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ARTICLES

Volunteers' Motivations: A Functional Strategy for the Recruitment, Placement, and Retention of Volunteers

E. Gil Clary, Mark Snyder, Robert Ridge

A psychological strategy for understanding the motivational underpinnings of volunteerism is described. In a presentation that merges the theoretical interests of researchers with the practical interests of volunteer administrators, six different motivational functions served by volunteerism are identified, and an inventory designed to measure these motivations is presented. The implications of this functional approach for the recruitment, placement, and retention of volunteers are then elaborated. Finally, recommendations are provided for volunteer administrators who seek to increase the number of people who volunteer and to improve their human resource management.

IN MANY respects, the leaders and managers of nonprofit organizations are like leaders of other organizations, because they must confront the difficult tasks of setting goals and objectives, budgeting and allocating resources, staffing the organization, and reporting on the organization's success or failure (Ellis, 1986). Nevertheless, the leaders of nonprofit organizations face special challenges. Unlike leaders of profit-making organizations, they must elicit financial support from government contracts, client fees, or donations rather than from sales of products or services, and they must deal with nonprofit

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boards of directors. Most important, many nonprofit organizations must rely heavily on volunteers to carry out core services (Herman and Heimovics, 1989). Indeed, because of these special challenges, several authors have suggested that a new specialization in social work should be conceptualized, that of volunteer administrator (Haeuser and Schwartz, 1984; Perlmutter, 1984). Clearly, managing a nonprofit organization requires special skills, and with volunteerism becoming more diverse, perhaps the most important skill will be the ability to adapt to the changing environment in order to be maximally effective (Schindler-Rainman, 1990).

One way to help volunteer administrators adapt and deal more effectively with their jobs is to assess pressing concerns to determine the areas in which they feel most uncertain and then train them in those areas. Brudney and Brown (1990) used a national survey to identify the management skills that volunteer administrators would most like to have covered in basic and advanced seminars in volunteer management. The top three preferences for subjects of basic seminars include the recruitment, placement, and retention of volunteers. In addition, the recruitment, placement, and retention of volunteers rank within the top twenty preferences for coverage in advanced seminars, particularly among administrators with five or fewer years of experience. Results of the survey suggest that volunteer administrators are concerned with the management of volunteers and that they would like to learn ways to perform these functions more effectively. This article represents an attempt to address these concerns and suggests a new perspective for volunteer administrators to consider.

Many nonprofit organizations must rely heavily on volunteers to carry out core services

As psychologists, our approach has been to focus on the motivational factors associated with volunteerism. We have sought to identify the needs, goals, plans, and motives behind people's decisions to volunteer. While some researchers have examined the needs of communities for devising strategies for recruiting, placing, and retaining volunteers (Sharon, 1990-1991), we have focused on the needs of individuals. That is, we have sought to identify and understand the needs and motivations that volunteers seek to satisfy through their volunteer work. Moreover, our approach has led us to examine questions not only of theoretical interest to researchers but of practical significance to volunteer administrators. It is of these practical concerns that we wish to speak.

In presenting this merger of theoretical and practical interests, we first describe the strategy that we have adopted for investigating and understanding the motivational underpinnings of volunteerism. Then, we discuss the development of a new instrument designed to measure these motivations. Finally, we elaborate on the implications of our research for the recruitment, placement, and retention of volunteers, and we provide recommendations for volunteer administrators as to how they might deal with these issues more effectively.

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Understanding Motivation: A Functional Strategy

