Management of Volunteer Services in Canada:

The Text

Second Edition

Ginette Johnstone (editor)

Nicole Dufresne Baker, Barb Gemmell, Lenore Good,
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edited by: Ginette Johnstone, M.Ed.

with contributions by:

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About the Contributors

This work is the result of the efforts of many leading thinkers in the field of management of volunteer services in Canada. We sincerely thank them for their work and celebrate their achievements.

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Nicole is an Honours Graduate in the University of Ottawa Commerce Program, and is a Chartered Accountant. As an auditor and consultant at Price Waterhouse, Nicole has dealt with many senior officials in both the private and public sector. In her current position, as chief financial officer at Ritchie Feed & Seed Ltd., she is aware of the issues and challenges facing senior government.

Nicole provides training in both the Board Development and Volunteer Management programs at various colleges. She is the author of <u>Taking Care of "Cash"ews.</u>

Barb Gemmell is the Volunteer Program Consultant at the Volunteer Centre of Winnipeg. She coordinates and facilitates two certificate programs, "Introduction to Volunteer Management" and "Leadership Skills for Managers of Volunteers". Barb provides consultation both locally and nationally. She volunteers for several community boards and committees. As an active member of the Manitoba Association for Volunteer Administration (MAVA) for the past 12 years, Barb has initiated and supported a very unique partnership between MAVA and the Volunteer Centre. Recently Barb joined the board of Canadian Administrators of Volunteer Resources (CAVR) as the Manitoba representative.

Lenore Good has been Director of Volunteer Services at the Health Sciences Centre, Winnipeg, since 1985. Under her leadership the number of active volunteers has tripled to over 1200 per year, and the revenues generated for the hospitals has increased eight fold to almost $400,000 per year. Her responsibilities include managing the Volunteer Department of the hospital which is responsible for the hospital's volunteer program, directing Volunteer Enterprises, a charitable not-for-profit corporation that operates seven volunteer supported revenue generating businesses, and liaison with The White Cross Guild, the auxiliary to the Health Sciences Centre.

Before joining the Health Science Centre, Lenore was National Training Manager for the Bay, Northern Stores. In her training role, Lenore developed and implemented management and sales training programs which were implemented in over 200 stores across Northern Canada. Lenore is married. She and her husband, Chris, have two daughters ages 23 and 21.

Linda Graff has been in the business of not-for-profit management since 1980. She has delivered workshops, presentations, and plenary and keynote addresses at more than 450 events to more than 20,000 people over the last eighteen years. Linda is a dynamic and challenging speaker who mixes humour and informality with innovative thinking and empowering concepts. She is an extremely popular presenter who is considered one of Canada's foremost authorities on volunteerism. Linda has written five books and numerous articles in the field of volunteer services management and currently specializes in policy development, risk management, screening, and discipline and dismissal.

Linda received undergraduate and graduate degrees from McMaster University. After nearly ten years as the Director of the Volunteer Centre in Hamilton, Ontario, Linda established her management consulting firm, GRAFF AND ASSOCIATES, located in Dundas, Ontario. Along with her associates, she works exclusively with charitable agencies and not-for-profit organizations. She currently divides her time among research, writing, and consulting projects, and the delivery of workshops across Canada and into the United States.

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Ginette Johnstone of Johnstone Training and Consultation (JTC) Inc., Carp, Ontario is known throughout Canada as a skilled consultant, trainer, and facilitator. Along with a B.A. (Psychology), and an M.Ed., (Adult) she has a diploma in Business Administration, and Certificates in Criminology and Volunteer Management.

Ginette specializes in the voluntary and public sectors. Her experience is broad, covering the management of volunteers, organizational development and voluntary sector administration. In the past, she has been Executive Director of a Volunteer Center in B.C. and a Coordinator of Volunteers for a juvenile justice program in Manitoba. Currently, Ginette is owner and senior consultant of JOHNSTONE TRAINING AND CONSULTATION (JTC) INC.

Ginette has facilitated many groups of senior managers. As well she has designed and delivered countless workshops on a wide variety of topics: presentation skills, writing skills, negotiation, partnership and facilitation. She is bilingual.

Ginette is author of Chairing a Committee, A Practical Guide, Words Do Make a Difference!, Volunteers, Active Partners, and The Complete Book of By-laws for Not-for-profit Organizations in Canada. She is co-author of A Book of Case Studies for Training Volunteers, A Book of Case Studies for Training Board Members What if? A Guide to Ethical Decision Making and The Challenging Personality: A self-help guide for trainers and facilitators.

Marilyn MacKenzie is a well-known trainer, facilitator and author. She is currently Director of Volunteer Resources at the Hospital for Sick Children.

Marilyn has taught and coordinated the certificate program in Fundamental Volunteer Management at Humber College, and was the only Canadian faculty member at the University of Colorado's Volunteer Management Program. She was a founding member of Partners Plus, a consulting firm that specialized in volunteer management issues. As a member, she travelled extensively across Canada and the United States as a consultant and trainer. Marilyn brings a passion for the Voluntary Sector; her sense of humour and extensive real life experiences to her writing.

Mary MacKillop

Liz Weaver has been involved in the field of management of volunteer services for over 15 years. Her involvement began as a student leader at Carleton University in the 1980's and her belief in the power of volunteerism remains strong. Liz is currently Executive Director of the Volunteer Centre of Hamilton and District. As a volunteer, she is a board member for a variety of organizations including Volunteer Canada and Community Information Services Hamilton-Wentworth.

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CHAPTER 1: VOLUNTEERISM IN CANADA

KEY POINTS

This chapter reviews the history of volunteerism in Canada. The integral role of volunteers in the development and maintenance of our society is explored from a philosophical basis and from an examination of the unique contribution that volunteers make. Current statistics are provided and trends that have an impact on the evolution of volunteerism are identified, including a brief look to the future of management of volunteer services.

This chapter will address
- ✔ the history of volunteerism in Canada
- ✔ volunteerism in Canada today
- ✔ the unique contribution of volunteers
- ✔ a philosophical basis for volunteering in western society
- ✔ current trends affecting volunteer activity
- ✔ the future of volunteer services

This chapter was written by Ginette Johnstone of Johnstone Training and Consultation (JTC) Inc.

The History of Volunteerism

Volunteerism is a long standing tradition in Canada. From our humblest beginnings, the ethic of giving freely of oneself, of helping one's neighbour and serving one's community has been integral to our social identity and national culture.

We can trace our Canadian tradition of volunteerism back to England, and the "Elizabethan Poor Laws" of 1601. The Reformation has caused the dissolution of Roman Catholic monasteries. This law made way for the creation of public institutions that would take over the charitable works that were provided by monasteries. Social responsibility became well entrenched in the lifestyles of the more prosperous citizens as ladies from aristocratic circles provided for those less fortunate.

Our early Canadian ancestors continued this tradition as much out of necessity as habit. Early times were difficult. The climate was harsh and the wilderness held dangers everywhere. It is through mutual aid that settlers were able to survive the challenging conditions of their new life. In many cases, it was through the good will and assistance of Aboriginal peoples, who taught the white man how to survive in his new environment, that early Canadians gained the knowledge and information they needed to tame this virgin land.

It was through community efforts that settlements grew. Barn raising days are a good example of the whole community coming together to help one family. While the men constructed a new barn for a young couple, or after the ravages of fire, the women provided refreshments and prepared meals for the whole group. Everyone helped in some way. This tradition persisted in all aspects of pioneer life, whether a person became ill and in need of care or children were orphaned through some tragedy and in need of a home.

Organized volunteer activity originated mostly in churches and other religious organizations. They worked with individuals and communities to meet specific needs and to bring aid to the less fortunate. Sometimes, natural disasters such as fires or epidemics brought people together for mutual benefit. Such an event, the great fire of Quebec City in the early 1690's resulted in the creation of the "Bureau du pauvre", one of the first organizations created specifically for providing social assistance. In these early days, there was no government assistance of any kind for the less fortunate.

Soon, secular organizations began to spring up, their purpose being to meet social, educational or health needs that were not otherwise being met. The early 19th Century saw the creation of such well known organizations as the Canadian Red Cross Society in 1896, The Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) in 1851, The Victorian Order of Nurses 1897, as well as many social clubs such as Kiwanis and Rotary.

Volunteer activity also has a strong tradition in political activism, from the fights for universal suffrage to the election of representatives to parliament. It is through political activism that the rights of the needy or of those suffering from discrimination or injustice were, and continue to be, fought for. Also, voluntary activity is a critical element of the process through which ordinary citizens participate in choosing their political leaders and in making the decisions that shape our society.

