

# **SOLID VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT**

Part of the

***PROFESSIONAL VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT SERIES***

**DESIGNED TO ASSIST YOU IN PLANNING AND  
IMPLEMENTING A SUCCESSFUL VOLUNTEER PROGRAM.**

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# INTRODUCTION

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If you're want a book that is full of graphs, charts and big words, this is not it!! This book is a basic, no nonsense guide to a solid volunteer management program.

This book is the third part of my "Professional Volunteer Management" series. "Solid, Volunteer Management" is a common sense approach for the non-profit organization. This book will help you achieve your goals in developing and implementing a solid volunteer management program for your organization.

I offer this book to you as a helper in your volunteer management needs.  
Best of Luck!!!

*DIANE SCANLAND*

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## PROFESSIONAL VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

*What is a volunteer?* You may think this is a strange question, but there are many organizations who don't know the answer. It is easy to state that volunteers are a free source of labor and go on. Take a moment to really consider the question. Volunteers are a valuable commodity, an asset to the non-profit organization. Obtaining and keeping good volunteers is a win-win situation. They rely on the non-profit management to keep them busy and to make them feel useful. Without volunteers, some non-profits would simply not exist. This puts pressure on the non-profit to provide a healthy, stable, solidly based volunteer program. Volunteers want security, proper direction, a sense of belonging and accomplishment, but most of all they want that warm fuzzy feeling one gets when serving their community. Indeed, these are all things the **volunteer must have** and **you**, the volunteer manager, **must provide** if you want to keep the volunteer in your organization.

You know you need volunteers, so what do you do? Can you just go out and start recruiting them? Do you just allow them to drop by your organization and you sign them up? Do you just "put the word out" and wait for them to come? Hardly! Providing a solid volunteer management program is no easy task. To be successful and recruit, train, retain and motivate volunteers requires a well thought-out volunteer management plan.

A solid volunteer program begins at the beginning, with a plan. We will start at the beginning. I will take you through the steps of a sound volunteer program from beginning to end.

Solid Volunteer Program Management is part of my "Professional Volunteer Management" series. This information should assist you in your quest for the volunteer program that will let you recruit and keep your volunteers.

Good luck!

# THE BASICS OF A VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

## *THE PRE-RECRUITMENT PROCESS--*

This process is sometimes called the Planning Process. This is the first step you must make before you can begin a volunteer program. In this process you will decide what you want to accomplish in your program and determine your objectives. Without knowing what you want to accomplish you won't know what type of volunteer you need.

One very simple but effective way to determine your objectives and/or what you want to accomplish is to put them on paper in simple terms. Like so:

What is the purpose/mission of my organization?

What do I need to accomplish my mission?

How close am I to this accomplishment?

Who can help me get there?

Once I get this help, will I know what to do with it?

What is my next move?

Once you have answered these questions, move on to step two.

The question "Once I get this help, will I know what to do with it?" is very important. If 10 volunteers walked in your door right now, would you know what to do with them? Sure, you could probably put them to work, but do you have job descriptions, a set orientation, a manual, a physical place for them to work, someone to supervise them, etc.? If not, read on!

**IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT THESE OBJECTIVES ARE WRITTEN DOWN. THEY NEED TO BE REVIEWED AT LEAST TWICE A YEAR.**

### ***DEVELOPING VOLUNTEER JOBS—***

You have your objectives now and it is time to design the jobs that will help you accomplish them. Once you have the proper job descriptions, you can match the volunteer to the job and vice versa. An essential thought; design jobs volunteers want to do! It is no good if the jobs you have are the ones no-one wants to do. In other words, don't recruit volunteers to sit in a room all day and lick stamps.

Ask yourself some simple questions; What will they do for us? Can we train them?

Develop a list of priorities out of your objectives and design the jobs for them.

There are several ways to structure a job description. A job description for a volunteer in a non-profit is really no different from a job description at other companies. Here is one example of a very simple job description.

## JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE: Public Relations Assistant

REPORTS TO: Communications Director

DESCRIPTION OF RESPONSIBILITIES: Assist with composing and mailing out PSA's, general announcements, and ad copy. Also assist with updating mailing and PR list. General word processing, and updating media book.

### SPECIFIC DUTIES:

1. Call various media and update names, addresses, titles etc. for media book.
2. Write and review PSA, type them for Communications Director. Mail out announcements.
3. Type and mail out information as needed to various media, nonprofits, and corporations.

### QUALIFICATIONS:

1. Age: 19
2. Education: HSD, good English, typing/W.P. skills, good communication skills.
3. Experience: Some writing preferred, experience with the media helpful, telephone experience needed, one year of W.P. needed, experience with mail outs helpful.
4. Other: Experience with the television and newspaper very helpful.

TIME REQUIREMENTS: At least 7 hours a week, more would be better.

BENEFITS: free parking, free drinks and snacks, free tickets to various events when available.

TRAINING REQUIRED: On the job training given, depending on experience.

Be as specific as possible on the job description, especially with the skill requirements and with the time requirements. Be prepared to be flexible with the time required. You don't want to lose a qualified volunteer just because you want the filing done at 3 p.m. instead of 1 p.m.

## ***RECRUITING THE VOLUNTEERS--***

Now that you know what volunteers will be doing for your organization and you have job descriptions for them, it is time to get them! Let's go recruiting!!

When you look for volunteers, remember that volunteering is a win-win situation. You get the assistance you need and the volunteer gets that fuzzy feeling, skills and much more. It is important to make sure the potential volunteer can give you what you need. You are not going to find this out when he/she completes the Volunteer Registration form. I would suggest you have a volunteer checklist ready for him/her to complete before they do anything else with your organization. This checklist should be designed so the volunteer can see if this is the right organization in which to volunteer. Even if your cause is one of his/her favorites, that is no sign your organization is the one. After all, the job is not going to get done if you're unhappy with the volunteer and vice versa.

You know why people volunteer, but have you ever given any thought as to why people **don't** volunteer? The number one reason is very simple, no one asked! So Ask!