The approach that we have adopted for investigating the motivational underpinnings of volunteerism is the strategy of functional analysis. Functional analysis is concerned with the personal and social motives, needs, goals, and functions that are served by an individual's beliefs and actions (Snyder, 1988). In psychology, the functional approach has been applied with considerable success to such problems as attitudes, persuasion, and social influence (Herek, 1987; Shavitt, 1989; Snyder and DeBono, 1987, 1989). The functional strategy asks questions of the form, What function or purpose is served for a person when he or she holds a certain attitude or behaves in a certain way? In the present context, the question could be posed, What functions are served when a person volunteers? The logic of the functional approach to volunteerism is to identify the motives that are satisfied, the needs that are met, and the goals that are reached when a person gets involved in volunteerism. Critical to the logic of the functional strategy is the assertion that persons can hold the same attitude or perform the same behavior for very different reasons. Acts of volunteerism that appear to be the same on the surface can actually reflect different underlying motivational processes. To the extent that these motivations can be identified, we can better understand what people are looking for when they think about volunteering and how we might help them to satisfy their needs. Finally, this strategy points to ways in which we might go about persuading nonvolunteers to participate in volunteer activities. If we can correctly identify the motivation that a potential volunteer seeks to satisfy, then persuasive messages can target that motivation and demonstrate how the motivation can be satisfied by a particular volunteer activity. Persons who believe that their needs and goals will be satisfied by volunteering are more likely to engage in the service than those who have no such assurance.

The Volunteer Functions Inventory consists of thirty reasons one might have for volunteering

The implications of the preceding discussion hinge on the ability of researchers and volunteer administrators to identify the motivations that current and potential volunteers seek to satisfy. Our research has focused on creating an instrument capable of assessing these motivations, one that researchers and laypersons can administer and score with ease. We have developed such an instrument, and we are now in a position to identify motivations that are satisfied by volunteering and to explain how this knowledge can help volunteer administrators recruit, place, and retain volunteers.

The Volunteer Functions Inventory

The instrument that we have developed to identify the motivations behind volunteering is called the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI). The VFI can be given to volunteers and nonvolunteers alike, and it

can be administered individually or in group settings. The inventory consists of thirty reasons that one might have for volunteering, and respondents are asked to report how important or accurate each possible reason for volunteering is for them. The instrument uses a seven-point scale. People who have never volunteered are asked to indicate how important each reason would be for them.

For each individual, six scores are calculated that correspond to six different motivations that can be satisfied by volunteering. Each motivation is assessed by five reasons on the inventory. The highest score reflects the motivation of greatest importance to the respondent, while the lowest score reflects the motivation of least concern. Thus, when the scale scores have been obtained, a volunteer administrator can quickly identify and rank order the salient motivational concerns of the respondent:

Social
My friends volunteer.
People I'm close to volunteer.
People I know share an interest in community service.
Others with whom I am close place a high value on community service.
Volunteering is an important activity to the people I know best.

Value
I am concerned about those less fortunate than myself.
I am genuinely concerned about the particular group I am serving.
I feel compassion toward people in need.
I feel it is important to help others.
I can do something for a cause that is important to me.

Career
Volunteering can help me get my foot in the door at a place where I would like to work.
I can make new contacts that might help my business or career.
Volunteering allows me to explore different career options.
Volunteering will help me succeed in my chosen profession.
Volunteering will look good on my résumé.

Understanding
I can learn more about the cause for which I am working.
Volunteering allows me to gain a new perspective on things.
Volunteering lets me learn through direct hands-on experience.
I can learn how to deal with a variety of people.
I can explore my own strengths.

Protective
Doing volunteer work relieves me of some of the guilt over being more fortunate than others.

Volunteering helps me
Volunteering is a good
No matter how bad I've
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By volunteering I feel l

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Volunteering helps me work through my own personal problems.
Volunteering is a good escape from my own troubles.
No matter how bad I've been feeling, volunteering helps me to forget about it.
By volunteering I feel less lonely.

Esteem
Volunteering makes me feel important.
Volunteering increases my self-esteem.
Volunteering makes me feel better about myself.
Volunteering is a way to make new friends.
Volunteering makes me feel needed.

(Copies of the Volunteer Functions Inventory in photocopy-ready form, as well as instructions for its administration and scoring, are available from the authors.)

The VFI measures six primary functions: values, understanding, career, social, esteem, and protective

The choice of the items listed on the VFI was guided by theoretical considerations. Clary and Snyder (1991) analyzed the empirical research on volunteerism and identified a set of primary functions served by volunteer activity. Although these functions may not exhaust the universe of functions potentially relevant to volunteers, they are the functions that emerged most clearly and consistently in this analysis. Reflecting this research, the VFI measures six primary functions: values, understanding, career, social, esteem, and protective.