Organization	Founded
Amnesty International - Canada	1961
Alzheimer Society	1978
Boy Scouts of Canada	1914
Canadian Blood Agency	1998
Canadian Cancer Society	1938
Canadian Diabetes Association	1953
Canadian Hearing Society	1940
Canadian Liver Foundation	1969
Canadian National Institute for the Blind	1918
Canadian Red Cross Society	1896
Care Canada	1946
Coalition of National Voluntary Organizations	1974
Crohn's and Colitis	1974
Girl Guides of Canada	1910
Kidney Foundation	1964
Rotary Club	1910
St. John Ambulance	1882
Victorian Order of Nurses	1897
United Way of Canada	1917
Young Men's Christian Association	1851

The first social welfare program in Canada was established in Ontario in the late 1800's. In other provinces, legislation concerned with the needs of the poor was scarce, with a few provinces having "poor laws" in place. At about the same time, immigration was on the increase; this resulted in some ethno-cultural groups being organized, becoming the venue for much culturally based volunteer activity.

In the mid 19th Century, the Industrial Revolution changed the face of communities through the development of large urban centres. As people flooded the city, leaving behind their rural lifestyles, and not always having employable skills, there grew a more urgent need for social supports. Still largely through the churches, but also through new secular agencies, many projects were organized to meet the needs of those in society who became victims of urbanization.

It was not until the middle of the 20th Century that governments began to take active responsibility for the care of those less fortunate. The post-war era brought prosperity and the pursuit of an egalitarian society. More adequate funding was provided to service organizations and in many cases, as in Children's Aid Societies, the government undertook to provide services directly. All this at a time when the economy was strong, government revenues were healthy and indications were for continued growth. That, combined with the evolution of a more liberal and tolerant society contributed to a major expansion of the voluntary and public sectors.

Government departments were created to ensure that social and health services were available to all citizens, regardless of their economic circumstance. Many services that were provided only through voluntary effort were taken on by governments eager to create a more equal and prosperous society.

This era saw the creation, in Canada, of universal health care, unemployment insurance and Canada pension. Though in some instances this period saw a decline in volunteerism as government took on increasing responsibility for the welfare of citizens, volunteer activity continued to flourish as there was never of shortage of needs to be met.

It is at about this time that the profession of management of volunteer services emerged, cutting its teeth in the United States. Formal volunteerism was the domain of "lady bountiful", the at-home, middle class housewife whose children were in school and who had time on her hands to "do good works". With strong leadership from visionaries like Marlene Wilson, those working directly with volunteers began adopting a formal management process that would allow them to optimize the experience for both volunteers and recipients of their service.

As the century progressed, the breadth of formal volunteer opportunity continued to expand. From limited beginnings in the health and welfare arenas, volunteerism expanded to include virtually every aspect of our society. The number of not-for-profit organizations grew rapidly. In the 1980's many ethnic and multi-cultural groups were formed. Today, volunteers are involved in health, education, social services, arts, culture, environment and more. Volunteers operate in a variety of settings. Whether it be one individual helping another, a neighbourhood clean-up initiative, a self-help group or a large department within a hospital, volunteer activity finds its expression in every corner of our society.

Even within the bastions of the corporate world, volunteerism has been acknowledged as a means to create a more meaningful business environment while making a valuable contribution to the community. Large corporations such as Nortel or Algoma Steel have created special committees whose mandate is to facilitate employee commitment to volunteer activity or charitable giving.

Volunteers are also involved within business settings to provide services through employee assistance programs, fitness programs and others programs benefiting the workforce.

Today, the pendulum is swinging back to a more conservative and fiscally restrained environment. Canadian governments at all levels are forced to reassess their role as service providers. Spurred by the economic recession of the early 90's, governments are rethinking the scope of publicly sponsored programs and services, wondering how much of that responsibility should be returned to the community. Federal, provincial and municipal governments are all redesigning direct service delivery, either by cutting services entirely or by devolving the responsibility to public levels below them or even to private organizations. This is leading to much discussion and controversy about just who should be responsible for what. It is creating a fear that, in their efforts to re-align their services with the economic reality, governments will make decisions that will hurt those most in need. Many believe that the Canadian "social net", a revered symbol of Canadian identity, is starting to come apart at the seams.

Community response to these changes seems divided, with some people seeing this as an opportunity to regain control and reduce government intervention while others feel strongly that governments are abdicating their responsibility.

Regardless, the trend is strong and there is little indication of governments reversing course. Though there are hints of more funding in crucial areas such as health care and education, the devolution of responsibility appears permanent. The voluntary sector is directly involved in this and will undoubtedly have an impact on how services continue to be provided.

Volunteerism in Canada Today

The spirit of volunteer service is still active today. Note the help freely offered, formally and informally, to the victims of the great floods in Saguenay, Quebec in the summer of 1996, in southern Manitoba in the Spring of 1997 and in the Ice Storm of Eastern Canada in January 1998. Canada has also acquired an international reputation for its generosity toward those around the world who are less fortunate, or who are victims of war or natural disaster such as Hurricane Mitch in 1998 and the major earthquake in Columbia in early 1999.

Despite the many social changes that have occurred, volunteerism continues to be a driving force in our nation. In recent years, it has gained strength and recognition for the individual who gives freely of his or her time and energy for the benefit of others.

Defining "Volunteer"

Before attempting to understand the scope of volunteer activity in Canada today, we must first define what is meant by the term volunteer.

The dictionary definition of volunteer reads:

> *"a person who offers or performs a voluntary service, especially a public service."*[1]

This definition emphasizes two main concepts. The first is that of "free will"; volunteers do what they do because they choose to. The second concept is that of "service", of helping others or society through volunteer activity without remuneration or financial gain.

Although this definition is widely accepted, there are groups of individuals who are involved in community or public service who do not clearly fit the concept of "giving freely". Their service is none the less of benefit and in many cases, they have been considered and treated as volunteers.

One such group includes individuals who perform community service as part of a court order. It normally involves first time property offenders, whom the courts believe would benefit from direct exposure to the individual or community they have offended. Students who are required to perform voluntary service as part of their course credits are also not "giving freely". Yet, they are widely accepted for placement in many volunteer services departments.

Another group which is growing rapidly is able-bodied welfare recipients who are required, in certain provinces (including New Brunswick and Ontario) to earn the social assistance they receive by contributing in some way to their community.

The voluntary community is finding itself in a dilemma with respect to the acceptance of these individuals. Though they do not fit the description of a true volunteer, their service is beneficial. The matter is further complicated by the need for additional administrative and fiscal resources required to accommodate these "mandatory" volunteers.

Statistical Information

It is very difficult to obtain current statistics about the scope of volunteer involvement in Canada today. This situation exists because of two main factors.

1. Our inability to accurately define what volunteer activity is makes it difficult to collect accurate data.

2. The work of individuals who volunteer on an informal basis, by offering their services to neighbours in need or providing some other volunteer activity without being attached to an organization, is often unknown to statisticians.

The latest and most reliable statistics on voluntary activity in Canada can be found in *Caring Canadians, Involved Canadians*[2], the report on an extensive survey sponsored by Statistics Canada, Volunteer Canada, Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, Canadian Heritage and Health Canada. Released in the fall of 1998, this survey clearly establishes the extent and enormous value of volunteer activity in Canada.

Highlights from *"Caring Canadians, Involved Canadians."*

- Between Nov. 1, '96 and Oct. 31, '97, over 7.5 million Canadians (31.4 of the Canadian population 15 years and older) volunteered;
- The average contribution was 149 hours;
- 1.1 billion of hours were volunteered; the equivalent of 578,000 full time jobs;
- 16.7 million people (71% of population 15 years and older) provided help directly to individuals.

We get a further glimpse, however slight, from the 1992 General Social Survey on Time Use.[3] This effort assessed how Canadians make use of their time. It separated time into five categories: free time; personal care; education; paid work; and unpaid work; a category that includes child care, elder care, cooking and meal clean-up, house cleaning and laundry, shopping, maintenance and repairs; and finally, volunteer work. The study did find that:

- men and women devoted nearly 25 minutes a day to volunteer work;
- Canadians over 55 averaged about 36 minutes a day for volunteer work; and
- employed people and students devoted the least time to volunteer work, averaging less that 20 minutes a day.[4]

Volunteers are a diverse group that represent every part of Canadian society. They come from all age groups, all walks of life, and any socio-economic status. They come from diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds; some are well-educated, some are not. Clearly, they make an enormous and invaluable contribution to our society.

