff in helping committees operate at maximum efficiency. Managers have six basic areas of responsibility. 1) organization, 2) planning, 3) training, 4) supervision, 5) control, and 6) evaluation. Using modern management theories in conjunction with a knowledge of human motivation can enhance the work of any committee.

### Motivational Tips for Effective Management of Committees

#### Organize



1. Work closely with the chairperson in the recruitment of members. Have more names than there are positions to fill. Help the person balance the membership with people who represent different perspectives.

2. Encourage the chairperson to structure the committee to represent the diversity present in your agency and/or community.

3. Provide the chairperson with ample training in leadership and the conduct of

meetings. Don't assume this is a skill everyone possesses. Likewise don't patronize someone with proven skills.

4. Make yourself available to the chairperson prior to meetings and during the times when committee members are being selected. The staff role is not to be intrusive but to provide background information and support as the volunteers go about their work.

#### Plan

1. Provide volunteers with previous work plans of the committee. A staff member with longevity can help a committee see the historical perspective of its work and provide continuity.

2. Use a formal planning process. Assist in reducing frustration by suggesting the use of strategic planning processes such as those described in this book. This can be done incrementally.

3. During planning sessions volunteers should be encouraged to be creative. Comments like "We did that four years ago and it didn't



work", or "There is not any money in the budget", can be stifling. Volunteers certainly need to be aware of history and budget, but in a way which encourages their creativity. No new programs would exist if someone did not set a plan in motion, and then find the money to do it. The staff role in the planning process is to facilitate a realistic and organized set of objectives, work plans, and activities to accomplish those things which volunteers feel can and should be done.

4. Staff can assist volunteers in the planning process by taking notes, compiling information, providing history, distributing information, and making sure that all pertinent reports are prepared prior to the meeting. This should be done in cooperation with the chairperson of the committee.

#### Train

1. Staff can arrange for training of volunteers by outside experts, or by individuals within the organization who possess expertise. Make use of community

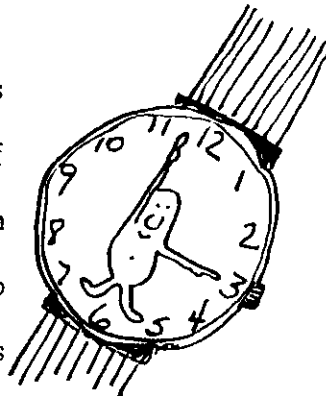
workshops and college continuing education classes. If a staff person has specialized information in an area of committee responsibility, have that person share their expertise. For example, a director of volunteer services with previous counseling experience could provide information to a committee recruiting new volunteers to work with juvenile offenders. The counseling expertise could help the committee understand who might effectively work with high risk youth.

2. Orientation and training of committee members is a job done most effectively by the chairperson of the committee in cooperation with the staff. The chairperson can review job descriptions and committee guidelines and the current objectives of the group. A staff member might assemble a packet of material that provides detailed information, needed by the chairperson. Motivational theorists tell us that ownership of a project produces a higher level of productivity. When staff "take over", they run the risk of reducing the sense of ownership. If a knowledgeable

volunteer provides orientation training for a committee this tells other volunteers that they are expected to work for a similar level of ownership and understanding. If a volunteer committee indicates it would like more training, a brief needs assessment can be conducted. This might mean drafting a short survey, compiling the results, and preparing a report for the chairperson. The job of the staff person is to enhance the effective functioning of the chairperson and individual members.

#### Supervise

1. Supervision is provided to individuals. Staff should consult the chairperson about a desired work plan to keep volunteers on track. This means making periodic phone calls and sending reminder notes. It is important for a staff person to know individual committee members schedules and best times for meetings. This function can save the chairperson hours of telephoning and checking when best to set



meetings. A card file system can usually serve this purpose.

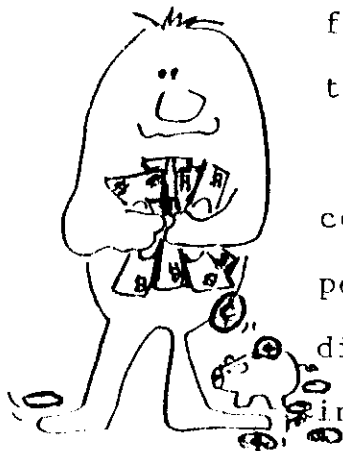
2. Good volunteer managers do not ignore absent members. A staff member needs to work with a chairperson to determine who makes follow up calls to individuals who miss meetings. Someone missing from a meeting should receive copies of the meeting summary and any materials handed out. If it is not known why the person missed the meeting, a follow-up call might be in order. Motivational theorist Abraham Maslow puts the need to feel a sense of belonging immediately adjacent to the need for food and shelter. If volunteers know that their absence affects the work of the committee, they are more apt to attend and feel a sense of belonging.

3. Often staff will intervene when they determine the volunteer is not going to carry out their job. Volunteer managers who do this are often praised by staff and other volunteers for "saving the day". Perhaps someone should instead ask the question, "Why didn't you do your job?" The role of staff is to facilitate the work of volunteers, not do

it! A re-reading of Tom Sawyer by Mark Twain might help staff to understand the function of volunteers. The staff job is to get other people to white wash a fence, love it while they are doing it, and think it was their idea in the first place. A volunteer who is not functioning needs to be 1) offered assistance, 2) possibly be reassigned, and/or 3) be closely monitored by the chairperson of the committee and staff. In some cases it might be necessary to replace that individual. Supervision of volunteers means steady monitoring. That helps keep the volunteer and staff informed of how a specific project is progressing.