Values

For some, volunteering serves a values function by allowing them to act on deeply held beliefs about the importance of helping others. By volunteering, such persons express their values in a meaningful way and receive satisfaction from knowing that their service is a true expression of those values. Volunteering can also provide an opportunity to serve as an advocate for a group or cause that is important to an individual. Often referred to as *altruism* in empirical research, national surveys find evidence of this values motivation when reasons for volunteering are identified (INDEPENDENT SECTOR, 1988).

Understanding

For others, volunteering serves an understanding function by satisfying the desire to understand the people whom one serves, the organization for which one volunteers, or oneself. Volunteering satisfies such a person's desire to learn for the sake of learning. For example, Gidron's (1978) study of volunteers in health and mental health institutions found that some volunteers had a strong desire to learn from their participation in their volunteer work.

Career

In contrast to the understanding function, the career function is satisfied when people volunteer to learn particular skills or to learn

about an organization not simply for the sake of learning but because doing so will help them explore job opportunities or introduce them to potential career contacts. The existence of this function is demonstrated by Jenner's (1982) study of Junior League Volunteers, many of whom volunteered to prepare for a new career or to obtain career-relevant skills.

Social

Still others are motivated to volunteer in order to satisfy a social function. For them, volunteering is a reflection of the normative influence of friends, family, or a social group whom they hold in esteem. They volunteer because it is expected by relevant others and because doing so fulfills their need to behave in socially desired ways. The social function is reflected in studies of blood donation where initial donors admit that an important reason for their action is social pressure (Piliavin, Evans, and Callero, 1984).

Esteem

The last two functions represent ways in which volunteering is undertaken for the specific purpose of making one feel better about oneself. Volunteering serves an esteem function to the extent that it enhances a person's esteem by making the person feel needed and important. The person already feels good about him- or herself but volunteers for the purpose of feeling even better. Evidence that volunteering can help people feel better about themselves is found in studies of volunteers in mental hospitals who demonstrate an increased self-acceptance as a result of volunteering (Holzberg, Gewirtz, and Ebner, 1964; King, Walder, and Pavey, 1970).

Protective

A person fulfilling an esteem function is contrasted with the person who feels lonely or guilty and volunteers to relieve the self of these unpleasant feelings. For this person, volunteering provides relief or escape from negative feelings about one's self and serves a protective function. Thus, the person motivated by protective concerns volunteers to help himself or herself forget about or escape from negative qualities and feelings. Evidence of this function is found in Keniston's (1968) sample of student activists who became involved out of a sense of "existential guilt" (Hoffman, 1976) or feelings of culpability for the plight of the less advantaged and in Frisch and Gerrard's (1981) study of Red Cross volunteers, some of whom volunteered to escape negative feelings.

Discussion

Research conducted thus far on the VFI demonstrates substantial content validity, as each of the functions just enumerated reflects a motivation to volunteer identified in the empirical literature. We have found impressive evidence of individual-to-individual variation

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in motivations to volunteer, with each function being rated as most important for some and as least important for others. This, together with the finding that none of the inventory scales are significantly correlated with a measure of social desirability, suggests that respondents are quite willing to endorse functions regardless of how desirable they may appear to be. In addition, the inventory is also reliable. Our research (Clary, Snyder, and Ridge, 1991) shows that the items making up each of the scales are particularly well suited to represent their respective functions as evidenced by high internal reliability coefficients. (All have internal consistency coefficients greater than or equal to .80.) We also find significant test-retest reliabilities (all correlations greater than .60), indicating that the VFI measures functions well over time (Ridge and others, 1990).