Where do you find the volunteers? Almost anywhere. Remember to put volunteer opportunities in the apartment clubhouses and laundry rooms in your area, send notices to your local papers, TV, and radio stations. Put fliers up at local supermarkets, churches, schools, colleges, and women/men's clubs. Don't forget the usual avenues when looking for volunteers. Call your local Volunteer Center or United Way and inform them of your needs. Also check in with your local Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP). They are a wonderful source of volunteers and you are likely to find a great variety of skills waiting to be used to the good of the community.

What do you do when you are in a position to tell someone of your agency and its needs? You don't have to make a formal presentation about your agency. Just casual talk, giving them the facts about your mission, who you serve, background and your volunteer needs. Once you have them interested, you can arrange for them to take a tour of your facility and receive the necessary handouts/materials they need to know more about your organization.

I have recruited volunteers standing in supermarket check out lines, doctors offices, etc. This has been done through casual talk in a very informal manner. Anywhere there are people there is a volunteer waiting to be discovered.

How do we relay our recruitment message? As I stated above, use notices or Public Service Announcements to all local media, make attractive, attention-getting handouts, have a fact sheet about your organization ready with a listing of volunteer opportunities. Always have material that is up to date, easy to read, is good copy, correct in both spelling and the use of the English language. Remember these hand outs, etc. are the first and last thing some people will remember about you and your organization. Keep it professional!



## VOLUNTEER CHECKLIST

Please fill out to use as a guide as to whether you want to volunteer for this organization.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Do you have time to give? \_\_\_\_\_ How Much?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Do you enjoy working with others and are you good at it?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Do you finish what you start? \_\_\_\_\_ Are you punctual?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Do you give adequate notice if you have to cancel plans or appointments?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Do you feel strongly committed to causes of the organization you work with?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Do you respect and follow organization's policies and procedures?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Do you feel you would have a challenge with this organization?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Would you take any training you need?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Do you have any special talents or skills you want to use?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Are you flexible regarding jobs and time?

### COMMENTS:

A potential volunteer will realize that you are serious about your volunteer program and that you want serious commitment from a volunteer. If you have potential volunteers complete the checklist before the registration form, it may save you time and energy. If a volunteer has really thought about what he/she can do for your organization, they won't mind completing the checklist. If someone is resentful of completing the checklist, you know he hasn't given much thought to your organization or to your needs. Therefore, he will probably not be around very long nor will he be happy in his volunteer work.

Now is the time for the potential volunteer to complete the Volunteer Registration form. Following is an example of a simple registration form. Naturally, you must adapt a form for your own agency and needs.

**VOLUNTEER REGISTRATION**

Date of Interview \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewed by \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ BEST TIME TO CALL: \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Work

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

Street City Zip

HOW DID YOU HEAR OF OUR AGENCY: \_\_\_\_\_

WHAT TYPE OF VOLUNTEER WORK DO YOU WANT: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

WHAT HOURS CAN YOU VOLUNTEER: \_\_\_\_\_

DO YOU HAVE A SPECIAL SKILL: \_\_\_\_\_

WHAT SPECIAL TRAINING OR EDUCATION DO YOU HAVE: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_PREVIOUS VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE? \_\_\_\_\_ WHERE AND WHEN: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_DO YOU HAVE A CAR?\_\_ IS IT INSURED? \_\_ WOULD YOU BE WILLING TO  
USE IT, IF NEEDED IN YOUR VOLUNTEER JOB? \_\_\_\_\_HOBBIES OR SPECIAL INTERESTS: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS OR INFORMATION:

When they complete the registration, arrange the time for an interview.

## ***SCREENING THE VOLUNTEER--***

### **Why interview/screen?**

This is a very important part of setting up a volunteer program. Screening the potential volunteers allows you to determine if the volunteer is what you need. A good interview will allow you to match up the volunteer with the right job. You will see how suitable he/she is to your organization and what he/she can and can't do for your mission.

During the Screening process, you should ask questions that will let you know where and when to use this volunteer. Also, it is important to let the volunteer talk and give voluntary information. Interviewing a volunteer is not any different than interviewing a paid staff member.

There are several ways to get the information you need. The Volunteer Registration will not give you adequate information about the volunteer and their skills. You have the best chance of discovering additional valuable information during the Screening Process.

Remember in your high school English class when you learned about the different types of questions and the purpose of them? Now is a good time to use them. Also, any tips or tricks on getting people to talk about themselves will come in very handy now.

Set up the interview when you have the time to really talk and listen to the potential volunteer.

Give the potential volunteer the chance to ask questions. Be prepared to give out all types of information concerning the organization, staff, mission, etc. An interested potential volunteer will have lots of questions about the organization.

Following is an example of questions and some tips on talking and listening.

## TYPES OF QUESTIONS

### TYPE

### PURPOSE OF QUESTION

#### 1. Factual

To get information  
To open discussion

How long have you lived in this area?

#### 2. Explanatory

To get reasons and explanations  
To broaden discussion  
To develop additional information

Why did you move to this area?

#### 3. Validating

To challenge old ideas  
To test new ideas  
To get reasoning  
To get evidence of proof

You say you still own the business that moved you to this area?

#### 4. Initiating

To introduce a new idea  
To advance a suggestion of your own

And you say you have more than enough help at the store and you want to get out more?

#### 5. Hypothetical

Same as Initiating

Let's say all of your help left the store, you would have to leave us, wouldn't you?

#### 6. Alternative

To make decisions between alternatives  
To get agreement

Would you have to stop volunteering for us if your store was short of help or would you hire more staff?

#### 7. Coordinating

To test for agreement  
To pave the way for action

You say you'd want to resume your volunteer work if you had to leave for a short time in order to train more of your store staff?

Ask "why?" during the interview. Question motives and be direct. There's no better way to understand how a person thinks or feels than being direct and asking "why"?

