

## Volunteer Recruiting Teams

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For over 70 years Girl Scouts of America and Camp Fire, Inc. have been using volunteers on Recruiting Teams. Men and women who believe in the mission of these agencies plan and implement campaigns to recruit new volunteers.

As volunteer agencies have grown in size and complexity, the recruiting effort has fallen to paid staff. It is time to return the responsibility for recruiting to the people who do it best: volunteers! They understand the job. They are trusted by prospective volunteers. Their participation gives them a greater sense of ownership of the program or organization.

A Volunteer Recruiting Team is only as good as the staff support it receives. Once a program is planned and job descriptions written, it is time to form the Volunteer Recruiting Team.

Potential Volunteer Recruiters come from current members/volunteers, non-members who believe in the work you do, or relatives and friends of clients. These people are recruited when the chairperson of the Volunteer Recruiting Team, working with staff, recruits the initial team. After initial recruitment, the team becomes self-sustaining, refilling positions as needed. People with sales experience or who are knowledgeable about sales techniques make good recruiters and can help during the training process.

The Volunteer Recruiting team uses a marketing plan to lay out a campaign for volunteer recruitment. The size of the recruiting effort is not a factor. Whether you are recruiting 3 or 300, the recruiting principles are the same:

1. Know the job you are asking volunteers to do.
2. Design or select materials to tell the volunteer story effectively.
3. Set a starting and ending time for the campaign.
4. Assign each Volunteer Recruiter to a "territory."
5. Create an advertising and promotion campaign to support the recruiting effort.
6. Make sure the Volunteer Recruiting Team has enough members to do the job effectively.
7. Set goals for the number of volunteers to be recruited.
8. Establish a budget.
9. Design a monitoring system to check on the progress of Volunteer Recruiters.
10. Plan regular reporting meetings.

Once the Volunteer Recruiting Team is in place, training begins. Your recruiters need:

- A knowledge of the agency including its mission and purpose, services offered, and financial support.
- Tips on sales pitch and persuasive communication, the benefits to the

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individual of volunteer opportunity.

- Specific information such as job descriptions and applications for the positions for which the recruiter will be seeking volunteers.

Explanations should also cover details of the program and how it is different from others. All appropriate campaign literature should be available.

Volunteers Recruiters need to know how to report their progress. They should receive a detailed explanation of the means used to keep recruiters informed.

If you want to generate excitement and enthusiasm for recruiting, learn about it by sitting in on a sales meeting for Mary Kay Cosmetics, Tupperware dealers, or I.B.M. Recruit a person from their organization to help you design your recruiting campaign. Professional staff can be the trainers, but this is a job that could also be filled by volunteers.

There are some key factors that will ensure a successful campaign:

#### 1. Clear Time Line

Recruiting campaigns need clear beginning and ending times. Volunteers and staff need to see a schedule and know clearly the meeting dates, deadlines, and reporting schedules.

#### 2. Advertising and Promotion

All publicity to support the recruiting campaign should be shared with recruiters. They need to know the timing as it will affect the recruiting activities. It is important for them to know dates of press releases, distribution dates for brochures, and informational meeting dates.

#### 3. Printed Material

The Recruiting Team needs a paperwork support system. Examples might be: one page summary on

agency and program, volunteer applications, job descriptions, brochures, schedules, etc. This should be in an attractive packet.

#### 4. Recruiter Meetings

Short reporting sessions for recruiters can be used to keep energy levels and enthusiasm high. Give awards and incentives at each session: "trophy" for dealing with the grouchiest person, applause for top recruiter, pencil for most improved. Meetings should be fun, up-beat, and filled with reports on progress and suggestions. Make sure they are short and at a convenient time for everyone. Always have new ideas and suggestions. Do not overdo it. Information needs to flow both ways.

#### 5. Closure Event

Wind up the recruiting effort with a bang! Everyone receives recognition. Make it fun!

#### 6. Evaluation

Verbal and written evaluations could be part of the closure event. Everyone included in the process should be given the opportunity to evaluate and make suggestions for the future.

Staff in volunteer agencies also need to provide personal support to Volunteer Recruiters. It is critical for someone to make regular contact with the Volunteer Recruiter. They should never feel out there alone. It is especially important to have tips to help them deal with negative responses. It is easy to personalize NO!

Volunteers need to have a clear idea when to call for help. They need to know the importance of completing their assignment. A professional staff person can also advise on knowing when to back away from a potential volunteer.

Sometimes recruiters get discouraged. Working with the team leader, staff can keep energy high and prevent discouragement. Using the "team" concept of volunteers and professional staff working together enhances the recruiting effort by involving more people. The professional manager becomes a facilitator for volun-

teer efforts.

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