



HOW TO GET A MAN

The Kalamazoo, Michigan, VAC has a new approach to an old problem—recruiting male volunteers. Using a “man to man” approach, they have successfully tapped a mother lode of potential volunteers at local businesses and industries.

FOREWORD

The "Report of Labor Recruitment Efforts" (May, 1975) was written in response to a number of queries which the Kalamazoo VAC received concerning their labor recruitment drives. It is merely an interim report about the first two drives that were held. It is not to be considered a complete general plan for a successful volunteer recruitment drive for labor and industry. There are still many factors involved which are not presently recognized nor taken into account.

The two drives discussed in the report involved companies whose employee population was between 2,000 and 3,000 (medium size). Both were unionized—one company had one union, and the other had five different unions. Experience has shown that recruitment in a multi-union company was more involved and took considerably more time than recruitment in a single-union company. Before general statements can be made and conclusions drawn it will be necessary to experiment with labor drives in:

- small size* companies (with and without unions)
- large size* companies (with and without unions)
- medium size* companies (without unions)
- human service agencies (governmental agencies, schools, hospitals, departments of social services, etc.)

*Size relates to employee population.

Subsequent to the writing of this report, a drive utilizing the model described in the report was held at a small unionized company having 54 employees. This drive resulted in six new volunteers. Percentage-wise, this reflects a significantly higher recruitment rate than that achieved in medium size plants (4% as opposed to 2-3%). This increase seems to be due to a higher proportion of recruiters to the number of employees (approximately 1:6 as opposed to 1:120).

The ideal time for such a drive seems to be January. If the drive is held during the spring, a common response

that the recruiters heard from the employees they approached was to wait until after Labor Day or after the summer. This feeling was also voiced by the Labor Recruitment Task Force which chose not to meet during the summer. The Fall appears to be a good time. However, there is a concern (on the part of the local United Way as well as the companies) that holding a drive at the same time as the United Way does might cause a conflict. Holding the drive in late November or the beginning of December (as was done in the first of such efforts) seemed to be in conflict with the approaching holiday season. A number of those recruited during the first drive did not actually begin to work until after the first of the year.

Kalamazoo's VAC is presently involved in a drive with the employees of the city of Kalamazoo (professionally clerical/technical and hourly employees along with police officers, firefighters and transit workers). A drive with Michigan Bell Telephone Company is planned for January. In the negotiating stages are drives with the Upjohn Company (a large non-unionized company) and Consumers Power Company. There are also plans for five small companies (which are geographically near each other) to have one drive together.

When enough data is gained, a final report will be published. According to the plans of the Labor Recruitment Task Force this will not be until January, 1977. There seems to be little information available about the entire area of recruiting employees through their place of employment to volunteer (especially on a non-time-released basis.) If anyone has any experiences or information about this subject, the Kalamazoo VAC would appreciate hearing from them.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Kalamazoo's Voluntary Action Center, along with five local agencies that utilize volunteers in their programs, has developed a model for the recruitment of volunteers, particularly males. The model is one where the recruitment takes place within local industrial plants which have labor unions. The agencies involved use volunteers on a one-to-one basis with their clients. For example, as: Volunteer Probation Officers, Big Brothers, Friends to the Mentally Impaired or to Recovering Alcoholics, and Counselors to First Offenders.

Background Information - Problem Definition

This model was developed based on the recognition that:

- Human service agencies have had a need for male volunteers and that in individual agency recruitment efforts for these volunteers they were competing with each other for a fixed supply resource.
- Recruitment efforts to date were, to a large extent, public relations activities aimed at developing a public awareness of the particular programs and their need for volunteers rather than at the actual recruitment of the volunteers.
- The mass media was already providing the agencies and the Voluntary Action Center with a high amount of coverage, but that even with this high degree of coverage recruitment needs for volunteers were still not being adequately met.
- Large numbers of potential volunteers were to be found working in factories. Individual attempts had been made in the past to recruit directly in local plants; however, such efforts were generally met with disfavor by management. Management felt that, if they allowed one agency to recruit in their plants, they would have to allow all other agencies who wished to do so.

With these facts in mind, a recruitment model was developed that could tap the potential volunteer resources available in industry, and, at the same time, be acceptable to and supported by management. The idea was to offer to the company a Recruitment Drive covering all agencies' volunteer needs in one mass effort. (To date there have been two successful drives using this model.) In one case, 53 volunteers and in another case 71 volunteers were recruited from plants with a population of between 2,000 - 3,000 employees.)