## HOW TO ENCOURAGE TALK AND LISTENING

### ENCOURAGE TALK

Don't interrupt when someone is talking. Give the volunteer your full attention. Show interest in what is being said through eye contact. Give an occasional nod of the head, this is a go ahead gesture. Every so often interject one or two words that show you are paying attention and you want them to continue.

"I see"      "Is that so"      "Really"      "That could be"      "You don't say"

These are a few examples of interjections into a conversation.

### GOOD LISTENING

Be a good listener and use good listening responses. By listening you will learn what they want to do and why, what they don't do and what their needs are.

Pause as if waiting for them to continue, echo or repeat the last few words they have just said, summarize what has been said or add "what else" or "is there anything else?" Use phrases such as; "Is it possible that...", "How did you happen to...". Choose neutral words such as; disagreed instead of fought, dislike instead of hate, unsatisfactory instead of bad....

Always be concerned--always be honest.

Be very honest about the time requirements for your agency or jobs and about the job description.

View the volunteer as a person, not as a "free" object. Let them know they're important and not just a pair of hands to do a few boring tasks most people don't want to do.

Once you are satisfied with the results of the Screening process, it is time to move on the Placement and Orientation process.

### ***The Orientation Process--***

Why have orientation? The main reason to have an orientation is to introduce your interested parties to your organization, including the staff and your physical surroundings. One very important reason for orientation is so the potential volunteer can exit at this time if s/he decides this is not the organization for their talents or interests. There is nothing wrong with this and the organization should be gracious and offer to refer the person to another organization more suited to his/her skills.

It may be hard to understand why anyone wouldn't want to volunteer for your organization, but it happens! Accept it and move on.

How to do an orientation? First, arrange a comfortable environment. Make sure there is plenty of light and refreshments. The materials and handouts you will need should be ready to hand out as soon as the room is full. The seats should be comfortable for all. If you are showing a video, slides, etc. make sure everything is working and ready. Start the orientation on time. Have name tags for everyone. Make sure that the person doing the orientation is very familiar with the organization and can give a tour, if needed.

There are three steps to an orientation.

1. Orientation to the organization- This simply means you tell the people about the organization and its mission. Give a history of the organization and its growth to date. This is also a good time to give them a tour of the facility. Show them the necessary areas, such as the restrooms, snack rooms, copy and supply rooms. Introduce them to the staff and any Board members that may be present. Show them where to sign in & out.
2. Orientation to the service- Now is the time to tell the people what services you offer and why. Let them be aware how important your mission statement is to the organization. Explain to them how you provide the services. This includes making them aware of your funding sources, donors, etc. Let them know if you don't provide the services or live up to your mission statement, you won't be allowed to function!
3. Orientation to the job- Give them an overview of the jobs available within your organization. If you have already assigned a job to each volunteer, explain it fully to them. Show them where they will be working (the physical place), and with whom. Introduce them to the person who will supervise them. Make sure they know where to go if they have a question to ask or if they need assistance. Show them the materials they will need to complete their assignments and where to get more if they need them. Give them a name tag and their own storage space for personal articles they may need to bring with them. Give them an organization handbook that lists dress requirements, rules and regulations, etc. You can tell giving an orientation to a volunteer is not much different than doing one for a paid employee! The same rules apply.

It is very important to make the volunteer feel wanted and comfortable with other volunteers and staff at the organization. Treating them as one of the staff is the best way to accomplish this. Let them know you depend on them just as you depend on the staff.

Be sure you include them in the birthday festivities, (if any) all the holiday functions, and any other special events you might hold within your organization. Make them aware of any benefits you offer volunteers, such as free drinks, tickets to events when available, insurance, etc.

This is also a good time for the volunteer to exit if s/he decides this is not the proper organization or position for him/her. It is better to leave now than wait for any training that might be given for the position available.

Once the orientation process is finished, you are ready to place and train the volunteers.

Be sure you have an informative Volunteer Manual ready for all of your volunteers. Following are some suggestions for a manual. Once again, gear your manual to your organization. The following items are basic items that can be included in any manual.

## **THE MAKINGS OF A VOLUNTEER MANUAL**

1. Greeting letter from agency Director and current President of the Board.
2. Agency description: goals, history and program descriptions.
3. Agency brochures, and publications.
4. Staff directory with name, position and phone extension.
5. Organizational chart.
6. List of Board Members.
7. Volunteer job description.
8. Forms used by agency; time sheets, etc.
9. Reimbursement policies and forms.
10. Termination procedures.
11. Dress code.
12. Hours of agency, methods for changing schedules or being absent.
13. Insurance forms and sign-up sheets.
14. Emergency procedures.
15. Evaluation process.
16. Grievance procedures.
17. Benefits for volunteers.
18. Listing of specific language or jargon used by your organization.
19. Information of client rights, confidentiality and legal restrictions.
20. Lists of promotion opportunities for volunteers.
21. Map of area and agency facilities.
22. Facility policies on use of equipment, services and building.



## **PLACEMENT--**

Placing a volunteer is perhaps the most challenging part of being a Volunteer Coordinator or Volunteer Administer. You must be sure you have the right person at the right job. This is not as easy as it sounds. This is one reason a good interview is so important. You will learn the interests of the volunteer and what the skills are they want to use. One of the worst things you can do a volunteer and to your agency is to place a warm body somewhere just because you need someone, anyone there. It could be that you have a position that is hard to fill or less desirable than other positions. Don't fill it just so you can say you have someone in that placement. Doing this to a volunteer is one sure way of not keeping the volunteer.

There are three concerns that volunteers express over and over when looking for a rewarding and appropriate volunteer position.

1. The volunteer work they do will be a waste of time.

Never put a volunteer to work on a project that you know is going to change soon after their work is completed. Don't assign volunteers to do a task that is not carefully planned out. In other words, make sure the work they do is the work you want and need.