In the course of developing the VFI, we surveyed almost 1,000 current volunteers as well as 500 university students. Factor analyses of the responses of current volunteers revealed six separate factors corresponding to the six motivations that the inventory is designed to measure. This factor structure emerged not once but twice; both samples consisted of almost 500 volunteers. Considering that the volunteer organizations participating in our research have represented a broad spectrum of volunteers and activities, ranging from hospice workers and crisis counselors to disaster relief and prison volunteers, these results are particularly impressive. The clean factor structure indicates that the inventory measures six motivations that are consistent with theoretical predictions and that are psychologically distinct to respondents.

Further evidence for the VFI's validity is found in correlations between scale scores and demographic variables, such as age (Clary and Snyder, 1990). For example, if it is correct to assume that older volunteers are established in careers and that younger volunteers are probably considering their employment alternatives, we would expect the career motivation to be stronger for young persons. A significant negative correlation (−.53) is obtained between the age of volunteers and their career scores, indicating that career concerns are indeed more important to younger volunteers. Finally, as we note in the next section, the VFI performs as expected in empirical studies investigating the functional approach for recruiting volunteers.

In sum, the VFI represents a promising new approach to the assessment of volunteers' motivations and offers several advantages over earlier attempts at measuring the motivations of volunteers. As the preceding discussion suggests, the VFI is reliable and valid and has a solid conceptual base. Furthermore, the VFI explicitly recognizes the multimotivational nature of volunteering and measures many motivations at once; this recognition has not always occurred. Clary and Snyder (1991) discuss this point, as well as the limitations of previous attempts to measure volunteers' motivations. Indeed, some volunteers may actually have clusters of functions that are similarly endorsed as very important, while other clusters of functions are less personally

important. Although the VFI has the potential to identify the single function most important to a particular volunteer, practitioners and researchers should understand that under certain circumstances it may be impractical to single out just one function. Thus, just as there are volunteers who are motivated primarily or exclusively by one function (for example, the values function), there may also be volunteers for whom several functions coexist and jointly underlie their volunteering (for example, volunteers who participate out of social, values, and esteem motivations).

While the VFI has strong conceptual and empirical support, some cautions are in order. Because the VFI follows a self-report format, it depends first on people's willingness to complete the inventory and second on how forthcoming they are in their responses. In this regard, we noted earlier that the scales do not correlate with measures of social desirability. However, we suggest that both concerns—willingness to complete the inventory and completing it candidly—lessen as organizations incorporate the assessment of motivations into standard placement procedures. By doing so, volunteer administrators will be treating this part of the process seriously, and we can hope that they will convince the respondent of the same. That is, the measurement of volunteers' motives, needs, and goals for volunteering is important and valuable to both the organization and the volunteer.

The VFI recognizes the multimotivational nature of volunteering and measures many motivations at once

In the preceding sections, we alluded to the implications of such motivational knowledge for human resource management in nonprofit organizations. We now elaborate on these implications and specify how volunteer administrators can use the VFI to recruit, place, and retain volunteers. As we will see, the functional approach provides a common framework for understanding these concerns. By understanding the motivational functions served by volunteering, managers can optimize the recruitment, placement, and retention of volunteers.

Recruitment of Volunteers

The American public clearly recognizes the importance of citizen participation. In 1989, it is estimated that American adults volunteered 20.5 billion hours to helping other people, some 98.4 million people performing volunteer services worth $170 billion (INDEPENDENT SECTOR, 1990). And when it comes to attitudes and values, Americans claim by a three-to-one margin to believe that people should volunteer and thereby help make the world a better place (INDEPENDENT SECTOR, 1988). Yet as impressive as these statistics are, the fact of the matter is that Americans actually fall far short of the true potential for volunteering. Using a broad and inclusive definition of *volunteering* that includes informally helping one's friends and neighbors as well as working within a service organization, barely half of American adults can report a single instance over

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the course of a year when they have volunteered. Moreover, fewer than one in three was actually involved in volunteer work at any point in time. This situation corresponds to the paradox familiar to students of human behavior—namely, that people's actions often fall short of their beliefs, intentions, and values. We would expect persons with positive attitudes toward volunteerism to become volunteers. But not all people translate these positive attitudes into action. Why is this the case?