The Unique Contribution of Volunteers

In many of our organizations, survival depends on the efforts and contributions of our volunteers. It is critical however, that we look beyond that to the deeper reasons why volunteers are so necessary to the health and development of our services. Consider the following.[5]

The first and most obvious of these reasons is that volunteers provide a **critical link with the community**. They are part of the communities that organizations serve; in several cases, they are recipients of that service. Because they are somewhat removed from the operational challenges of service delivery, volunteers continually bring a fresh community perspective to the organization in a way staff, who are and must be immersed in the agency's organizational culture, cannot. An organization's culture gives it a character all its own; it also often prescribes how it approaches its clients/customers and how it tackles challenges. Staff, to a much larger degree than volunteers, assume and contribute to a certain philosophy and approach to service delivery.

Volunteers, on the other hand, are more tuned into the pulse of the community because they are more detached. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that they are tuned into a different wavelength and thus have a different perspective on how the community views the service, its prominence, its necessity, its value. By tapping into this valuable information, agencies can stay in touch and be much more responsive to the community.

By the same argument, it can be said that volunteers bring a much **broader perspective** to the decision-making process. Staff assume the organizational culture and the organizations runs smoothly because they come to understand instinctively the unwritten conventions that make it work. Volunteers also absorb the organizational culture, but to a far lesser extent. Thus, they bring to the organization a broader perspective on which to base decisions. In effect, they allow the organization to see things more easily from new and different angles and therefore remain fresh and current. Without this breadth of perspective, agencies can quickly become stagnant, unable to adapt creatively to continually changing needs.

An important outcome of this link with the community is the support and loyalty that volunteers help build in the community for the service. By virtue of their involvement, they make the agency part of the community and the community part of the agency. The degree to which staff can accomplish this is limited because they are contractually and by necessity bound to meet organizational goals first; that is where their responsibility lies.

In its 1992 report "Why People Volunteer", the Volunteer Centre of Ottawa-Carleton states:

> *"Many volunteers appear to get satisfaction from educating people about the causes and organizations they work for. There is a sense of bringing about social change".*[6]

Volunteers have easier access to that community, to tap into its physical and human resources and to build **support and awareness**. They are the best recruits for new volunteers or financial supporters, and may even find physical resources such as space or equipment. All of this enables staff to use their talents to optimum effectiveness.

Furthermore, volunteers bring a vast **pool of experience, knowledge and expertise** to our organizations. In its strategic initiative "Taking Volunteerism into the 21st Century", the American Red Cross states as one of its ten principles:

> *"Volunteer does not mean amateur"*[7].

If we are to involve volunteers as partners, we must accept this as true. Though the pool of skills and knowledge may be one of the more obvious reasons for involving volunteers in our organizations, the great extent to which volunteers add to our human resources is often underestimated. This resource can never be exhausted and can enrich every aspect of our work. This is truly the area where volunteers and staff complement each other, learn from each other, exchange, create and help each other, like all partners should.

A very important aspect of volunteer involvement, both in direct service and at the leadership level, is the role volunteers play in **keeping our organizations accountable**. Because they are part of the community we serve, they ensure that we are true to our mission and that we focus on service delivery. They will be quick to point out a tendency to become bogged down in bureaucracy, or the fact that our internal bickering is affecting the quality of service. It is they who constantly remind us of why we are there.

Admittedly this aspect of volunteer involvement can be somewhat threatening. However, our realization that volunteers, especially when recognized as partners, share our goals and hopes for our agency, frees us to accept this contribution for its true value. It becomes an essential element of effectiveness.

Just as volunteers keep us accountable, they **keep us current**. Because they maintain one foot in and one foot out of our organizations, they are the first to see how we can rise to meet an unmet need, or to change our services to make them more effective or efficient. Although they can sometimes be resistant to change, volunteers are most often the ones to point to a new opportunity and lead the way to a better service. After all, it is in the volunteer tradition that most of our services originated.

By being responsive to volunteer input in planning and evaluation, our agencies can maintain the leading edge in an ever changing society.

Finally, volunteers are the very **essence of the democratic process**. Without volunteers, democracy cannot exist. This is true at many levels, starting with the voluntary activity of community leaders to the daily involvement of the front line volunteer. Volunteering is the primary mechanism by which the citizen can contribute to a better society and to the decision-making process in a way he/she knows best. It is the optimum venue by which individuals shape culture and heritage, by which they become active citizens in a society dedicated to fair access and representation.

Susan Ellis, in her classic book "*From the Top Down*", offers her "first choice reasons"[8] for encouraging volunteer activity. These are:

- Volunteers have credibility because they are unsalaried;
- Receiving assistance from a volunteer (rather than from an employee) makes a difference to the recipient;
- Volunteers are insider/outsiders... (they) have a broader point of view;
- Volunteers extend your sphere of influence;
- Volunteers are valuable as objective policy makers;
- Volunteers bring the luxury of focus;
- Volunteers are more free to criticize;
- Volunteers can approach assignments with less pressure and stress;
- Volunteers are private citizens, free to approach legislators or the media;
- Volunteers can experiment with new ideas.

It is obvious that agencies cannot but benefit by making volunteers active partners. Volunteers make a unique and different contribution from that of staff. It is a contribution that deserves equal status with that of staff. Once we accept volunteers as active partners and structure our organizations and design our services to reflect that, everyone will benefit: the volunteers, staff, management and most of all, those we serve.

A Philosophy of Volunteerism

For those of us who are, or plan to be, actively involved in this field as a manager, a leader of those who give freely of their time, the last years of the 20th Century are a time of re-assessment and re-alignment.

At a time when volunteerism is gaining recognition from the private sector and governments at all levels, at a time when the profession of manager of volunteer resources is finally gaining recognition, practitioners must be clear about their contribution to the evolution of their profession. It is a very exciting time, full of opportunities.

This confirmation of our identity as a profession begins with a clear articulation of our philosophy of volunteer involvement, one that recognizes volunteers as active partners in service delivery, partners who bring something unique and specific to what we do.

It continues with the education of colleagues, senior decision-makers, the community and volunteers themselves.

Volunteers as Partners

Managers of volunteers play a critical role in ensuring that our organizations accept volunteers, not as subordinates, not as do-gooders, but as true partners, of equal status with staff on the organizational chart, albeit with a far different role and contribution and certainly never intended to take over or replace staff.

Partners share responsibility, share commitment, share risks and share rewards. Entering into a partnership also means sharing in the consequences of not living up to expectations. Managers must implement partnership agreements that clearly outline what is expected of each partner and what the commitment of each will be. They must stop making excuses and covering up. They must treat volunteers as partners in every sense of the word.

Volunteers and Labour

As the voluntary movement gained strength in the formal service delivery system, it has come in conflict with organized labour. Union members, eager to protect their member's jobs, feared that too many volunteers would erode paid positions and provide employers the means to reduce their workforce.

This misunderstanding has come in the way of labour and volunteers working together toward the same goal. Most will agree that volunteers are not to replace staff. They perform tasks that would not otherwise be carried out, usually in the way of additional service or in areas of innovation. Yet, defining just what that means is not as straightforward as it might seem.

Li Zahnd, in her article, "Volunteer Staff Relationship in a Union Environment" lists a number of ways that managers of volunteers can work collaboratively to create a positive relationship with unions:

- clear policies defining the role of volunteers;
- joint (with staff) design of volunteer positions;
- language that is distinct from that of staff;
- volunteers and staff informed about policies;
- monitoring and evaluation of activities;
- policies and procedures regarding the role of volunteers during industrial conflict; and
- celebration of successes through staff recognition.

As the history of volunteerism demonstrates, volunteers, upon seeing a need for service, began meeting it. In doing so, volunteers increased awareness and visibility of the 'cause', an effort which frequently led to formalized organizations to assume responsibility for alleviating that need. More often than not, paid jobs were the result of volunteer initiatives.

Despite this reality, volunteer-union relations still provide managers of volunteer services with challenges.

> "In the workplace of the 1990's where workforce downsizing by an organization is a common occurrence, it is of little wonder that volunteer services are viewed with much suspicion." (Thacker, 1997)

There is still much discussion to be had about what jobs are suitable for volunteers and which are not. Even when organizations have a philosophy of volunteerism articulated and is supported by clear policies defining appropriate volunteer involvement, the dialogue with labour must be on-going.

To assist in maintaining harmonious relations, Colin Thacker suggests:[9]

- Any change should be preceded by full consultation;
- Agreements on voluntary activity should be made widely known;
- The roles of volunteers and paid workers should complement each other;
- The actions of volunteers should not threaten the livelihood of paid workers;
- Volunteers should not receive financial rewards;
- There should be a recognized means for resolving problems; and
- An agreement should exist of how to proceed in the event of a strike should exist.

Clearly, good cooperation and collaboration between volunteers and labour will continue to be an on-going concern of volunteer services departments.