2. Their skills and talents will not be utilized.

Once again, don't make a volunteer with a specific skill such as printing, plumbing, drawing, painting, etc. lick envelopes every time s/he shows up to work. Find out during the interview what their skills are and if they want to use them. Some people have a skill that has nothing to do with their employment. They may want to be able to use that particular skill to keep their hobby or hidden talent sharp.

3. They may be placed in jobs that are not suited to them.

This concern speaks for itself and is easy to understand. You wouldn't place a carpenter at the front desk answering the phone just because that is where you needed someone. Don't ask a volunteer to do your bookkeeping if they don't know about debits and credits. This is one of the most discouraging things that a volunteer can experience. Nothing will make a volunteer exit your organization faster than feeling bad because they couldn't do the job assigned to them. This is bad for their esteem. Remember, one of the primary reasons one volunteers is to feel good about themselves.

## **EVERYONE WINS WITH GOOD PLACEMENT!!**

For the organization, they get the job done right the first time. They have a happier staff as well as volunteers. They know they have someone they can depend on when they need a specific job completed.

For the volunteer, they get to feel good about themselves. They know they are needed and are really contributing something valuable to the organization. They get to use the skills they want/need to use.

## ***TRAINING--***

What is Training? Training is the action you take when you have found the right person for the job and you want them to do the right thing. Training is the instructions a person gives in showing someone how to do a job properly. Proper training will allow a person to reach his/her potential. Proper training or instruction is the kindest deed you can do for a person who is new to an organization or to a particular position.

There are basic questions you need to ask when you decide someone needs training or you find the job isn't being done properly or you aren't getting the results you need from someone who is doing the job that you assigned them to do.

### **IS TRAINING THE ANSWER?**

1. What is the difference between what is being done and what is supposed to be done?
2. Is this difference really important?
3. Does the volunteer possess the skills necessary to do the job properly?
4. If the skills can be learned, what is the best way to teach them?
5. Is there a more sensible way to do the job?
6. Are there obstacles to a good performance that has been overlooked?
7. What are the alternative's solution?

Every organization or trainer will have different answers to these questions. You have to decide what is best for your organization and your volunteer (s). If you decide after you evaluate the situation that training is what is needed, so be it. Now, you have to decide what type of training is best and who will do it.

Don't be afraid to invest in training for your volunteers. Investing in volunteers and training can be invaluable to your organization. Remember the volunteers will be giving you something more valuable than what you are giving them, **TIME!**

### 3 TYPES OF TRAINING

*Pre-Job Training* is designed to prepare a person for a specific job before s/he actually begins a job. Examples:

Reading Handbooks  
Seeing films/videos

Observing others on the job  
Attending lectures

*On-The-Job Training* provides the trainee with the opportunity for extended knowledge, to improve their skills, and perfect performances while person is performing the job. Examples:

Observe and actually do the job  
Attend skills workshops

Group Session  
Role Play

*Continuing Education* provides all persons with possibilities for developing to their fullest potential. Examples:

Ongoing Workshops  
Adult Education Classes

Seminars  
Job or Duties Swapping

#### ***HOW TO TRAIN--***

Explain the job in general-start with why you do this job, how, when, etc. Tell them the results of completed efforts for the particular job they will be doing.

Show how to do job in detail-explaining each step as you go, but let them do job. Hands-on is usually the best way to learn how to do a job.

Provide constructive criticism and praise often. Remember "Criticize in private, praise in public".

Discretely check on job progress-watch from a distance, talk with supervisor of volunteers, other staff, etc.

## ELEMENTS TO CONSIDER IN A TRAINING SITUATION

When you begin your training sessions, there are many questions to consider. Some people don't realize how physical surroundings, personal relations and organizational talents can affect a training session. Being on top of these situations will make the difference in how much a person retains or how fast a person will absorb the information they need to hear during a training.

### *A climate setting checklist--*

**Physical Surroundings**--Consider the following when looking for a place for the training/orientation sessions. **Space**/is there enough room? Will people feel closed in? **Ventilation and tempature**/is there fresh air moving about? Is the temp. set on a comfortable setting? Remember, the more people in a room, the warmer it is. **Lighting**/is there adequate lights? Is there a glare? Is the sun shining in anyone's eyes? Fluorescent lights are not the best lights in which to work. **Decor**/is the decor tasteful and not distractful? Are the colors warm and soothing? Are the chairs comfortable? **Refreshments**/are there drinks available? Always have cool water and glasses nearby. If it is early morning, make sure you have plenty of coffee and hot tea, regular and decaf. If it is a lunchtime, you need to provide lunch. For afternoon, ice tea or soda is what you will want to serve. Leave the coffee for mornings only. If possible, don't have morning to evening training sessions. If it is unavoidable, you should provide a light evening meal.

2. **Human/interpersonal relations--Democratic Leadership**/does everyone get a chance to talk or ask questions? Is there a process set for equal participation from the group? You don't want to make a group think there are favorites or make new people feel they don't fit in right from the beginning. **Welcoming Environment**/again, treat everyone the same. Have everyone wear nametags and call everyone by their name. Have a greeter at the door and someone to inform group where the snacks, lounges, phones, etc. are located. **Comfort Setting**/is the heat/air, chairs, decor comfortable for all? Is it casual? A training session should never be so formal that people feel they should have dressed up to attend! If people are comfortable and feel a part of the group or process, they will participate. They will ask questions and perhaps answer questions.

3. **Organizational process**--Was this session organized? Were notices sent out to everyone involved? Does everyone know about any policies or procedures involved? Is there a meeting theme? Is there a meeting structure? If you have your act together and show this group you are prepared, they will feel easy and good about what they are about to learn. For some, if you show you are competent, they will feel more secure about their jobs and their employer.