II. PROCESS

A. Planning

Prior to any recruitment effort, careful planning should be done to:

- Determine which companies should be asked to participate. Factors to consider include: the company's past record of community service involvement, the characteristics of its employee population (to the extent to which the employees have participated in volunteer programs before, and if so the type of volunteer work done, the suitability of the employees to certain types of volunteer experiences, and what types of programs would appeal to them), and the company's current economic situation.

- Determine the specific needs to be filled and the extent to which it can be assured that volunteers recruited will be readily used.

To accomplish this planning, it is helpful to have two task forces:

1. A Labor Recruitment Task Force made up of members of both labor and management from a representative group of local companies. This group has the knowledge of which is the best company to approach and how to do it.
2. A group comprised of representatives from local agencies who have a substantial need for volunteers. They should be willing to plan for labor recruitment efforts as a group while, at the same time, gearing their respective agencies toward such efforts.

B. Initial Contact

Any effort at volunteer recruitment in a company must have the support of both labor and management. Prior to a decision to have a Recruitment Drive in a particular company, the support of these two groups must be gained. Both should be actively involved in making decisions and in planning the Drive. In the two Drives held to date, the Voluntary Action Center met on separate occasions with the president of the unions and the public service directors of the particular company. In each case, an explanation was made of the VAC's role and function in the community, along with a detailed description of unmet human service needs in the area. Attention was paid to how these persons contacted felt the solution could be remedied. They were asked to talk informally to key co-workers to determine if they would be interested in helping to meet human service needs. First meetings with these individuals were purely informational. It was generally the case that these people contacted had little idea of the volunteer needs and opportunities that existed in the community, let alone an understanding of the VAC and how it operated.

C. Communication and Planning Meeting

Following the initial contact with labor and management and the gaining of their endorsement and willingness to help, a formal meeting was held involving those agencies in need of volunteers, the VAC, and labor and management representatives of the particular company. At that time, each human service agency explained its own need for volunteers. This was followed by a brainstorming session in which ideas were presented by all in attendance as to how volunteers could be recruited from this particular company. A chairperson or co-chairpersons for the effort were also selected. Perhaps the strongest point made at this meeting was that the agencies and the VAC would not be nearly as effective in recruiting volunteers as would the actual workers in the plant.

D. Identify Recruiters

The next step was to identify and approach those willing to serve as recruiters. Several of those in

attendance at the above-mentioned meeting offered to assume this responsibility. Others in attendance offered to find fellow workers that would be willing to serve in this role. It became the responsibility of the co-chairpersons to insure that an adequate number of recruiters were obtained and that those recruiters were representative of salaried and hourly employees and management on all shifts and from all departments.

E. Materials

Recruitment materials were developed by the VAC, the involved agencies and the company.

F. Training

After recruiters were selected, a training program for them was set up. This training was developed by the VAC and the participating agencies. It was held no more than one week prior to the actual Drive. All recruiters participated in training sessions.

G. Official Drive

Two weeks was designated as the time of the actual Drive. During this time the recruiters did the actual contacting of their fellow employees.

H. Contacting Potential Volunteers

As soon as the recruiters submitted the names of interested employees, these potential volunteers were contacted. Those interested in a specific program were referred directly to that program. Those unsure of what they wanted to do, but yet willing to help, were given an interview by the VAC to determine where best their time, talents, skills and interests could be used. After the interview they were referred to the volunteer job they had chosen.

I. Follow-up

Follow-up was extremely important to the Drive as well as to future efforts. Care was taken to insure that the potential volunteers had been contacted and were utilized by the agency to which they were referred. They were asked if they were pleased with their volunteer assignment (or, in the case that they decided not to volunteer for a particular agency, that they were advised of other volunteer opportunities). One month and three month follow-up was conducted. Follow-up on a yearly basis is planned.

III. RESPONSIBILITIES

For the success of this drive it was imperative that all involved parties had a clear understanding of their responsibilities. The manner in which these responsibilities were successfully defined and allocated is outlined below. This allocation of responsibilities was subject to change based on the nature of the industry and the agencies involved.