Current Trends

With the ever-increasing pace of change, it is important for leaders in the voluntary sector to keep a watchful eye to the trends that might shape volunteer activity. The 90's have seen major changes in direction in social, economic, political and technological developments. Though intricately related, these four areas provide a framework for considering some of the forces which are shaping the field.

The **social** arena has been the most tumultuous, with new ideas and services coming and going at such a pace that even the best have difficulty keeping track.

One of the more predictable factors of this groups has been population demographics. With the baby boomers reaching retirement age, the numbers of seniors is increasing dramatically. This fact, along with the better health care and longer life expectancy are causing an increase in demand for all kinds of services to seniors, including in health, recreation, education, that few could have predicted. It must also be noted that this increase in the number of seniors, who are known to devote more time to volunteer activity in retirement, provides the manager of volunteer services with a source of volunteers rich in skills and experience.

Diversity is certainly a major social issue of this century. With the emergence of the global village, and rapid technological advances, movement around the globe has increased dramatically. The face of Canada has changed to reflect a multicultural population representing a large range of values, beliefs and expectations.

As Canadians began coping with issues of diversity, the term widened from denoting racial and cultural diversity to include diversity in ability, economic background, sexual orientation, etc. As we come to see diversity as a celebration of differences, our population continues to evolve and diversity is quickly becoming a major asset for effective service delivery.

Another factor has been a new awareness of issues relating to safety and security. Though statistics show that crime is on the decrease, there is a public perception that it is on the increase. This has resulted in programs and services needing to consider safety and security issues like never before.

There has also been a major shift in lifestyle values that is only now beginning to manifest itself widely in all facets of voluntary and public service. This is a shift away from a dependency of the expert/professional to the belief in individual self-determination and self-sufficiency. Rather than going to the professional to be told what we should do, we go to the professional to find out what our options are. We reserve the right to decide for ourselves.

Economically, the trend has been consistent. The boom days of the eighties have been replaced with the recession of the nineties. This has been characterized by increasing government deficits and decreasing monies in public coffers. In face of this new reality, the voluntary and public sectors have had to find ways of "doing more with less" and of becoming less dependent of the public purse for their revenues. This has become the biggest challenge of the voluntary sector of this century.

As the economy begins to regain strength, the expectant return to financial stability is still not assured. A shift in philosophy with respect to responsibility and ownership, as well as the devolution of powers by governments at all levels, have left not-for-profit organizations having to re-define their sources of support.

Changes in the Canadian labour force are also to be considered. Because of their large numbers, the baby boomers created a surplus of labour which is partly responsible for the high unemployment rate experienced in the 1990's. However, as the boomers begin to retire, they will have the reverse effect, creating a shortage of labour. Furthermore, with the shift away from manufacturing, the high demand skills are more and more focused in the high tech sector. Skilled workers are already in high demand in this areas, producing a skill shortage despite the still high unemployment rate.

The lack of jobs in formal organizations has led many Canadians to self-employment. This has been strengthened by the social shift from dependency to self-sufficiency. Tired of being directed and sometimes limited by large bureaucracies, many have opted for a scaled down, expert-based, personalized service that they can provide by becoming entrepreneurs and small business owners. This trends leads to two challenges for voluntary service providers. The first is increased competition as increased numbers of private service providers make their way into the market. The second is the increased difficulty in reaching these people when recruiting volunteers.

The dramatic shift to the **political** right, the renewed conservatism that this country has experienced, even by traditionally left-wing factions, has left many organizations, communities and governments struggling to cope with a new economic reality. One of many effects of this shift is that organizations who once were assured government funding are now facing the challenges of fund raising in an over-taxed system. Other organizations are having to re-think the type of service provided, sometimes having to reduce levels of service in one area in order to introduce new services in another.

This trend has led to major reforms in how governments fund services. Initiatives such as "Long Term Care Reform" in Ontario and "Workfare" in New Brunswick are examples of the impact of new political thinking. Add to that the already mentioned devolution of responsibility by governments and you have a system experiencing a fundamental change in both philosophy and structure.

One cannot underestimate the impact of **technological** advancements on the voluntary and public sectors. As the information highway is making in-roads into just about every aspect of our lives, voluntary agencies have been slow to "get connected". This is partly due to their poorer financial status than many organizations in the private sector. But more relevant is the resistance to technological progress for fear that it might take away the human factor which so many not-for-profit agencies pride themselves.

Reality is setting in however, and more and more, voluntary organizations are realizing the need to become part of the new technological era. It may become their best bet and developing a dialogue with their counterparts in the private and public sectors.

Technological advances have also allowed more individuals to work out of their homes. According to Statistics Canada, 1.1 million employed people, that is 6.2% of the labour force, worked out of their home in 1991.[10] One of the most prominent workplace shifts of the century, the home worker is re-defining how information and services are provided. The impact of this change is yet to be felt by the voluntary sector but promises to have definite consequences in the very near future.

More insights are evident from a report commissioned by the Voluntary Action Program, Department of the Secretary of State in 1988. The purpose of the research was "to prepare a provincial profile of the resources available to voluntary organizations."[11] Though somewhat dated, the report identified a number of issues common across the country. Some of these are worth noting.

- The changing concept of volunteer, noting that people's motivations for volunteering were more varied and less altruistic than traditionally thought.
- Growth in the voluntary sector, leading to increased competition for money, volunteers and managerial expertise.
- Access to provincial funding, especially true for new organizations.
- Attitude of bureaucracy as many government officials believe in the contribution volunteers can make to the community.

Though other issues identified related more to the sector in general, it is evident that the sector is experiencing a major evolution, if not a revolution.

The Manager of Volunteers in the 21st Century

All of these changes present new challenges for the manager of volunteers. Though this text concentrates on entry level competencies, the forward looking manager will reflect longer on the challenges faced by the sector and the vital role that he or she plays in the evolution of the profession.

Chapter 15 offers some thoughts to consider about the future of this profession, but this future will be crafted by those who practice it. It is a responsibility to be taken seriously.

Endnotes

[1] *Gage Canadian Dictionary*, Toronto, Ontario: Educational Publishing Company, 1993, page 1260.

[2] *Caring Canadians, Involved Canadians,* Highlights for the 1997 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, Non-profit Sector Research Initiative, Ottawa, Canada: Minister of Industry, 1998.

[3] Statistics Canada, *Initial Data Release from the 1992 General Social Survey on Time Use,* Ottawa, Ontario: Statistics Canada, 1992.

[4] Ibid, pages 4 -7.

[5] From: Johnstone, Ginette, *Volunteers: Active Partners*, Carp, Ontario: Johnstone Training and Consultation, (JTC) Inc., 1995.

[6] The Volunteer Centre of Ottawa-Carleton, *Why People Volunteer, a report to the Voluntary Action Directorate,* Ottawa, Ontario: 1992.

[7] American Red Cross, *Taking Volunteerism into the 21st Century*, March 1990.

[8] adapted from: Ellis, Susan, *From the Top Down,* 2nd Edition, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Energize Inc., 1996, pages 8 - 11.

[9] Adapted from Thacker, Colin, Creating a Positive Environment: Volunteer and Staff Relations", *Journal of Volunteer Resources Management,* Winter 1997, Volume 6.1, pages 2-4.

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[11] Voluntary Action Program, *The Voluntary Sector in Canada*, Hull, Quebec: Department of the Secretary of State, 1988.

Review Questions

The past, the present, the future: all create the context in which managers of volunteers lead those who provide service freely.

1. Briefly trace the historical development of volunteer activity in Canada, listing major developments.
2. What do you feel are the major influences which have an impact on volunteer activity in Canada today?
3. What values underlie your personal philosophy of volunteer involvement?
4. Identify three major trends that you have observed and describe how they will affect the role of managers of volunteers in the near future.

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CHAPTER 2: MANAGEMENT CONCEPTS

KEY POINTS:

Management is the process of leading individuals and administering the department in such a manner as to fulfill the organizational mandate while empowering individuals to do their best. Management of volunteer services is human resources management as it applies to voluntary organizations.

This chapter addresses:
✔ what is management
✔ achieving a balance in management
✔ management functions and roles
✔ ethics in management
✔ the evolution of management of volunteer services
✔ standards of practice

This chapter was written by Ginette Johnstone of Johnstone Training and Consultation (JTC) Inc.

What is Management?

Henry Mintzberg, professor and researcher at the University of McGill states that management is what separates formal organizations from a random collection of people. It is "the presence of some system of authority and administration, personified by one manager or several in a hierarchy to knit the whole effort together".[1]

As a discipline, management has been evolving since the beginning of the century. In the rest of this text, there will be more in depth discussion of many aspects of management; this chapter will provide a conceptual framework within which it all fits.