## WHO WILL DO THE TRAINING?

### *Planning the training*

Have the training planned out before you set the date, time, etc. There are several questions you will need to answer concerning a training process. The most important question is "Who is the best person to do the training"? The person most qualified to do the training is not always the person who is actually doing the work you are training other people to do. Sometimes, it is best if the trainer is from outside the organization. They can give a fresh perspective on the duties required. Sometimes, the trainer should be the person to whom the prospect will report to. After all, the person in charge of the person doing this particular task will want to feel secure about the job being done. At times, the Executive Director of the organization will want to do the training. This is a chance for them to keep in touch with the volunteers and the duties that need to be done. The same can be said for Board Members. You will have to decide what is best for the organization and who will benefit more from the training depending on who does the training.

### After the training

When the training process is over, conduct a short evaluation. Talk to the group being trained. Give a short and quick quiz regarding the training materials and contents. Did they learn everything they wanted to learn? Did they understand the training process? How was the trainer? Was s/he easy to work with? To understand? Was there enough group participation? These answers should help set up the next training session.

When you have finished the training and evaluation of the training, place the volunteer in the right position.

***NO ONE EVER VOLUNTEERED TO DO A BAD JOB!!!***

### ***REMEMBER***

Fit the training to the job--don't have a CPA teach janitor duties or have a Chef teach sewing. Make sure the training relates to the job you are trying to fill within the organization. If the job is casual, make the training casual, etc.

Don't limit the training to a formal classroom presentation--you learn more by doing and/or observing the duties that are required for the position. You actually need a mixture of classroom, hands-on, studytime, etc. to effectively learn the position.

Be aware of the differences in training for children/young people and adults.-- Adults have much longer concentration spans. They can adapt better to different training situations they are more apt to listen when you tell them to. Children get distracted easily, and they don't enjoy sitting for long periods of time.

Train for success-- When you train, take the attitude that the person (s) you are currently working with will be on the job for years to come. Let them know, you expect them to know this position and you **expect them to train** someone to do this position someday! Take the attitude that it will be a long time before you train anyone else to do this position. It is o.k. to let people know you depend on them.

## MOTIVATION

Once you have the volunteers placed in the right positions and you have given them the proper training, you want to make sure they stay interested in your agency and in their duties. Keeping them motivated is the key to their retention. Retention is covered later in this book. I have found it is hard to separate motivation, retention, and recognition. They are all part of one another. You realize motivation is important if you are to retain the volunteers, and recognition is very important in that it is a motivator and makes the volunteers feel needed and important. You can see how they are related and how one is useful for the other. Let us cover motivation first.

### *Why people do or don't do things*

People do things with the proper motivation or they don't do things because they have no motivation. It is up to the organization or the volunteer coordinator to give the volunteer the proper motivation on the job. With the proper motivation, the volunteer will enjoy the job more and the agency will benefit from that enjoyment. Sometimes understanding motivation and why it does or doesn't work, means delving into the mind and looking at motivational theories such as Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.

There are two basic reasons why social programs fail:

1. There is a lack of management and organizational skills within the organization
2. A naive view of people and motivation

In volunteer management, volunteer supervisors most often deal with the number two reason mentioned above. It is true that some volunteer managers have a naive view of people when it comes to motivation. They think if they walk past the volunteer a couple of times a week, say hello, stop for idle chit-chat, or give an occasional pat of the head, this is all volunteers need. Some think that the once a year recognition event is enough to keep the volunteer interested. Still others think that because their cause is so worthwhile the volunteer will continue giving their all just to help such a worthy cause. If you really think about this issue, you will recognize this is simply not the case. Volunteers need to be motivated, cheered on, constantly worked with, given daily encouragement, etc. In other words, they must feel really, really good about what they are doing and feel most needed! This is perhaps the best motivator!

### ***Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs***

**Physiological**--The basic physical needs of water, food, sex, air, etc.

**Safety**--The need be feel secure, be safe from harm, shelter (housing), etc.

**Social**--The need to be liked, have a closeness with others. This is the point that a person feels the urge to volunteer. They want to be with others and be liked. This is one of the main reasons a person volunteers.

**Esteem**--The need to be recognized as a person, to be rewarded. This is where the recognition segment of a volunteer program kicks in. Everyone wants to be rewarded for the good they do. This is one of the best motivators.

**Self-Actualization**--The highest need: This means a person will not be happy unless he is doing what he wants to do. I suppose you could call this stage "Volunteer Nirvana". You can now understand why proper placement of a volunteer is so important.

When you look at the hierarchy of needs, it is easy to see how this fits into a good volunteer management program.

Maslow had two interesting observations.

1. Man is a wanting creature, and as soon as one level of need is met, he will move on the the next level.
2. A need that is met is no longer a motivator.

It is very important to always have a challenge for the volunteer. Sometimes this means inventing a job and letting the volunteer do their own job description. If this is a volunteer you wish to keep, you will find a challenging job for him/her.

Herzberg also had a motivation theory. He called it the Hygiene Theory.

He stated that a person's work environment was hygiene factors; policies, administration, supervision, working conditions, interpersonal relations, status, security and money. The feelings of achievement are motivators; professional growth, recognition that the job is a challenge and provides scope. Relating to the job itself, one must feel a sense of achievement, be recognized for accomplishment, have challenging work, be given increased responsibility, and have room for growth and development.

Herzberg's theory fits right into a good, solid volunteer management program. The motivators mentioned above are the most popular reasons why people volunteer. Once again, the volunteer's job and reason's to volunteer are no different than the paid worker. And, the way to motivate the volunteer is no different than what you would do to motivate the paid worker.

## EMPHASIZING RETENTION

One of the most frequently asked questions among volunteer coordinators concerns retaining volunteers. How do we keep them? What can we do so they don't jump ship?

I have found the best way to keep volunteers is very simple; let them get really involved in your organization. Make them feel like they are "part-owner" of your organization. If they feel this way, they will want the organization to be at its best at all times. They will want to give their best and you will get the job done using their skills.

