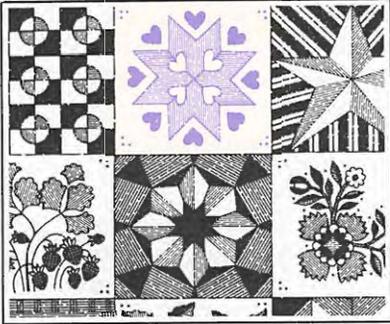


Marketing Your Volunteer Program To Recruit Volunteers



Know Your '4 Ps' Before ADVERTISING AND PROMOTING VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

By Nancy Macduff

When a volunteer agency uses a marketing approach to program development and volunteer recruitment, the job of advertising and promotion is easy. In voluntary organizations, advertising is often designed and carried out by staff and a public relations committee. They are responsible for posters, brochures, TV, radio and direct mail campaigns, slide and video presentations.

Volunteer job descriptions, an essential component of volunteer marketing plans, tell the public relations committee exactly what type of person to reach. For example, suppose a nursing home was looking for a volunteer to conduct musical activities for residents. A variety of effective techniques could be used to reach potential volunteers for that job: brochures distributed through music stores, college music departments, a music teacher association, concerts, etc.; radio spots on classical or easy listening stations; and handbills on cars at concerts.

This method is called "target marketing." The idea is to go after those people who have the skills needed and might

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have an interest in offering their services.

Product, Promotion, Placement, and Price are known as "the 4 Ps" in marketing terminology. Knowledge of the 4 Ps provides information that dictates to whom an agency's public relations, advertising or volunteer recruitment campaign is directed.

Product

In volunteer recruiting, product is both the program and the benefit you are selling the volunteer. Personal satisfaction is a benefit for many volunteers, but there are many others. If you want a person to work as a volunteer counselor at a family planning center, for instance, recruitment literature should state the benefits of the program to the volunteer. Some of those would include personal satisfaction, knowledge that they are helping others in need, career experience, increased personal knowledge of medical aspects of family planning, learning to work with others, and opportunity for advanced training in a medical setting. Remember that different people are motivated by different things. The more benefits you identify, the better chance you have of "selling" the volunteer opportunity to a potential volunteer.

Promotion

Promotion is the techniques or strategies you use to reach your potential volunteer. The days of global advertising are over. Voluntary agencies must target the people they want to recruit. They must seek out

those volunteers at their home or club or through their favorite news station. Aiming for the sky shows a lack of respect for our programs/services and a lack of respect for the volunteers who work in them.

The public relations committee should develop a wide array of advertising devices and techniques to reach the agency's targeted volunteer market. The following list illustrates examples:

- Billboards—large displays to promote program or service
- Brochures—simple-one page informational tracts designed to impart information about a program or service
- Bus/subway cards—usually paid advertising for program or service on public transportation system
- Direct mail—information mailed directly to prospective clients or volunteers
- Display booths—posters, pictures and other items about a program to illustrate its services; placed in shopping malls, fairs, PTA carnivals, flea markets, etc.
- Handbills—one-page flyers printed on one side and used on car windshields or as grocery bag stuffers
- Mobile information units—a van or trailer with displays and extensive information about a program or service
- Movies—opportunities to record actual program or volunteers in action, or use "star" to help sell program or service
- Other volunteers—the single most successful method of recruiting volunteers
- Posters—attractive large boards with information about a program or service
- Public service announcements

- Radio—same as television (below)
- Restaurant tray liners—fast food restaurants use food tray liners, which can be printed with the message of your program or service
- Slide/tape presentation—scripted, electronically pulsed slide show with audio narration used to promote a program
- Telephone—tool for contacting potential volunteers
- Television—medium for interviews, PSAs and/or special programs about your agency and volunteers
- Videotape presentation—scripted, acted out presentation that promotes an agency program or service
- Want ads—request for volunteer help in a local newspaper column reserved for volunteer organizations or in the "help wanted" section
- Window displays—exhibits or program items in store windows, especially effective when done once a year to promote a special event

Placement

Placement is deciding where the devices developed will reach the potential volun-

teer markets. Rock stations are probably not a good place to run public service announcements if you are trying to recruit senior citizens. The public relations committee and staff must determine the most appropriate way to reach its target audience of volunteers.

Price

Price, in a business context, is the cost of the product. When we use volunteer help, we rarely think of cost, but frequently there is cost to a volunteer who provides service to an agency. When an advertising campaign is developed, volunteer expenses must be a consideration. Such costs include gas, bus, taxi, babysitter fees, registration, supplies, lost time to job, and/or membership dues. This information needs to be shared with the volunteers before they are recruited.

The job description provides information that should also be included in advertising and promotional material. How many hours a week? A month? When does the job start and stop? Do you expect the person to serve year after year? This gives volunteers an idea of their "time" costs.

If your volunteer organization has separate public relations and recruitment committees, it is essential that staff provide communication links between the two committees. The recruitment team must successfully sell the potential volunteer on the benefits and opportunities. To do this, it needs to have good information about the devices the agency will use to recruit volunteers. The more consultation and sharing of information, the more ownership and commitment volunteers will have in carrying out their respective jobs.

To help the public relations committee work effectively, the staff or chairperson should answer the following questions about the 4 Ps:

Product: What product are we selling and how will it meet volunteers' needs?

Promotion: What devices or techniques can we use that will attract the volunteer to our product?

Placement: Where can we locate the devices we have selected so they will be seen by our targeted potential volunteer market?

Price: What is the cost in money and time to our potential volunteers?

Jot Down Your Ideas . . . about the 4 Ps

What **PRODUCT** are we selling and how will it meet our volunteers' needs? _____

What **PROMOTIONAL** devices or techniques can we use to attract the volunteer to our product? _____

Where can we **PLACE** the devices we have selected so they will be seen by our targeted potential volunteer market? _____

What is the **PRICE** (cost) in money and time to our potential volunteers? _____