The manager is the lynch pin; the person who connects the work of the people in the organization to its mandate. Inherent in the role is the need to continually balance the delicate tension between motivating the people and getting the job done.

> No job is more vital to our society than that of the manager. It is the manager who determines whether our social institutions serve us well or whether they squander our talents and resources. (Mintzberg, 1989)

In essence the manager is the overseer. He or she ensures that the mandate is attended to in the most effective and efficient manner. It can be argued that the manager's job is really to see the 'big picture' and ensuring that all the pieces fit as they should.

Management Functions

Looking at management in a more practical vein requires us to ask "Just what is it managers do?" Though there can be as many answers as respondents to this question, there has been a long tradition in the management schools to refer to five basic management functions:

1. Plan: This function includes setting a direction for the organization or department, the establishment of a mission or purpose and based on those, the creation of goals and objectives that will take the agency or department toward its ultimate destination.

2. Organize: This function oversees daily operations and involves the development of job descriptions, the scheduling of duties, the analysis of work flow, anticipating problems and writing policies and procedures.

3. Staff: This function includes all tasks that ensure that adequate human resources are in place to accomplish the mandate and includes recruitment, selection and placement as well as orientation and training of workers.

4. Direct: This function includes activities that help guide and direct workers in their jobs and includes supervision, coaching, problem solving and conflict resolution.

5. Control: In this function, the manager ensures smooth operations with activities such as performance reviews, financial checks and monitoring activities.

It is important to understand that managers have many roles, not all easily defined, and that their daily activities will depend on many factors.

Managers wear many hats: boss, recruiter, trainer, supervisor, coach, interviewer, evaluator, reporter, administrator, leader, follower, planner, decision-maker.... Herein lies the challenge of a good manager: to be able to choose the right hat at the right time, while balancing the need to pursue organizational goals, departmental objectives and the personal needs of staff and volunteers.

The Balance in Management

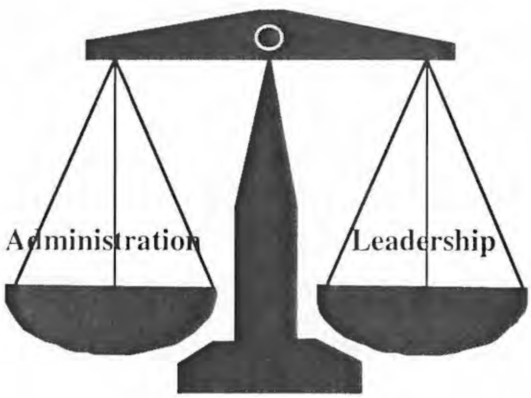
One way to look at management is to see it as a balance between two types of functions: leadership functions (where leadership is seen as people oriented functions such as coaching, supporting, guiding ...) and administrative functions (where administrative functions are seen as paper work: budgeting, planning, evaluating). A good manager must have both sets of skills before he or she can be effective.

It is in establishing a balance between leadership functions and administrative functions that managers can ensure that the "big picture" is being addressed.

> "Effective managers manage themselves and the people they work with so that both the organization and the people profit from their presence." (The One Minute Manager)

This does not mean that managers have to be experts at everything. Rather, it means that they must understand each function with respect to what side of the scales it falls on and put in place the necessary supports and systems to accomplish it.

Administrative skills include
- planning
- organizing
- record keeping
- budgeting
- report writing
- scheduling
- and more.



Leadership skills include
- communicating
- interviewing
- motivating
- recognizing
- training
- delegating
- coaching
- and more.

No manager will have mastered all these skills. In most instances, the manager will, by virtue of natural preferences and abilities, be stronger on one side of the scale than on the other.

This is consistent with Robert Ornstein's left brain right brain theories. Following ground breaking research on individuals who had had the two hemispheres of their brain separated, it was shown that the two hemispheres of the brain are each responsible for different functions, each specializing, in either logical thinking or abstract thinking.

For most people, the left side of the brain functions in a logical, linear, articulate fashion. It is specialized for language. The right side of the brain functions in abstract, relational, and creative ways. Its specialty is visual functions and emotion. All of us have a preference for one or the other; that is most of us have, through natural disposition, developed one side of our brain more than the other.

Relating this to management, one might suggest that administrative functions are those that usually require left-brain thinking. They are systematic and procedural. Leadership functions require right-brain aptitudes to deal with patterns, ambiguities, unpredictability and emotion.

Since everyone has one "preferred" side, it follows that individuals will find themselves stronger at either administrative or at leadership functions. Yet to be truly effective, the manager must try to develop both.

At the very least, the conscientious manager will gain an awareness of strong aptitudes and work to develop the weaker ones. This process will be more of a struggle for some than for others, yet it is imperative that a basic appreciation for each approach exist.

This approach can also be described as the difference between an analytic approach to management versus an intuitive approach to management. Again, managers will have a natural preference for either one or the other. Yet both are required for effective, balanced decisions. The manager's common sense and experience will allow him or her to make some decisions quickly and intuitively. On the other hand, a more formal analysis will provide the manager with factual information to avoid costly errors and to ensure that all aspects of the decision are considered.

The truly effective manager will achieve a high degree of self-awareness and will seek out in others the skills necessary to complement his or her own.

Management Roles

Henry Mintzberg offers us another way of looking at management roles by dividing them into

- interpersonal roles,
- informational roles and
- decisional roles.[2]

Interpersonal Roles

As the title would suggest, interpersonal roles are those that involve the manager's relationship with others. There are three interpersonal roles: figurehead, leader and liaison.

The <u>figurehead</u> role is that in which the manager performs "ceremonial" duties that come from his or her position as a person of authority. These might include meeting important visitors, handing out awards, sitting at the head table etc.

Then there is the <u>leader</u> role, a difficult one to define. The leader role involves many of the skills outlined under "leadership tasks" above and refer to any activity that the manager undertakes to elicit good performance from his or her staff.

The third interpersonal role is that of <u>liaison</u>. In that role, the manager links with people outside his or her department or organization. In this role, the manager maintains a connection with the "outside" in order to gain and disseminate information that will help meet the organizational goals.

Informational Roles

A large part of a manger's job involves processing information. For this, the manager relies on three informational roles: monitor, disseminator and spokesperson.

Wearing the <u>monitor</u> hat, the manager keeps in tune with his environment to glean any and all information that will be useful in achieving goals.

The manager will also be a <u>disseminator</u> of information to those who may not have access to it.

Finally, the manager has a <u>spokesperson</u> role, in which case, the manager speaks on behalf of the department or agency.

Decisional Roles

Finally, the manager plays four decisional roles. These are entrepreneur, disturbance handler, resource allocator and negotiator.

The <u>entrepreneur</u> role sees the manager making a series of small decisions aimed at the continuous improvement of the department or organization.

The <u>disturbance handler</u> reacts to problems and issues as they arise and makes decisions to address them.

Decisions with respect to how resources are shared are made by the resource allocator. These resources include financial and physical resources, but also human resources and time.

In the negotiator role, the manager is in constant discussion about how work might be done, where resources might be gained, what process might be used, etc. Negotiations are of all types and sizes and represent a constant activity for the effective manager.

Ethical Management

The complexity and changeability of management makes it critical that managers manage ethically. That implies that managers will have reflected on the values that will characterize their approach and will demonstrate integrity and consistency in their application of those values to their work.

> "Particularly for those in leadership positions, our ethics will be reflected in the decisions that we make. They will be apparent in the consistency engendered by a strong philosophical basis for decision making or in the unpredictability of decisions which have no clear value basis." (Johnstone and Waymire, 1992)

There are many practical reasons why it is important for managers to manage ethically.

1. Managing according to a code of ethics is a demonstration of professionalism and as such will contribute to the credibility of the manager and of the decisions he or she makes.

2. Ethical management is fair management and fair management means respect from peers and workers alike.

3. Ethical management is consistent management and consistent management fosters trust.

4. Managing according to a code of ethics provides the manager a value base for good business decisions.

In their book "*What If... A Guide to Ethical Decision Making*"[3], Johnstone and Waymire provide their readers with a process for ethical decision-making that will assist all managers in addressing both the small and large problems that they face.

Good managers want to do what is right. Their ethics, that is their "values transformed into action"[4] will help them do just that.

Management of Volunteer Services

Management of volunteer services is the application of management principles to a department of volunteers.

The management of volunteer services has been under constant evolution during the past several decades. It has struggled to achieve recognition as a profession, recognition that is still elusive in many cases.