1. The responsibility or task they are given to do--volunteers continue to volunteer usually for two main reasons; they feel needed/appreciated and they are making a difference in their organization/community. Again, this is where proper placement and training are important. If they are given the proper task to do or one that is fitted to them, they will do it well and feel good about it.
2. Being with people--volunteers like to be part of a team. Indeed, one reason they volunteered was to meet people. Make sure they always are part of the team. Include them in activities, get-togethers, meetings, etc. Introduce them to everyone like they are part of your staff. Everyone wants to be part of something, make them part of your team.
3. The organization--organizational issues will directly impact the ability to retain volunteers. It is important to always be on top of things. Keep things orderly, running smoothly and organized. Volunteers don't want to be part of the clutter, they want to be part of a well run organization that always knows where it is going. Volunteers need to feel secure in their jobs just as paid workers. That's why it is important to always have jobs with job descriptions, places for them to work, sign-in sheets etc. This shows them you have everything together. But you also need to show that you have the ability to change and you can balance the professional and personal issues of your organization.

### *Recruiting from within*

A good way to get volunteers and to keep volunteers is to recruit internally. This means you ask the volunteers you have to recommend other people they know who might be interested in your organization. Also, when you have a special job that needs to be done, before you start looking for more volunteers, look at the ones you have. Especially if it is a job with more responsibility. Most volunteers want increased responsibility and more challenge. Working with volunteers you already have shows them you trust their instincts when recruiting more volunteers. This will let them know they are a valuable part of your organization.



### ***Turning short term volunteers into long term volunteers***

Sometimes we recruit volunteers for short term positions, such as a special event or a fund-raising campaign. When these needs are met the volunteer moves on to another organization, etc. Why not turn the short termers into long termers? I am sure if you look around your organization, you can find a permanent volunteer job for them. It might mean starting them out at an "entry-level" position while you find something more suited to their skills. Let them know how much you want to keep them and use their skills. When they see how sincere you are, they will be flattered and probably happy to stay on while you find something better suited to them. You might even ask their suggestions about a job and have them help with the job description. Sometimes, it is important to get the input from a volunteer about the different jobs that need to be done. They often see or have a fresh perspective on what needs to be done versus what is being done.

## HOW TO IMPROVE A VOLUNTEER'S JOB

1. Give them a great place to work--make it cheerful, airy and uncluttered. How many times have you seen a volunteer occupy whatever is available for workspace? Often, it is the corner of someone's desk, the dark side of a storage closet or even worse. If they are doing a job that requires a telephone, make sure they have a phone readily available. They need a phone that is not in the middle of a room where they can't talk or hear who is on the other end. If they are a long term volunteer, give them their own space. Let them bring a personal item or two for their space. This is part of the "ownership" of the organization.

2. Give the volunteer what they don't have--find out what they want, not what they have and try to give it to them. They may want to learn about the computer or word processing. Make arrangements for them to spend time on the computer or work with someone who knows about computers. Let them attend workshops and seminars on various subjects. This will not only broaden their skills but will benefit the organization as well. Especially if you allow them to use their new found skills within the organization. Perhaps they want to improve their public relations or speaking skills, let them give a presentation about your agency to potential volunteers. Allow the long term volunteers to assist with the orientation of new volunteers. Just give them something they want!

3. Every volunteer wants a good time, so give it to them!--Make the workplace a happy working environment. Make sure everyone smiles and is glad to be there. Give the volunteers some of the same perks you give to paid staff. Let them have access to the coffee and snack room, free concert tickets, potlucks or office parties. At least once a year, give a great recognition event. Arrange for special volunteer events. If you get a chance for a TV or radio interview, perhaps one of the volunteers could take part in the interview. Remember not to force anything on a volunteer. Some volunteers are happy just to know they're appreciated and that you always remember their name.

This is a good time to remember some very important points concerning volunteers and their needs. You can fit this points in your program with recognition, retaining, making volunteers happy, etc. Indeed, they fit in anywhere.

1. Always say hello to volunteers. Don't ever let them think you don't know they are around.
2. Always say good-bye to volunteers. If you aren't going to be around when it is time for them to go, be sure to say good-bye as you leave.
3. Always say thank you.
4. Recognize each volunteer as an individual. Remembering each name will help accomplish this.
5. Always SMILE at each of them!

## EVALUATION

The evaluation process of a volunteer management program is perhaps the most underrated part of successful volunteer management. The evaluation process is one of if not the most important part of successful volunteer management. The evaluation process is the point at which you will discover what works for the volunteer and what doesn't work. Also, the volunteer will be able to provide valuable input as to their ideas and views about the program and what will make it better. The volunteer should be evaluated at least once a year if not every 6-8 months. The evaluation process needs to be for both program/staff as well as the volunteers.

Evaluating the staff/program--Consider the quality of volunteer training, the degree of training information, quality of staff supervision of volunteers, treatment of volunteers, how effective is staff at working with volunteers, and the overall quality of volunteer program.

Evaluating the volunteer--Consider the competence of volunteer, how dependable is the volunteer, the extent of the volunteer's commitment, does the volunteer seem to get fulfillment from their job and are they likely to continue in program.

Be prepared for the feedback from the volunteer. They will be able to give you ideas about the program and what works better for them. During this process, keep in mind that there are volunteers who aren't right for your organization. If they somehow got through the screening and orientation process without realizing this, the evaluation process is a good point to find out why they aren't right for your organization or vice versa. It may be hard to accept, but there will be times when your organization doesn't live up to everyone's expectation. Don't take it personally.

## WORKING THROUGH PROBLEMS WITH A VOLUNTEER

Everyone can not get along with everyone all of the time. It is just not possible and is not probable. Human nature deems it impossible. Some people can't work with or for friends and most spouses can not work together. There are so many types of personalities that it would be a miracle if you can fit in with every type of work relationship. It is almost certain that the time will come when you have to confront a volunteer about their work habits, personality, etc. Following are suggestions that might help you get through this problem.

1. Stay calm and cool. Don't lose your temper, even if you're right. Allow the volunteer to blow off steam. Don't argue. Listen. Stay positive.
2. Put yourself in their shoes. Listen with empathy. Look for the facts. Let them know you are concerned about the problem. Nod. Agree with them on some points.

