

UPS Delivers \$2 Million For Volunteer Management

It would appear that a call for prevailing volunteer management is now being heard. Volunteers, like employees, need structure, guidance and goals. If volunteers are expected to stay with an organization, then the organization must take a heightened and defined approach to organizing and maintaining their participation.

A recent United Parcel Service (UPS) study has underscored this view. Its statistics show nearly 40 percent of respondents to a nation-wide telephone survey would volunteer more if their efforts were well-managed and organized. Only "conflicts with more pressing demands on their time" was a more frequent reason at 65 percent.

The survey was conducted by Bruskin/Goldring Research, based in Edison, N.J. In the wake of these figures, the United Parcel Service Foundation (UPSF) established a \$2 million grant in an attempt to meet the organizational needs.

Dubbed the Volunteer Impact Initiative, the grant to ameliorate the effective use of volunteers will be split among five major national organizations. Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America, Junior Achievement, Points of Light Foundation, United Way of America and 100 Black Men of America will each receive \$400,000 during the two years to create or expand a model program.

"Managing volunteers effectively has become increasingly important for organizations and has never really been addressed in a significant way," said Gary Lee, Jr., UPSF executive director.

The study was part of a commitment made to America's Promise -- The Alliance for Youth (AP) during the Presidents'

Summit. AP is a clearinghouse for corporate and nonprofit sector promises made to better the lives of American youth.

Nonprofit organizations may see an increase in numbers of volunteers by better using their skills, the study concluded. Corresponding with other recent studies, the UPS survey indicated people believe volunteering is more important now than it was five years ago.

Nearly one quarter of survey respondents said they had never volunteered. It also indicated:

- 20 percent of the population had volunteered in the past but was not volunteering now;
- A majority American adults serve as volunteers in some capacity;
- Only of five American adults has recently increased the amount of time spent volunteering;
- Almost one quarter of employees were aware of a community service project organized by their employer for employee volunteers.

Alan J. Abramson, director of the nonprofit sector research fund at the Aspen Institute in Washington, D.C., said the study underlines the concerns expressed prior to the Presidents' Summit. "Volunteers need to be organized," he said. "With 2 million new volunteers (as sought by AP), who is going to organize them?"

Abramson applauded UPS for giving to a cause that isn't in the limelight. "It responded to the data it developed. You can't expect volunteers to come out if they aren't being organized."

-- *Melissa Batchilder*