Strides have been made, however, thanks to the efforts of many pioneers in the field. Starting in the United States, with the work of Harriet Naylor, Ivan Schier, Susan Ellis and Susan Vineyard, there is increasing acknowledgment that the responsibility for managing the contributions of volunteers in not-for-profit organizations did indeed constitute management.

Marlene Wilson with her book "The Effective Management of Volunteer Programs" in 1976 gave all of those in the field, a solid resource on which to build their skills.

Over the years, management of volunteer services has met the criteria that define it as a profession.

- Specialized body of literature: This area has seen a tremendous increase in the past two decades, with more experienced managers and leaders in the field who have written extensively on the topic.
- Code of ethics: Though there is some work left to do in this area in Canada, there has been considerable thought and discussion about the ethics in the field. In 1998, the Canadian Administrators of Volunteer Resources released *"CAVR Dimensions of Ethical Conduct" which* outlined five values to guide the actions of managers of volunteer resources.
- Formal educational programs: For many years, certificate programs have been available in colleges across the country.
- On-going review and accreditation: Many professional associations for volunteer administration offer their members accreditation in the field, including the national Canadian Administrators of Volunteer Resources.
- Specialized language: Though this area is not as strong as the others, practitioners are slowly developing a language of their own, the best examples being in the efforts to separate the language of management of volunteers from that of labour.

With the health services sector, particularly hospitals being in the forefront of development, management of volunteers services is now a fully established profession. Every year, it grows in confidence and recognition. Once reluctant to be allied with human resources, perhaps out of a fear of being swallowed up, managers of volunteers now proudly describe themselves as human resources professionals, with a specialty.

CAVR Dimensions of Ethical Conduct

(abridged)

1.0 Citizenship:

Administrators of volunteer resources are committed to volunteerism as a positive force for responsible citizenship, social action, quality services, healthy communities and civil society. We believe that volunteerism makes our society more just, compassionate and caring. As administrators of volunteer resources, we strive to demonstrate the value of volunteerism to the community, the volunteers, our organization, clients, staff and within our profession.

2.0 Accountability:

Administrators of volunteer resources recognize that our roles involve multiple accountabilities to volunteers, our organization, clients, staff and our profession. We believe that accountability is a key value in the pursuit of excellence.

3.0 Respect:

The administration of volunteer resources is grounded in a very strong belief in respect.

CAVR Dimensions of Ethical Conduct
4.0 Fairness: Administrators of volunteer resources must be guided by fairness in all of our decisions. **5.0 Trustworthiness:** In our dealings with volunteers, our organizations, clients, staff and professional colleagues, we demonstrate our trustworthiness.

Standards of Practice

Much work has been done in Canada establishing minimum standards of performance for managers of volunteer resources. Standards of practice provide a basic guideline, a measuring standard upon which to assess performance.

The Canadian Administrators of Volunteer Resources have published such standards for 14 areas of competence required by the manager:

1. Planning/Resources
2. Coordination
3. Volunteer Assignment Guides/ Descriptions
4. Recruitment
5. Interviewing and Screening
6. Orientation
7. Training
8. Volunteer/Employee Relationships
9. Supervision
10. Recognition
11. Record Keeping and Reporting
12. Evaluation
13. Volunteer Input and
14. Professional Development.

Accepted standards are outlined in each of these areas.

One excellent resource in defining the management function with respect to volunteer services comes from the Ontario Association for Volunteer Administration (OAVA). In the late 1980's, OAVA developed "Standards of Practice, Entry Level Competencies for the Management of Volunteer Services".

These standards of practice represent entry level competencies for the management of volunteer resources and address knowledge, attitude and skill requirements. They are based on field-tested research. The standards are reproduced here by permission of OAVA.

OAVA Standards of Practice
These standards represent accepted core competencies for entry level managers of volunteer resources. *1. Plan Programs* To have a working knowledge of the theory of program planning and to be familiar with current literature on planning.

OAVA Standards of Practice

To recognize the need for and the benefits of a structured process for volunteer resources.
To have the ability to:

- identify needs
- conduct research and surveys
- identify physical, human and financial resources
- consult with staff, community and clients
- develop options
- determine compatibility of options with organization's mission and strategic plan
- select options
- develop goals and objectives
- develop action plans with timelines
- determine method of evaluation
- prepare budget and have it approved.

2. *Develop and Maintain Systems*
To have a working knowledge of current systems for the management of volunteer resources.
To appreciate the need for effective systems for the management of volunteer resources.
To have the ability to:

- develop policies
- develop systems and procedures
- develop forms and revise them as needed
- create volunteer service/job descriptions
- identify opportunities for computer applications
- write manuals/handbooks
- establish and review mechanisms for policies and procedures.

3. *Market Volunteer Resources*
To have a working knowledge of marketing theory.
To appreciate the significance of effective marketing.
To have the ability to:

- identify marketing objectives
- define target groups
- identify the competition
- determine the benefits of the program/service
- customize a message
- choose a medium
- deliver the message
- evaluate the results
- revise marketing strategies.

4. *Staff Volunteer Services*
To have a working knowledge of human resources management theory.
To appreciate the significance of effective human resources management.
To have the ability to:

- recruit staff and volunteers
- screen potential applicants
- initiate personnel record
- facilitate completion of forms
- conduct orientation
- conduct interview with applicant
- match skills and interests to opportunities

OAVA Standards of Practice

- select successful candidate (staff or volunteer)
- negotiate placement options
- assign placement
- provide specific pre-training
- follow-up on placement
- confirm placement or re-direct volunteer.

5. *Training Volunteers and Staff*

To have a working knowledge of training theory.
To appreciate the need for and benefits of training.
To have the ability to:

- assess training needs
- establish training objectives
- arrange collaborative training
- explore alternate training opportunities
- market training opportunities
- design curriculum
- select educational resources
- select presenter(s)/venues
- select audio-visual equipment
- develop/provide reference/training materials
- select and arrange for training location
- conduct training sessions
- evaluate training program
- encourage volunteer/staff networking.

6. *Supervise Volunteers and Staff*

To understand the roles and responsibilities of supervision as it relates to volunteers and staff.
To appreciate the need for and benefits of providing on-going supervision.
To have the ability to:

- communicate with volunteers and staff
- listen actively to volunteers/staff concerns
- motivate volunteers and staff
- coach volunteers and staff
- develop leaders/leadership skills of volunteers and staff
- facilitate groups
- educate/interface with volunteers and staff
- help volunteers adapt to change
- refer volunteers and staff to other services
- solve problems
- assign tasks
- delegate activities, tasks or responsibilities to volunteers and staff
- maintain personnel records
- evaluate volunteers and staff (on-going)
- conduct performance appraisals
- report on performance problems
- redirect or terminate volunteers and staff
- conduct exit interview.

OAVA Standards of Practice

7. *Motivate and Recognize Volunteers, Staff and Community*

To have a working knowledge of the theories of motivation as they relate to volunteers and staff.
To appreciate that motivation and recognition bring results and rewards.
To have the ability to:

- establish and review recognition procedures
- identify goals and objectives of volunteers and staff
- develop career paths
- provide training and educational opportunities
- implement recognition systems
- provide growth opportunities for volunteers and staff
- communicate issues and developments about volunteer resources and the organization
- highlight volunteer achievements to staff and vice versa
- provide informal personal recognition
- act as a catalyst for new ideas and suggestions.

8. *Interface with Other Internal Staff*

To have a working knowledge of the principles and techniques of negotiation and advocacy within the organization.
To appreciate the need for advocacy on behalf of the volunteer constituency.
To have the ability to:

- establish internal relations structure
- orient other staff of volunteer department/services
- participate in management team
- involve staff in planning of volunteer resources
- involve other staff in training initiatives
- recognize contributions of other staff to volunteer resources
- communicate activities of volunteer resources to other departments/staff
- integrate volunteers into the organization.

9. *Administer Programs and Systems*

To have a working knowledge of the administration of programs and systems.
To appreciate the need for skilled administration of programs and systems.
To have the ability to:

- establish and review administrative procedures
- define units of service
- maintain record of activity
- plan and conduct meetings
- collect information
- analyze and interpret information and data
- write and circulate reports
- solve financial, legal, equipment and facility problems
- evaluate programs and services
- modify programs and services
- collect and update resource materials
- assist community with resource development.

OAVA Standards of Practice

10. *Manage Finances*

To have a working knowledge of financial management.
To appreciate the need for sound financial management.
To have the ability to:

- establish and review department policies
- establish spending priorities
- establish and justify preliminary budgets
- seek budget approval
- monitor budgets
- approve and reconcile expenditures
- interpret and review financial records
- modify and revise budgets.

