



Marketing Your Volunteer Program To Recruit Volunteers

THREE CHECKLISTS

By Steve McCurley and Sue Vineyard

The following lists are excerpted with permission from the authors' new book, *101* Ideas for Volunteer Programs* (*Actually 949 Ideas in 50 Categories!) (see listing in *Tool Box* for details).

Checklist Prior to Recruitment Campaign

1. Who currently volunteers for us and what do they do?
2. Why do they volunteer for us?
3. How do they compare to volunteers with other agencies?
4. Do we know how and where volunteers will be used?
5. Do we know how we will explain the agency's purpose and mission to volunteers.
6. Do staff understand and accept both volunteer and staff roles?
7. Do we have job descriptions for all positions?
8. Do we have a planned and targeted recruitment campaign?
9. Do the appeals we will use relate to our community and to the volunteers we want to attract?
10. Are we utilizing distribution mechanisms that relate to our target groups.
11. Do we have a qualified volunteer interviewer?
12. Do we know what questions will be asked in interviews?
13. Do all questions relate to volunteer job skills?
14. Have we conducted a risk management assessment of the volunteer roles?
15. Do we know how we will evaluate and compare candidates?
16. Do we know what we will do with "rejected" volunteers?
17. Can we describe volunteer benefits to interviewees?
18. Have staff been trained in volunteer management?
19. Do we have our volunteer personnel management system in place?
20. Does everyone involved in the recruitment effort understand their role?

Steve McCurley and Sue Vineyard are internationally known trainers and consultants on nonprofit management, fundraising and volunteer involvement. In addition to 101 Ideas for Volunteer Programs, they recently released 101 Ways to Raise Resources (see listings in Tool Box).

Motivations to Appeal to in Recruitment Campaigns

1. Helping others.
2. Improving the community.
3. Gaining work experience.
4. Utilizing untapped educational skills.
5. Learning new skills.
6. Getting out of the house.
7. Changing the status quo.
8. Staying active and involved.
9. Meeting new people.
10. Being needed.
11. Testing a new career.
12. Making professional contacts.
13. Gaining academic credit.
14. Experiencing different life-styles.
15. Building self-confidence.
16. Doing satisfying work.
17. Putting your hobby to good purpose.
18. Meeting new challenges.
19. Learning responsibility.
20. Fulfilling a tradition.
21. Being a winner.
22. Sharing fun time with your family and peers.
23. Gaining recognition from others.
24. Using natural gifts and talents.
25. Putting faith into action.
26. Helping a friend.
27. Preserving the past.
28. Influencing others.
29. Getting to know prospective clients.
30. Searching for a job.
31. Being an individual rather than a number.
32. Empowering others.
33. Meeting others with like values.
34. Being a role model for your children.
35. Giving back what you have gotten.
36. Showing that you care.

□ Recruitment Ideas

1. Offer slide-show programs illustrating clients being served by volunteers for use at condominium association meetings in your area.
2. Offer a program on ways to become involved to large companies for use in their pre-retirement seminars.
3. Talk to the manager of your local cable TV program at a high school or college station to present a program on your agency.
4. Never walk away from a meeting where you have given a talk about your agency without getting the name and contact information of everyone who was interested. Get back to these people within one week if possible.
5. When you are going to make a presentation to a large group, take several volunteers with you both to talk about their own experiences and to help you deal with interested applicants.
6. Get lists of other organizations in your area to see if they can help your recruitment effort by advertising your program, offering you time on their meeting agendas, distributing written information to their membership, posting notices on bulletin boards, etc. Churches are especially good at this.
7. Have someone do research on clubs, groups, schools, etc., who have as part of their activities a project similar to yours. People in those projects are excellent prospective recruits for your program.
8. Since a tool that augments recruiting is publicity, consider ways to get your story (of client needs, not organizational history) across, such as identifying businesses that buy newspaper ad space and asking them to plug your cause and how people can become involved.
9. Work with other volunteer groups in your community to sponsor a volunteer fair at a shopping mall or a company.
10. Ask your newspaper to donate space in its classified ads section for volunteer job openings. Place (and pay for, if necessary) a volunteer job advertisement in the Help Wanted section, built around appealing to gaining job skills and making employment contacts.
11. Get churches to announce your needs to their congregations.
12. Contact high school and college department heads in any subject areas that coincide with your agency's purpose to see if volunteering with you can become part of a class assignment.
13. Talk to personnel directors of companies, explaining volunteer opportunities and ask if they can direct retirees and current employees to you.
14. Create a "Resource Inventory" file of groups, individuals, media, clubs, businesses, etc. List name, contact information, past history of collaboration, publications, and all other useful information.
15. Don't forget that you can recruit whole groups to help you with a project. Recruit the National Guard to serve as safety marshals for your special event. Let the Lions Club co-sponsor and operate your Jailathon. Get the Toastmasters Club to serve as your Speakers Bureau.
16. When trying to involve minorities as volunteers, find leaders in that community and recruit them to recruit their peers.
17. When trying to enlist a teacher, pastor or leader of some group, take one of their members with you to help persuade them. Make sure this person is both committed to and informed about your agency.
18. Speak the language of the person you are trying to recruit. Ask yourself, "What do we do that would be of interest to them?" and highlight this in your presentation.
19. When trying to recruit a group, look up its creed or mission and use some of the wording in your presentation. Don't overdo it.
20. Always tell why you are personally committed to your work when enlisting others, since it personalizes the job you are seeking to fill. If you aren't personally committed, recruit someone else to do recruitment.
21. Always recruit volunteers on the basis of the *service to clients*, not the needs of the agency. People work for people, not things.
22. When trying to recruit businesses, look up their advertising slogan and build it into your presentation.
23. Tell people what they will do, how long they will be expected to do it and who will benefit.
24. Remember that you're trying to remove people's reasons to say "NO," not twist their arms into volunteering.
25. Never use guilt when trying to recruit.
26. Be honest and up front with people when trying to recruit. Do not lie about or minimize the work or the time needed.
27. Avoid "first warm-body-through-the-door" methods of recruitment. If you can't get the right person, don't take anybody.
28. Ask grocers to stuff flyers into grocery bags about your program.
29. Break large volunteer jobs down into smaller components that recruit people on these lesser time-consuming jobs.
30. Be careful about recruiting people to titles without explaining the actual job functions and responsibilities. "Secretary" can mean different things to different people.
31. Diagram where people will fit into the overall pattern of work. It will help them visualize their role in relation to others.
32. ALWAYS offer a job design—even if it's a simple one-sentence sketch of the work to be performed. This way, both you and they are more likely to understand their assignment.
33. Don't recruit until you know what you are doing and what the volunteers are going to be doing.
34. Appeal to your current volunteers to recruit their friends. Sponsor a "Bring a Friend" introductory luncheon.
35. Get the Welcome Wagon, Visitors Bureau and Chamber of Commerce to disseminate your material to newcomers.