From the functional perspective, people volunteer to satisfy personal and social needs and goals. According to this view, people will adopt new beliefs and behaviors to the extent that they can be persuaded that the new beliefs and behaviors will satisfy their motivations better than existing beliefs and behaviors. It is clear, however, that in the case of volunteering, people have positive attitudes about volunteering and citizen participation, yet many remain inactive. Perhaps these citizens would volunteer if they knew that doing so would satisfy their motivations. Thus, it would not be necessary first to persuade them to adopt more favorable beliefs about volunteering to get them to volunteer. The key to recruitment would be to show potential volunteers how volunteer activity would better satisfy their motivations than inactivity. This can be accomplished by taking the steps outlined here.

The nature of membership in particular groups can provide clues about the motivations of potential volunteers

The first step toward successful recruitment is considering the audience from which recruiting will take place so that the relevant motivations of potential volunteers can be identified. For example, one nonprofit organization may wish to recruit student volunteers from colleges and universities in the area, while another may wish to recruit employees from local industries, and still another may wish to recruit members of local churches and synagogues. By identifying where the recruiting will be done, volunteer administrators can assess the motivational concerns of audience members and then promote their organizations or activities as a means by which relevant motivations of the target audience can be satisfied.

The very nature of membership in particular groups can provide clues about the motivations of potential volunteers, as in the case where younger adults are likely to be motivated primarily by career concerns. However, recruiters may be surprised to find that their expectations about the relevant motivations of an audience are not accurate. While young adults are motivated by career concerns, they may have even stronger motivations related to understanding, that is, to the desire to learn more about the causes for which they would be working, the recipients of their service, or themselves. Moreover, individuals can be motivated by several concerns, and it is important to understand which needs are the most pressing. Thus, instead of assuming that a particular audience is motivated by a single motivation and basing recruitment efforts on this assumption, recruiters should assess the current motivational concerns of the target audience.

Measurement of audience motivation is the second step for successful recruitment, and the Volunteer Functions Inventory is a tool that can be used for this purpose. Because the VFI can be completed in minutes with minimal written instructions, how nonprofit organizations go about administering the VFI is limited only by the creativity of administrators. We have assessed volunteer motivations via the VFI at volunteer fairs and expositions as well as by distributing it through volunteer organizations. The potential exists for the VFI to be administered at community events, through bulk mailings, through telephone surveys, or on an individual basis at an organization's headquarters. Whatever the setting, the VFI gives the volunteer administrator important insight into the motivational concerns of the potential volunteer.

Individuals can be motivated by several concerns, and it is important to understand which needs are the most pressing

The third step for successful recruitment is tailoring persuasive messages to the relevant motivations of potential volunteers. Once the motivational profile of the selected group has been determined, that group can then be targeted for advertisements addressing the specific motivational concerns of its members. To illustrate, once again consider the potential volunteers who are motivated to satisfy an understanding function and who as such are interested in learning certain things. The organization that wanted to tap this audience would be well advised to create advertisements promoting itself and its activities as the means by which volunteers can learn things about the people whom they are serving, the organization, and themselves. The ads could stress the insights gained by previous volunteers and the continued learning opportunities provided by volunteering. Thus, these advertisements should inform potential volunteers about the match between their motivational concerns, the organization, and its activities. Our own research suggests that such ads are more persuasive and have a greater effect for recruiting volunteers than motivationally irrelevant ads (Ridge and others, 1991).

In face-to-face contact with individual volunteers, administrators should find it relatively easy to address the motivational concerns of the individual as they explain the benefits of volunteering. However, at the level of groups of volunteers, they may find that a particular audience has more than one salient motivation, and they may wonder how best to target this audience for persuasive messages. Depending on the resources available, the organization may choose to create more than one message, each with a different motivational emphasis, or it may choose to identify the motivational concern of greatest importance to the greatest number of people and then create one message addressed to them. Regardless of the strategy employed, targeting the motivational concerns of the audience will fortify recruitment efforts and persuade more people to volunteer.