### **Deal with the behavior, not the individual.**

3. Action. Solve the problem with action. Don't just say you will--do it! Offer options. If you're at fault, apologize.
4. Politely close the session. Thank them for their input. If everything has been said, bring session to a polite close. Keep volunteer informed as to what will happen. Let them know you're concerned and they can come to you again if there is a need.

If you try to solve the problem and nothing seems to help, you have a choice to make. You can let the situation ride and probably get worse or you can fire the volunteer. Yes, that is right, fire the volunteer. You can certainly fire a volunteer, much the same way as you would a paid worker. It is not a pleasant thought, but sometimes it must be done.

## **FIRING A VOLUNTEER**

### ***Minimize the occurrence of having to fire a volunteer***

Deal directly with the volunteer. Be up-front and tell them of the problem. You may be surprised. They may have no desire to stay. They have been waiting for a chance to leave and this is the time for them to exit.

### ***Alternatives to firing a volunteer***

If the above is not the case, here are some suggestions.

Do a recon. Perhaps the problem is not as serious as you think. Look at it from all sides.

Re-supervise. Did the volunteer have proper supervision on the job? Maybe the volunteer needs to be watched more closely or with a sterner eye.

Re-assign the volunteer. Are there other jobs more suited to the volunteer? Perhaps they are simply tired of the current duties.

Re-train the volunteer. Maybe they need new or additional training to remind them of the duties and responsibilities for the job/organization.

Place on leave. Tell them you can see they are getting stressed, burned out, etc. and offer to let them leave for a while. Tell them to give you a call when they are ready to return and you can talk over the duties with them again. Let them know you appreciate the work they have done but you're concerned that they are tired and might need a break.

Re-motivate. Maybe the volunteer has all the plaques, certificates, etc. they can use for this position. They may be ready for more responsibility. Let them know you depend on them. Give them a new challenge.

Rotate volunteers. Do a volunteer shuffle. Give the older long termers a change to learn new skills and responsibilities. Everyone needs some new scenery now and then.

Refer volunteer to another agency. Tell the volunteer you heard of a special job that is suited just for them. Let them know another agency really needs their skills and is looking forward to working with them. Give them good references.

Retire volunteer with honors and a big send off. Tell the volunteer you are restructuring the position and someone else is better qualified to do the new job. But you hate to see them go and you would love to give them a big send off. Let them know their hard work was greatly appreciated. This might also be a good time to refer them to another agency.

### ***When you have no choice but to fire the volunteer***

There is no easy way to do it. You just do it! Be as straight forward and polite as possible, but make the bottom line, "I am sorry, we can no longer use your services as a volunteer".

Sometimes, it can't be helped. The best thing is to get it over with as soon and quietly as possible. It is better to handle a firing this way, than to make it so uncomfortable for the volunteer they just disappear. If that is the case, you can bet they will not have anything good to say about your organization. It is always better to be honest and up-front, most people respect this technique.

Always allow a volunteer to leave with dignity and retain their self-respect. If necessary, allow them to feel they have outgrown your organization or that you cannot meet their expectations.

Never use the word "fire" when talking with the volunteer about leaving the organization.

## RECOGNITION OF YOUR VOLUNTEERS

### RECOGNITION IS A VOLUNTEERS SALARY!!!

Recognition is a part of why people volunteer. They enjoy receiving the plaque, certificate, etc. Mostly, they enjoy the applause and the feedback about the good they are doing or how important they are to the organization. Some volunteers want no recognition. They are content with just knowing they make a difference. Don't ever force recognition on a volunteer who doesn't want it. That is a good way to lose a volunteer. Some people are uncomfortable being in the limelight while others thrive on it. It is up to you to know their wishes or preference and respect it.

#### *Ways to recognize volunteers*

There are so many ways to recognize volunteers, they don't even need to be listed. But just in case you are looking for something new after you and the volunteers tire of the certificates, plaques, etc., here are some ideas.

Thank you cards to volunteer and to the volunteer's family  
 Added responsibility                      Article on volunteers  
 Own parking space                      Flowers and balloons  
 Lunch out once a month              Include volunteers in meetings & events  
 Give a handwritten reference letter for them to take for jobs, etc.  
 Give perks such as concert tickets, etc.  
 Always know their name and what they do for your organization  
 Smile when you see them and call them by their name  
 Give them their own desk and personal space  
 Make sure your board knows them by name and position  
 Free coffee or drinks and snacks  
 Offer to teach them new skills  
 The list goes on and on and on and on and on and on and on and on and on.

## EVALUATION FORM FOR VOLUNTEERS

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ POSITION \_\_\_\_\_

WORK SCHEDULE: DAY(S) OF WEEK \_\_\_\_\_

HOURS OF WORKDAY \_\_\_\_\_

IS VOLUNTEER DEPENDABLE? \_\_\_\_\_ IF NOT, WHY? \_\_\_\_\_

DOES VOLUNTEER GET ALONG WITH OTHER VOLUNTEERS/STAFF? \_\_\_\_\_

DOES VOLUNTEER SEEM COMMITTED TO PROGRAM? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

DOES VOLUNTEER SEEM TO BE FULFILLED IN POSITION? \_\_\_\_\_

IS VOLUNTEER COMPETENT IN POSITION? \_\_\_\_\_

IS VOLUNTEER WILLING TO LEARN NEW SKILLS OR SEEK TRAINING FOR

NEW POSITIONS? \_\_\_\_\_

IS VOLUNTEER WILLING TO TAKE ON MORE RESPONSIBILITIES? \_\_\_\_\_

IS VOLUNTEER LIKELY TO CONTINUE WITH PROGRAM? \_\_\_\_\_

Space for volunteer to write comments and suggestions for program.

Remember this form is just a suggestion. You may not want to be so formal in your evaluations of the volunteers. Some people prefer a informal meeting with volunteers and making notes once the session is over. But I would encourage you to have something in writing. This is important if you decide to use the volunteer's input or suggestions for the program. The input from the volunteer is also very useful in performing employee evaluations.