Voluntary Action Center or Volunteer Bureau's Responsibilities:

- To provide leadership to the effort
- To contact (upon the advice of its Labor Recruitment

Task Force) companies to determine their interest in having a Volunteer Recruitment drive

- To meet with representatives of labor groups and management of interested companies to give them a good view of the need for volunteers and how they can fill this need
- To meet with those agencies involved in the drive to:
 - A. Explain thoroughly how the drive will be coordinated
 - B. Insure that the agencies involved will have job positions available to potentially recruited volunteers and that they will contact recruited volunteers within a short time after they are referred to them
- To convene an organizational meeting between labor group and management representatives and the agencies involved in the drive
- To assist the company in the development of recruitment materials
- To develop and coordinate a training program for all of the drive's recruiters
- To send announcements of the drive to local radio stations
- To refer all those persons recruited to the program or agency of their interest. In cases where the potential volunteer is unsure as to what specifically he wishes to do, it is the VAC's responsibility to personally interview him. This interview assesses his time, talents and interests and matches them with a volunteer position in the community.
- Follow-up to:
 - A. Insure that each recruited volunteer has been contacted by the agency to which he or she was referred.
 - B. Find out if the volunteer is satisfied with the placement.
- To provide, to both the company's labor groups and its management, a report of the results of the overall drive.
- To thank all those involved in the drive for their assistance.

Participant Agency's Responsibilities

- To have available volunteer positions and descriptions for recruited volunteers.
- To provide the volunteers with orientation and/or training and supervision.
- To provide all written materials needed to develop recruitment materials.
- To contact all volunteers referred to them in a reasonably short period of time afterwards.
- To report to the VAC on the status ("active," "pending," "decided not to volunteer," "unable to contact," etc.) of volunteers referred.
- To participate in the development and the conducting of the Recruiter Training.
- To assist the VAC in organizing the overall drive.

Recruiter's Responsibilities

- To attend Recruiter Training Session.
- To contact their fellow employees and tell them about the need for volunteers.

- To refer those employees interested in volunteering to the Voluntary Action Center or Volunteer Bureau via the Interest Card (see "Recruitment Materials" Section for an explanation).
- To distribute volunteer pins and brochures to their fellow employees during the drive.

Chairperson (or Co-Chairperson) Responsibilities

- To coordinate the entire drive.
- To insure that all recruiters attend the training sessions.
- To communicate with the recruiters frequently during the drive to motivate them, keep them supplied with materials and help them with any recruitment difficulties they might be having.
- To make sure that the posters are displayed.
- To act as the communication link between management, labor groups, the recruiters, the Voluntary Action Center and the agencies involved in the drive.

Labor Groups Responsibilities

- To endorse the Drive and make certain that their membership is aware of their endorsement and support.
- To work with management, the Voluntary Action Center in the development of the drive.
- To get individuals from their membership to act as recruiters.

Management's Responsibilities

- To endorse the drive and make their employees aware of their endorsement and support.
- To work with labor groups and the Voluntary Action Center in the development of the drive.
- To get representatives from management to act as recruiters.
- To host the organizational meeting in which the drive is planned and developed by all parties involved.
- To help develop and obtain recruitment materials for the drive tailored specifically for their employees.
- To publicize the drive in the company.

Labor Recruitment Task Force

- To serve as advisors to the Voluntary Action Center in their labor recruitment efforts by assessing potential participating companies and planning approaches and methods of implementing and improving such efforts.

IV. TRAINING

Since a major share of the success of the drive depends on the recruiters, care should be taken to insure that they clearly understand their role in the drive and that role's responsibilities, and that they have the necessary knowledge, attitudes and skills to be successful as a recruiter. To accomplish these goals a Labor Recruiters training session was conducted. This session, which lasted two to three hours, covered the following:

Topic	Technique
1. The community's overall need for volunteers and the importance and role of volunteers in the human service delivery system.	1. Verbal explanation with charts to illustrate.
2. The role of the recruiter and the responsibility of that role and the procedures of the drive.	2. Verbal explanation with charts to illustrate and recruitment materials distributed.
3. The reasoning behind recruiting in various factories.	3. Verbal explanation.
4. The particular programs involved in the drive.	4. An explanation of each agency involved in the drive given a representation of that agency . . . how volunteers fit into their program and what kind of volunteer they needed (qualifications). This explanation was supplemented with written material.
5. Volunteer's Viewpoint and Experience	5. Presentation by a volunteer involved in one of the above programs.
6. Recruitment Skills (appropriate and inappropriate approaches)	6. Role playing
7. Goal Setting	7. Drive Chairperson asked each recruiter to set personal goals. The total of these individual goals represents the total goal of the drive.

V. RECRUITMENT MATERIALS

The following recruitment materials were utilized during this effort:

Recruiter's Handbook - A handbook was developed for the recruiters of the drive. This handbook provided:

- an explanation of the recruiter's role and responsibilities.
- suggestions, approach and guidelines on how to recruit potential volunteers.
- a thorough explanation of each of the particular programs for which they were asked to recruit.