#### Control

1. Control is not a dirty word. In profit making businesses, it is the term used to describe keeping an eye on the numbers and the quality of the product. It is a term that can be used more productively in volunteer circles than it is currently. Staff who have control assignments with a committee are not trying to take over. They are people who keep



facts, figures, and reports for the use of the committee.

2. A major area needing control is finance. A staff person frequently has more direct access to those with information about a committee's budget. Each meeting the chairperson should provide the group with a budget report, both income and expenses. This information is usually gathered by a staff person who then briefs the chairperson on its implications.

3. Other areas of control would include keeping attendance records, maintaining accurate program figures related to the task of the committee, e.g., statistics on the number of campers for the camping committee; the number of media contacts in the last quarter for the Public Relations committee; the number of constituent inquiries for a subcommittee of a state governmental Advisory Board. Any type of information that helps committee members see the validity of their work is useful and should be shared. The most effective means to share this is through

the chairperson or a member of the committee with a special interest or assignment in that particular area. The staff person provides the information and its implication to the volunteer who in turn shares it with the larger group.

4. Minutes and meeting summaries are another form of control. Staff has the responsibility to see that notes are taken and distributed to appropriate persons.

5. Through control, staff can indicate to a committee the need for mid-course corrections. A youth agency had organized an effective recruiting committee. Their job was to find adults to work with small groups, which was done in the fall. The work of the committee was planned in the spring and early summer. In late August a staff member learned that the local school district was changing its policy about the distribution of information on youth programs that would dramatically impact the way adult recruiting was to be conducted. A series of emergency meetings were held to adjust the previously designed plan. Much of the original plan was

salvaged, including some cleverly designed recruiting brochures. The staff person monitoring this process pulled the committee together to make a "mid-course correction." That is a control behavior. It is important to note that the volunteers made the decisions about the actual changes in recruiting format. It was the staff person who saw that some additional printing was done, contacted members of the media, and greased the wheels for the recruiting. Volunteer members of the committee contacted influential people in the school system to register concern and bring about changes advantageous to the organization. The volunteers also carried out the actual recruiting events.

### Evaluation

1. Evaluation is carried out by and for volunteers. It includes an evaluation of the content of the work accomplished, and the contributions of individuals to that work. This process and the role that staff play is more fully described in Step VIII on evaluation.



2. Staff should ask their supervisors and/or other professional staff to evaluate the functioning of a particular committee. This means assessing the staff/volunteer interaction on the committee and determining if there is a need for change in the responsibilities that would enhance the effectiveness of the committee.

A non-profit agency had grown dramatically over a three year period. The small Finance Committee was now responsible for overseeing the budgeting process, making presentations to funding sources, and developing financial plans which included a capital fund drive. This challenging work was being tackled by 5 high powered volunteers. There were no complaints, but it was clear to a staff member that the potential for burnout was imminent. During the evaluation process the committee undertook, the staff member suggested a different structuring of the committee to enhance membership and/or change the workloads. This suggestion was lost in a barrage of other ideas.

The staff member then discussed the

matter more fully with the chairperson of the Finance Committee and the agency director. The issue was reviewed at a meeting with the President of the Board of Directors, the Executive Director, The Chairperson, and the staff member assigned to the Finance Committee. The board undertook an overall review of its structure. Not only were the Finance Committee duties changed, but so were the duties of several other committees. The growth of the organization had necessitated a more realistic configuration of small committees to do big jobs. This staff person's intervention was entirely appropriate. A famous sage once said "sometimes we miss the forest because we have our forehead pressed up against the bark." Staff are paid to maintain a certain level of objectivity and distance. This does not mean they lack commitment or concern for the mission of the organization. This example illustrates how a staff member can personally evaluate committee operations and see that changes are made to ensure a healthy continuity.

3. Volunteer managers should also evaluate their own personal commitment. Just as volunteers can become burned out, so can professional staff. If a staff member has been working with the same committee for a number of years, they might consider moving to a different group. Volunteers on Advisory Boards and Boards of Directors usually serve a specific term. If possible, staff assigned to a committee should also rotate periodically. In smaller organizations this is not always possible. In that event, managers must use every ounce of creativity to keep fresh. This includes reading the latest on the management of volunteer programs, attending Continuing Education workshops, working with other volunteer managers in the area, and perhaps pursuing an advanced degree. Another technique is to continuously recruit vibrant volunteers. A refreshing new voice from Boise or DesMoines can help a volunteer manager stay fresh.

Effective committees that are productive and retain members are not an accident or an Act of God. They are the result of hard work by staff and administrative level volunteers such as

the president of a Board of Directors, the chairperson of an Advisory group, or the chairperson of a particular committee. The steps in this manual suggest techniques to build strong committees.

The theories that underline all of the suggestions come from the research done by hundreds of people on human motivation and adult learning. Anyone interested in building a better committee needs all the tools available. These tools are suggested to enable staff and volunteers to help others achieve their mission.