Your program management and what you plan on doing with your program in the future will decide how you need to conduct your evaluation process.

## DO NOT SAY TO A VOLUNTEER.....

1. I don't know....

Who knows if you don't. It is your job to find out.

2. We can't do that....

Start by telling why this is not the best way and offer a better way or suggestion.

3. Automatically say no without a thought.....

Always be positive. Give an explanation first, not a negative.

4. I will be with you when I .....

Always take the time to listen to a volunteer. They may only have a minute or will probably only take a minute of your time. Don't put them last because they are a volunteer. If there is something important that can't wait and you're in the middle of it, tell the volunteer that and make an appointment with them as soon as possible.

5. No, you'll have to.....

Once again, this is a negative. Don't tell them what they will **have** to do, but suggest what they **need** to do. Or perhaps you can offer to **show** them what they must do. Remember, to always explain your reasons.

Remember, **VOLUNTEERS** don't have to *do anything!*



## **SUGGESTIONS FOR VOLUNTEER FEEDBACK**

Ask volunteers to respond to a survey, either by phone or mail. Let them know what you will do with the results of the survey. (This would depend on how many volunteers you have.) An on-the-job questionnaire may be best for your purposes.

Have an open forum or a focus group. Let them tell you what they like or dislike. Include all volunteers. You want to get all views. (Again, this depends on the number of volunteers you have.) A small, informal face to face meeting may work better with your organization.

Be personably. Talk frankly with the volunteers. Spend time and get to know them. LISTEN to them.

Have a suggestion box available and actually look at the suggestions.

Respond quickly and openly to volunteer complaints.

Ask the volunteers about their problems and what are their suggestions for solving the problems.

If you use the ideas or suggestions of a volunteer to improve a situation, give them the credit they deserve.

Have an open-door policy for employee-volunteer relations. Encourage the employees to tell you of any problems and what they did about them. The same goes for volunteers and problems they have with employees. Keep a list of problems and what you do about them. This should assist in finding out why problems occur.

Use feedback from volunteers as a performance measure and vice versa.

Communication and problem solving among volunteers and employees should always be a high-priority item on your agenda. Always be on the look-out for problems and ways to solve them. It is very important to maintain an open door for both volunteers and employees. Remember they work best together.

## EVALUATION FORM FOR PROGRAM

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Name of Organization**

This is a form for the volunteer to complete. The information should be useful to the volunteer coordinator/Executive Director of the organization using volunteers.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

WHAT DO YOU ENJOY BEST ABOUT THIS VOLUNTEER PROGRAM? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

WHAT DO YOU ENJOY LEAST? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

DO YOU GET ENOUGH SUPERVISION? \_\_\_\_\_ TOO MUCH? \_\_\_\_\_

ARE YOU GIVEN ENOUGH OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN NEW SKILLS? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ DO YOU WANT TO LEARN NEW SKILLS? \_\_\_\_\_

DID YOU RECEIVE ENOUGH/PROPER TRAINING? \_\_\_\_\_ IF NOT, PLEASE  
COMMENT. \_\_\_\_\_

DO YOU HAVE THE COOPERATION AND ASSISTANCE OF THE STAFF IN  
DOING YOUR VOLUNTEER DUTIES? \_\_\_\_\_

IF NO, PLEASE EXPLAIN. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

DO YOU PLAN TO CONTINUE AS A VOLUNTEER WITH US? \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE LIST ANY IDEAS/SUGGESTIONS FOR VOLUNTEER PROGRAM.

## YOUR STAFF'S ASSESSMENT OF THE VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Please complete and provide feedback regarding our volunteer program. Please answer all the questions as completely as possible. You don't have to sign the survey unless you want to. Your answers will be kept confidential.

1. Do you have volunteers in your area or in your department? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know
2. Are you directly responsible for volunteers? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know
3. Are the volunteers qualified for their positions? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't Know
4. How would you describe the utilization of volunteers in our agency? ☐ Well utilized ☐  
Generally well utilized, but could be improved ☐ Not well utilized ☐ Don't know
5. Are the volunteers adequately trained for their responsibilities? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know
6. What else can we do to help staff work better with volunteers? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. How would you describe the reaction of our clients to the volunteers? ☐ Favorable mixed  
☐ Unfavorable ☐ Don't know
8. What benefits do we get from the use of our volunteers? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. What problems have we created with the use of volunteers? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. Has your work load changed now that we use volunteers? ☐ If so, how? ☐ Lessened  
☐ Remained the same ☐ Increased ☐ Changed in type of work
11. Describe the assistance you have received from the Volunteer Director? ☐ Helpful  
☐ Not Helpful ☐ Don't know

Please make suggestions or comments regarding the utilization of our volunteers, additions to any answers above or suggestions of how we can improve our volunteer program. (use the backside)

Please return questionnaire to \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Executive Director or Director of Volunteers (signature)

# **DDS CONSULTING**

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DDS CONSULTING, a volunteer management consulting firm, instructs non-profit agencies on the most effective ways to recruit, train and utilize volunteers.

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A wide range of services are offered, from workshops on a variety of volunteer management topics, to consulting on fund raising and image enhancement.

Diane Scanland is a seasoned professional in volunteer management and community relations. She is the Executive Director for Orlando Day Nursery (American's 909th Point of Light) and has served as Director of Recruitment & Referral and Agency Services Director for the Volunteer Center of Central Florida. Her other experiences include Senior Case Manager at a homeless shelter and Mentor Coordinator for the Amerasian Mentor Project. She has also implemented and publicized many special events, projects and fund raisers. Diane is an accomplished public speaker with the Downtown Orlando Toastmasters and has won many ribbons for her speaking abilities. Diane has conducted workshops on volunteer management for a variety of organizations including the City of Orlando.

She was named the "1992 Orlando Downtown Woman of the Year" by the Women's Executive Council and was honored for her community service to the Central Florida area.

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