11. *Conduct Public Relations*

To have a working knowledge of principles and techniques of public relations.
To appreciate the value of effective public relations.
To have the ability to:

- prepare press releases
- develop promotional materials
- make presentations
- arrange media coverage
- network with other professionals
- prepare newsletters
- collaborate with other community agencies in special projects
- promote programs
- recognize contributions
- evaluate effectiveness.

12. *Interface with Community*

To have a working knowledge of principles and techniques of community relations.
To appreciate the benefits and importance of community relations.
To have the ability to:

- participate in professional organizations
- assist agency develop groups relating to your mandate
- identify community resources
- promote volunteerism
- represent agency/organization
- provide information about organization(s)
- help community adapt to change(s)
- collaborate with other community agencies in special projects
- facilitate community involvement in work of agency.

13. *Pursue Professional Development*

To be aware of various venues for professional development.
To value on-going professional development.
To pursue professional development in some of the following ways:

- establish personal growth goals
- adhere to professional standards/ethics in practice
- subscribe to trade journals
- advocate for the administration of volunteers as a profession
- seek individual credentials/accreditation in management of volunteers.

OAVA Standards of Practice
• maintain a personal library • identify education opportunities • attend courses, seminars and conferences • contribute to the body of knowledge in management of volunteers • network/share with fellow professionals • participate in professional associations • keep up to date on issues and trends.

Over time, the special skills that managers of volunteers bring to an organization are becoming recognized as unique and critical.

Professional Accreditation

Today, many colleges across the country offer certificate programs in the Management of Volunteer Services and increasingly, not-for-profit organizations hiring managers of volunteer services require such credentials.

Furthermore, managers of volunteer services can obtain professional accreditation through professional associations:

- The Canadian Administrators of Volunteers Resources (CAVR), the national professional association for managers of volunteers.
- The Ontario Association for Volunteer Administration (OAVA).
- Ontario Directors of Volunteers in Healthcare. (ODVH).[5]

CAVR outlines 6 criteria for national certification:

1. a member in good standing of CAVR,
2. three years experience in the profession,
3. personal philosophy on volunteerism,
4. demonstrate leadership in management of volunteers,
5. fifty hours of workshops and/or course study in professional development, and
6. demonstration of knowledge and experience in volunteer service administration by submitting two written reports.

Thus, management of volunteer services proves to be a complex and challenging profession. Individual practitioners will find it rewarding work, full of variety and satisfaction, the most important of which comes the constant contact with committed and capable individuals we call volunteers.

Endnotes

1 Mintzberg, Henry, *Mintzberg on Management*, New York, New York: The Free Press, 1989, page 7.

2 Ibid, pages 15 to 21.

3 Johnstone, Ginette and Waymire, Judith, *What if... A Practical Guide to Ethical Decision Making"*, Carp, Ontario: Johnstone Training and Consultation, 1992.

4 Ibid., page 5.

5 As of the date of printing the second edition of this text, the Ontario Association for Volunteer Administration and the Ontario Directors of Volunteers in Healthcare have merged to form PAVR-O, Professional Administrators of Volunteer Resources - Ontario.

Review Questions

The management of volunteer services is a profession in evolution.

1. Describe the five functions of a manager.
2. In achieving a balance in management, indicate whether your aptitude lies in the administrative or the leadership side of management and explain why.
3. Describe five key roles of a manager according to Mintzberg.
4. What are the three most important values for you as a manager of volunteer resources? Why?
5. Examine the standards of practice and identify your three strongest talents and three areas for improvement.

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CHAPTER 3: PLANNING AND EVALUATION

KEY POINTS:

This chapter examines planning and evaluation. Strategic and operational planning are reviewed and the planning process are examined in detail. Tools for evaluation are also be explored within the context of the planning process.

This chapter addresses
- ✔ the importance and relevance of planning for a volunteer services department
- ✔ strategic and operational planning strategies
- ✔ methods for implementing successful evaluations
- ✔ techniques for action planning

This chapter was written by Liz Weaver of the Volunteer Centre of Hamilton & District.

In the world of the management of volunteers, a great deal of time is spent on the actual "doing" and much less time is spent on "planning". Volunteers are needed for programs and they are needed now! However, planning and evaluation can be critical elements to the initiation of a volunteer program and to its ongoing success.

Learning to develop effective plans and evaluating measurable outcomes can strategically support volunteer services. Information gathered from the planning process and from evaluation activities can provide the necessary data to enhance volunteer services, establish credibility within the organization, and gather support from both internal and external groups.

This section will focus on the Planning and Evaluation Cycle as a critical element of a successful volunteer services department. Planning and evaluation can be easily implemented, but each activity requires both time and resources to do them effectively. Take the time to plan, implement the plan, evaluate outcomes and then watch the volunteer services department grow.

Why Plan?

The staff are pressuring the manager of volunteer services to recruit forty new volunteers for staff program needs. The manager of volunteer services has a report due tomorrow and volunteer recognition night is coming up next month. In the midst of all this chaos, the manager is also expected to develop a plan for the volunteer services department.

While planning may not totally eliminate the chaos, it will certainly help establish priorities and may even provide some time to assist with last minute requests. The development of an operational plan or a specific project plan, while it may take time to initiate, will actually save time. The plan becomes the reference point for annual cycles, identifying stress points and enabling the manager of volunteer services to be better able to respond to requests.

A plan, whether it is strategic or operational, is the map for program delivery. Through effective planning, the volunteer services department becomes pro-active rather than reactive. A good plan identifies the actions which will assist in meeting service and project goals. It also allows for the effective use of resources: through the plan it becomes clear what human, financial or material resources are required to complete the activities or projects. In these days of scarce resources, the plan helps allocate resources effectively and identify areas which may need additional resources. The plan can provide the time to obtain these resources in advance of their need.

Planning can help clarify expectations and reduce uncertainties. The volunteer services department usually plays a key role in a variety of programs delivered by the organization. It follows that the volunteer services plan should be integrated with other departmental plans within the organization as well as with the strategic plan. The supervisor or Executive Director should be consulted in its development. He or she will better understand the role and function of the volunteer services department and can integrate individual departmental plans into the goals and objectives established for the organization.
Planning should never be done in isolation but should take into account the mission and vision of the agency, goals of the agency, and the current programs and clients.

Planning can also assist in clarifying the role of the manager of volunteer services. By integrating the volunteer services department work plan with other plans in the organization, staff will be better informed about the services provided, where volunteer support is available, and where the other department becomes responsible for volunteer participation.

Strategic plans set the overall direction for the organization to move in. Operational or annual plans become a training opportunity for volunteer services and can help identify service gaps. The operational plan can also be the opportunity for team building between the paid and unpaid staff of the organization.

Why plan? To provide direction and map out the route to take to accomplish goals. Planning can be a team exercise where volunteers and staff are integrated and establish mutually supportive goals and objectives.

If there are so many good reasons to plan, then why doesn't planning happen? The reasons not to plan are also many and varied. In some cases, staff may be new to the job and not know what the operational service needs are. Often managers of volunteer services are so busy meeting day to day demands that there does not seem to be enough time to plan. For some agencies, planning is not a priority. And many managers of volunteer services don't feel that they have the tools or resources to develop a workable plan.

By the end of this chapter, the question will change from, why don't we plan to when can the planning start?

Benefits of Planning

Planning:

- provides a road map to show where the organization is going and how to get there;
- helps develop a sense of security;
- shapes events to ensure consistency in actions and directions;
- provides a balance between short term crises with long term vision;
- increases control over the destiny of organization;
- helps develop a frame of reference for human and financial resource allocation;
- provides an opportunity for the organization and staff person to be creative and forward thinking; and
- provides a training opportunity for staff to learn more about the organization.[1]

Types of Planning

Most agencies in the not-for-profit sector are involved in two types of planning. The first is Strategic Planning usually done by the Board of Directors and senior managers of the agency. The second is Operational or Annual Planning, based on the Strategic Plan but developed by staff. The Strategic and Operational plans must be linked, their goals and objectives compatible. Both plans should be based on the mission and/or vision of the agency.

Strategic Planning

Strategic Planning

> *"is the process by which an organization envisions its future and develops the necessary procedures and operations to achieve that future."*[2]

Consequently, strategic planning is generally long term. In the Strategic Plan, the Board of Directors and senior managers envision the future of the agency. Through the plan, they identify the key directions and determine where they want the agency to be in three to five years. They then outline the action steps that will get them there. The strategic plan starts with and is based on both the mission and vision established for the organization.

The strategic plan will also include an environmental scan which assesses those factors which will directly or indirectly have an impact on the agency. These factors could include availability of funding and/or fundraising, profile of the agency in the community, services provided by the agency, or services in the community which compete with the agency.