Employee Brochures - A brochure was developed specifically for distribution to each of the plant's employees. This publication gave a brief, concise description of each of the particular volunteer needs of those agencies or groups involved in the drive (sample attached).

Interest Cards - These cards were the form on which the recruiters reported potential volunteers they have recruited. This card listed the potential volunteer's name, address, phone number and area of interest. The recruiter also signed these cards.

Volunteer Pins - Pins with the message "Volunteer" and the volunteer logo were worn by the recruiters during the drive. These pins were also distributed by them to their fellow employees. (Such pins can be purchased from the National Center for Voluntary Action.)

Posters - Posters were placed throughout the factory. These posters listed the specific volunteer needs that the drive placed an emphasis on meeting. Since the drive focused on the recruitment of males, most of the pictures on the posters were of men in volunteer roles. Racial minorities were also well represented in these pictures. (see sample)

In-house Newsletter - Many industries had in-house newsletters or publications. Such publications:

- a. introduced the need for volunteers to the employees prior to the actual drive.
- b. informed the employees as to who are their company's recruiters (this also is a good way to reinforce to the recruiter the fact that his role in the drive is important).
- c. promoted the idea of volunteering during the drive.
- d. reported the accomplishments of the drive.

Check Message - A message (such as "Someone Needs You - Consider Becoming a Volunteer") was printed on the employees' checks. Such a message was easily added to checks printed by a computer.

Other Possible Recruitment Materials:

- a letter from a recruiter to those employees whom he plans on contacting about volunteering informing them about the drive.
- marquees and bulletin boards in the factory displayed volunteer messages.

VI. OUTSIDE PUBLICITY

Publicity for each individual drive in the local newspaper was rather difficult to secure. The same held true for television spots. It was feared by representatives of both of these media types that this practice could become merely a "free" source of publicity for local companies. However, they both were willing to do a story about the overall effort.

Radio stations were willing to publicize the drive on an individual plant basis. The emphasis of their spots was on thanking or commending the *employees* of a particular company (rather than the company *per se*) for their concern and work in community service.

The media's willingness to publicize these events would have been much higher if there was a city-wide drive involving all companies, once each year.

VII. OBSERVATIONS TO DATE

- A. The idea of one Volunteer Recruitment Drive for many community agencies' volunteer needs is more acceptable to a company than many small individual drives for each human service agency because of the time and effort saved.
- B. These consolidated Drives are beneficial to management and the labor groups because they build a sense of unity among workers.
- C. Volunteer Recruitment Drives are excellent public relations events for participating companies.

- D. The training that the volunteer recruiter receives gives an introduction to the community's human service delivery system, thereby making them resource people for co-workers in need of human services.
- E. This approach to recruitment is a low cost and economical method for agencies to recruit large numbers of volunteers. At the same time it is a good way to make the community more aware of the participating agencies' programs.
- F. Volunteers who are recruited through such Drives are, to an extent, prescreened since the recruiters use good judgment and personally know those whom they approach.
- G. These Recruitment Drives enable agencies to plan in advance for a high influx of volunteers.
- H. Since this approach calls for a close working relationship between several human service agencies, it tends to increase cooperation between the agencies. It promotes a sharing of resources and ideas and gives agencies' staff an in-depth knowledge of other programs.
- I. This approach can be an effective way of recruiting racial minorities. By utilizing members of minorities as recruiters the success in recruiting minority members of volunteers is improved.
- J. After the drive a residual effect occurs. Some employees who were given information about the program but were not recruited decided that they would like to volunteer. Also, employees tell their family and friends about volunteering and they in turn volunteer.
- K. Labor Recruitment Drives can greatly increase the recruitment potential of the VAC. They also are helpful in promoting the idea that the VAC is the clearinghouse in the community for volunteers.

VII. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Thus far, this volunteer recruitment method has proven successful. Any agency or group of agencies considering such a Drive should be encouraged to do so. In projecting into the future the next step will probably be a regularly scheduled Drive every year in the spring (careful attention is given to not hold this Drive at the same time as the United Way Drive, typically held in the fall). Such a Drive could involve all companies in the community.

It should also be noted that the recruitment method described here can be applicable to other settings besides work settings. Some of the many other possibilities include:

- Parishioners trained to recruit from their fellow church members,
- Minorities trained to recruit other minority members,
- Block Club members trained to recruit in their neighborhoods, and
- Youth trained to recruit their peers.

Such a recruitment technique is merely a sophisticated approach to a highly successful technique in use for many, many years—the word of mouth—*i.e.*, a friend telling a friend.