As our discussion suggests, a critical component of any persuasive message aimed at recruiting new volunteers is informing potential recruits that their motivations will be better served by volunteering than by remaining inactive. Recruiters who perceive their organiza-

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tion as satisfying one particular function may face the task of portraying it in new and functionally different ways. For example, the leader of an organization that provides food and shelter for the needy may view it as serving primarily a values function. In this case, the organization has perhaps recruited people by stressing how the activity allows them to perform a compassionate service and do something for others less fortunate. However, if the target audience is motivated primarily by esteem concerns, the values advertisements will be less effective. The recruitment message must include the assurance that the activity will satisfy the volunteer's relevant motivation, that is, it will make the volunteer feel needed and important. When this has been done, the potential volunteer should understand that this particular activity will fulfill an important need, and he or she should thereby be more likely to volunteer. Making sure that the activity actually meets these needs is the subject of placement and retention, which are discussed in the next two sections.

Recruiters who perceive their organization as satisfying one function may face the task of portraying it in new and functionally different ways

Placement of Volunteers

Many volunteer organizations sponsor several activities, while others serve as recruitment and referral centers that represent a variety of agencies and activities. A challenging task for the volunteer leader is to correctly identify the activity at which the newly recruited volunteer will be most productive and from which he or she will derive the most enjoyment. Some volunteers have a clear idea of what they would like to do, but situations sometimes arise in which the activity of choice is currently unavailable or another activity needs volunteers more desperately. In each of these situations, the volunteer leader must assign the volunteer to an activity that will meet the needs of both the organization and the volunteer. The functional strategy can assist the leader in making these decisions.

The functional approach suggests that assigning a volunteer to an activity that matches her or his motivation will bring the most satisfaction to the volunteer. And satisfying one's psychological needs is likely to affect a volunteer's performance, although, as Puffer (1991) has suggested, the effect is not always a straightforward one. These effects, whether direct or indirect, require the volunteer leader to identify the motivational concerns of the volunteer, find the activity (perhaps among several alternatives) that will best satisfy this motivation, and make the appropriate assignment. The first task can be completed by administering the VFI to the volunteer. The results give the leader an idea of what the volunteer desires to get out of the volunteer experience.

The second task—identifying an activity that will fulfill certain needs—may be more challenging. There are some activities that obviously satisfy certain motivations for the volunteer. For example, the volunteer motivated by career concerns who is interested in becoming a therapist will almost certainly be profitably placed as either a

telephone or face-to-face counselor. Similarly, the person motivated by understanding concerns will be fruitfully placed in an activity that allows him or her to learn a new skill, such as learning and teaching about lifesaving techniques. Administrators must attempt to place volunteers in functionally relevant activities, thus ensuring that volunteers will have their needs met and enjoy the activities.

The challenge comes when the organization's activities appear not to address the needs of the new volunteer. Just as volunteer administrators must be cautioned against assuming that a particular audience will be motivated by a particular function, they must also avoid the tendency to perceive a particular activity as fulfilling only one type of motive. The same activity may well be appropriate for people with different motivational concerns if volunteers receive feedback indicating that their needs are being met. Leaders prepared to provide volunteers with different yet motivationally relevant feedback will be better able to place volunteers with different concerns into the same activity. In this way, they can place volunteers into a greater variety of activities and direct volunteers to activities that may be less popular or need more volunteers.

The same activity may well be appropriate for people with different motivational concerns

To illustrate, a volunteer leader may be eager and willing to place a volunteer thinking about becoming a therapist into a counseling assignment, thus matching a career concern with an appropriate activity. This activity may also be perfectly suitable for the person motivated by social concerns, provided that the volunteer receives feedback indicating that the service is consistent with social norms. Or the same activity may be appropriate for a volunteer motivated by values concerns, provided that the feedback informs the volunteer that the service is a demonstration of compassion and that it is truly helping people in need. The point of this example is to demonstrate that placing a person in a certain activity will be easier and more successful if the leader understands the motives of the volunteer and places her or him in an activity in which he or she can receive motivationally relevant feedback. While providing this feedback, the volunteer administrator must also listen carefully to feedback from the volunteer so that adjustments in activities can be made when necessary. The feedback mechanism is essentially a reciprocal process. The creative leader who can frame an activity in functionally different ways and listen to the feedback provided by volunteers will be better able to place volunteers in activities that they will enjoy and want to continue performing.

Of course, not all activities lend themselves to serving all functions. But administrators with activities of limited diversity should find that the functional strategy allows them to place more people into the same activities, provided that the personal and social functions of the volunteers are met. It also allows them to place volunteers into activities that traditionally attract few volunteers by assuring them that their salient motivations will be satisfied. And administrators can work cooperatively with one another, learning about the

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activities of different organizations so that volunteers will be more effectively directed to activities that will be the most fulfilling. Moreover, the feedback received by and from the volunteer is extremely important and has implications not only in placing but also in retaining the volunteer.

Retention of Volunteers

Volunteer administrators must grapple not only with recruiting and placing volunteers in appropriate activities, but they must also strive to retain their current volunteer staff. As the interests and circumstances of volunteers change over time, administrators face constant turnover. This turnover comes at a tremendous cost to the organization (Babchuk and Booth, 1969). Volunteer turnover can decrease organizational morale and services, and revenue can be lost as administrators focus resources on recruitment, training, and other aspects of human resource management. The functional approach helps administrators to address the problem of turnover by offering a framework and a strategy for encouraging continued, sustained service, because the logic of the functional strategy that applies to recruitment and placement also applies to retention.

Administrators who see that the needs of volunteers are met will be better able to keep volunteers

Functional theory suggests that volunteers will be satisfied with their involvement precisely to the extent that it meets their needs, goals, and motivations. From this proposition it follows that volunteers whose motivations are fulfilled by their service will remain with the organization for longer periods of time; for research relevant to this suggestion, see Clary and Miller (1986), Francies (1983), and Omoto and Snyder (1990). Administrators who see that the needs of their volunteers are met will be better able to reduce high turnover rates and keep volunteers longer. In functional terms, administrators who provide volunteers with activities that match their motivations and satisfy their needs and goals will foster an atmosphere in which volunteers receive more satisfaction from their work and will thus continue longer in their service.

Clearly, the first step toward gaining committed service from a volunteer is to place the volunteer in an activity that meets her or his needs. As the discussion of placement noted, the functional approach provides a practical strategy for meeting this requirement. The key is for the leader, the activity itself, or the recipient of the service to provide feedback indicating that the volunteer's motivation is being satisfied. For example, a person motivated by a protective function needs to feel that he or she will be relieved of guilt stemming from having more than the underprivileged, that the service will help him or her focus more on others than on personal problems, and that he or she can feel better by helping others. Volunteer administrators can provide this kind of feedback by providing specific examples of how the volunteer's service is benefitting the underprivileged, by offering opportunities for volunteers to participate in the organization and

implementation of various programs, and by encouraging recipients of volunteer services to express their gratitude to the volunteers. Receiving motivationally relevant feedback should increase the commitment of a volunteer to the activity.

Administrators must also be aware of changing motivational concerns. Gaining committed service from a volunteer depends on modifying assignments in order to satisfy emerging needs. That is, as time passes, a volunteer's original needs may be met, and the volunteer may feel the need to satisfy newly relevant motivations. Consider, for example, persons motivated by career concerns who have obtained employment. They may stop volunteering unless they feel or are shown that volunteering can satisfy other motivations. Now perhaps they have salient values needs, or perhaps they have emerging esteem needs. Whatever the case, the nonprofit leader needs to be aware of changes so that new assignments can be made and feedback provided to match these motivations. A key to being aware of these changes is to solicit feedback from the volunteer regarding his or her satisfaction with the current assignment. In addition, administering the VFI at different times during the volunteer's tenure will allow the manager to keep abreast of changing motivations. Expanding the current task or making a new assignment can be done as the need arises so that the volunteer will remain at the same organization while satisfying different needs.

Gaining committed service from a volunteer depends on modifying assignments in order to satisfy emerging needs

Finally, commitment to an organization can be maintained by assigning different tasks that serve the same function. As with any task, boredom can result from prolonged exposure to the same activity. Some volunteers may never desire to satisfy more than one motivation, but they might desire diversity in the activities that will meet the same motivational needs. To the extent that administrators understand the motivations served by their activities and provide motivationally relevant feedback, they can assign different tasks to volunteers that will satisfy their motivations and encourage them to continue volunteering.

Summary and Conclusions

We have introduced a psychological approach to understanding the motivational underpinnings of volunteer behavior, and we have pointed to some of the practical implications of such an approach. The functional approach seeks to identify the motivational foundations behind volunteer activity and recognizes that multiple motivations are involved. This means, first, that different individuals involved in the same activity can be attempting to satisfy very different motives and, second, that the same individual may seek to fulfill more than one motive. From a functional analysis of volunteer behavior, we developed an instrument—the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI)—that yields a motivational profile for an individual volunteer or potential volunteer. The functional approach, along with the VFI, has

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important implications for the practice of volunteering, because the identified functions can be used for the critically important tasks of recruitment, placement, and retention.

Up to this point, we have considered the recruitment, placement, and retention processes as isolated one from another. However, a strength of the functional approach comes in viewing these three aspects of the volunteering process together. The functional approach, which provides an overall framework, represents the different tasks facing volunteer administrators as pieces of the same cloth. In other words, while these aspects of volunteerism are distinct, the functional strategy treats them as interdependent and provides a unifying system for understanding volunteer activity.

We have asserted that recruitment can be strengthened by identifying the salient needs, goals, and motivations of potential volunteers and by creating persuasive messages to engage these motivations. Such messages persuade potential volunteers to participate in volunteer activities by showing them that volunteering can satisfy important psychological and social motivations. The functional approach is potentially effective both in recruiting from groups of individuals at such places as businesses or churches and in recruiting single individuals. Of course, groups make it possible to recruit many individuals at once. However, regardless of how people are recruited, whether in groups or individually, decisions about placement and retention are made at an individual level. And ultimately the functional approach is concerned with the personal motivations of each volunteer as an individual.

We have also asserted that the same motivations that operate for attracting individuals to volunteering are also likely to guide them to specific volunteer tasks. By being able to identify the motivations of individual volunteers, administrators can place volunteers in appropriate assignments. Finally, recruiting volunteers for, and placing them in, motivationally relevant activities and providing motivationally relevant feedback will serve to increase volunteers' satisfaction. This increased satisfaction in turn increases their commitment to the volunteer task and to the organization itself. Thus, in all phases of the volunteer process, the critical goal is one of matching the individual volunteer with volunteer tasks. The match is based on motivations important to the individual and on the ability of organizations and activities to fulfill those motivations.

Thus far, we have suggested a variety of strategies for implementing the functional approach, but we have yet to consider the easiest and most practical first step that volunteer administrators can take to address issues of recruitment, placement, and retention. Very simply, this step consists of assessing the motivations of one's current volunteers. By identifying the motivations of persons already drawn to their organization, administrators can understand the functions served by the activities in their organization and use this information to decide about appropriate recruitment and placement strategies for

the future. These plans would involve tailoring messages and activities to the motivations of those most likely to become involved with the organization. Furthermore, retention could be strengthened by assigning new tasks that would satisfy the emerging needs and goals of some volunteers and provide diversity for volunteers whose motivations were unchanged. Thus, measurement of existing volunteers provides administrators with a method of addressing all three areas of human resource management right away.

Clearly, the functional approach to volunteers' motivations offers practical advantages to organizations that use volunteers. With the VFI, volunteer administrators can gain an understanding of the motivations of their volunteers quickly and efficiently. Furthermore, the functional approach is built on a solid conceptual and empirical foundation. The approach outlined here gives volunteer administrators and researchers of volunteer behavior an opportunity for fruitful collaboration.

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