Components of strategic planning include department and program goals and objectives. Strategic planning goals and objectives identify time lines and who is responsible for the successful achievement of the goals.

Operational Planning

Operational plans are quite similar to strategic plans but are based on a shorter time frame and deal more with daily concerns. Operational plans also include broad goals and more specific objectives for achieving these goals. The development of an operational plan includes the opportunity to evaluate success in achieving the objectives. This assessment will assist in later planning.

Planning Terms

Mission Statement
The mission statement articulates the fundamental reason why the agency exists. Some mission statements are written identifying how the organization will solve a problem(s) it has identified.

Mission answers the question "why?"

Vision Statement
A vision statement identifies future directions for the agency. It "paints the picture" of success.

Vision answers: "what will success look like?"

Purpose
The purpose is a general statement similar to the mission but developed for the department or project. It also answers why the department, service or program exists.

Strategic Plan
Directions established by the Board of Directors which will move the organization forward. Strategic plans are usually three to five years in length.

Operational Plan
The short term plan of activities aimed at achieving the organizational mission and departmental purpose. The operational plan is usually developed annually by staff and is linked to the strategic plan.

Goal
A broad statement of intent relating to the purpose (may have several and may change periodically).

Goals answer the question "what?"

Objective
Specific targets leading to the successful achievement of the goal. May have several objectives for each goal. Each objective should be SMAC:

- specific: what specific steps will be taken to achieve the goal;
- measurable: what numerically will change as a result of this objective being successfully attained;
- achievable: is this plan realistic in light of time, experience and resources.
- compatible: is this objective compatible with the goal and mission?

Good objectives always have specific time lines that identify when each objective will be completed.

Objectives answer the question "how?"

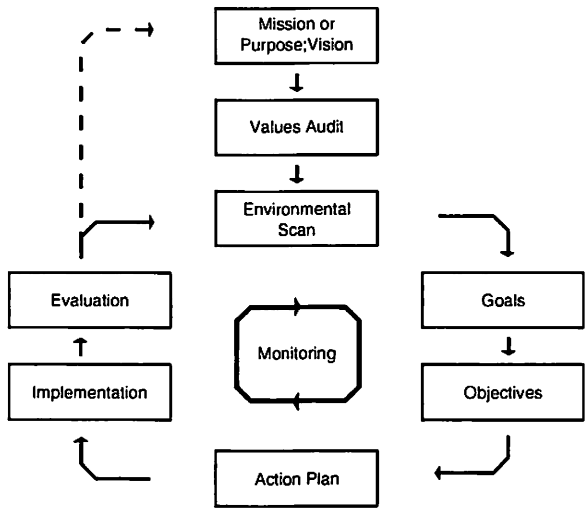
Strategy or Action Steps
Answers the questions what will be done, who will do the task, when will it take place, and where will it take place. This is the nitty-gritty of how each objective will be reached.

Action plan refines "how" and answers the questions "where, when, who, how much?"

The Planning Cycle

Planning is a cyclical process. The process is simple and can be applied equally to long term strategic planning and to short term operational planning. The key to successful planning is to always link back to the mission and vision for the organization or department.

STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS



Planning can be broken down into individual steps. This makes the task more manageable and easier to do. There are many resources which can assist you with the planning process. Successful planning is meaningful to the individual or group doing the planning and is something that can be accomplished within the organization.

The goals and objectives must move beyond the plan to the implementation phase. In the planning cycle above, evaluation is an important element and built into the cycle.

The Cycle

The first two steps in the planning process are overarching steps. They are fundamental to the entire organization. All plans must link to the mission and vision of the organization.

Step 1: The Mission

The first step in the planning process is to review the mission of the organization or purpose of the department, service or program. Is the statement still relevant? Should changes be made to the mission statement to better reflect the reason for the organization's existence. The review of the mission or statement of purpose only occurs in strategic planning.

In composing a mission statement, the organization will answer the following questions:

1. What are we? (charitable organization, not-for-profit);
2. Who do we serve?
3. Where are they?
4. What need do we meet?
5. How do we meet it?
6. What makes us unique?

The mission statement must be short and concise for easy retention.

Step 2: The Vision

As the "picture of success" the vision must also be reviewed to ensure that it still reflects where the organization wants to go. Like the mission, the vision is only reviewed during the strategic planning process.
The vision is usually worded in concrete, image terms.

Step 3: Values Audit

The third step is to conduct a values audit of the agency or program. What are the key values which will characterize the agency or department's approach to service? How do these values impact on service delivery?

Values audits are not simply a listing of values that are part of the organizational culture, but rather, it is the sometimes difficult process of identifying a few key values which are more important than all the rest. Values audits are also part of strategic planning and not operational planning.

Step 4: Environmental Scan

The next step is the environmental scan. The environmental scan looks at those factors which directly or indirectly impact on the agency, department or program. These factors could include the availability of funding and/or fundraising, the profile of the agency in the community, services provided by the agency, or services in the community which compete with the agency.

One type of environmental scan, known as the SWOT analysis, looks at the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats faced by the organization. (Also known as So What's Out There.) The strengths and weaknesses are internal agency factors - what does the agency do well and what are its weaknesses. The external or community factors identify opportunities for growth or change and also threats to the organization.

Internal Factors	External Factors
Strengths	Opportunities
Weaknesses	Threats

A successful environmental scan will involve all segments of the community including board members, staff, volunteers, clients of the services, and non-related community members. The information obtained in the environmental scan will assist in developing strategic planning for the agency.

Step 5: Goals

The next step in the planning process is the formulation of goals. Goals are broad statements of intent which relate to the program and are linked to the mission of the organization. Once the goals have been identified, objectives are determined.

Step 6: Objectives

There may be several objectives tied to each goal. They are the specific targets which have been identified as necessary to successfully achieve the goal.

Objectives are a very important part of the plan as they are the basis for measurement of success. Thus, the SMAC formula ensures that objectives are complete:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Compatible (with the mission)[3]

Step 7: The Action Plan

The action plan operationalizes the goals and objectives of the planning process. It details the actions necessary to meet each objective.

SMART action plans are
- Specific
- Measurable
- Action-oriented

and identify
- Responsibility
- Time Lines.

See the next page for a useful action planning tool.

Step 8: Implementation

The implementation phase is putting the plan into practice by following up on the actions identified in the goals, objectives and action plan.

Our Plan: (name of department or program)

Date: ________________

Goal: ____

Objectives	*Action*	*By whom*	*By when*	*Cost*	*Done*

Our Plan: (name of department or program)

Date: March 1996

Goal: To go on a holiday in the summer of 1997

Objectives	*Action*	*By whom*	*By when*	*Cost*	*Done*
1. By selecting location for a 7 day summer holiday by April 15.	1a. Call travel agent to get options	me	April 2	nil	
	1b. Consider options and discuss with agent.	me/agent	April 6	nil	
	1c. Select 2 locations and obtain costs	me/agent	April 6	nil	
2. By confirming travel arrangements by April 20.	2a. Decide on location	me	April 15	nil	
	2b. Choose mode of travel and accommodation	me	April 15	nil	
	2c. Reserve tickets and accommodations	agent	April 20	deposit	
3. By booking holiday time by April 20.	3a. Compose a memo to boss requesting holiday time	me	April 15	nil	
	3b. Obtain confirmation	me/boss	April 18	nil	
4. By deciding on what to bring with me.	4a. Make a list ...	me			

Step 9: Evaluation

The final phase of the planning process is the evaluation phase which will be discussed in detail later. It is vital to include evaluation into the planning process as it sets the groundwork for the development of future plans.

Sharing The Plans

It is important for manager of volunteer services to share operational plans with others in the organization. The volunteer services department is often linked to a variety of services and departments within the organization and interacts with staff and volunteers. To achieve success, everyone involved or implicated in the volunteer services department plan should be aware of its goals and objectives.

As mentioned before, sharing the operational or project plan can also provide an opportunity for setting boundaries or can become a training tool for others to learn the extent to which volunteers are involved in overall service delivery.

Sharing the volunteer services plan provides a checkpoint to determine if the plan is consistent with the goals of the organization. Is the volunteer services department on-track and compatible with the delivery of other services? Is the plan responsive to all stakeholders? These issues can be identified or clarified only by sharing the plan.

Evaluation

Planning takes time and resources but the benefits accrued from developing and implementing a plan are many. A key factor in the planning process is evaluation. Evaluation assists in determining the successes and the challenges faced by the service.

Evaluation of programs and outcomes can help you justify the service to decision-makers both within and external to the agency. It can assist with future program planning, scheduling and administration. Evaluation is a key component of overall organizational effectiveness. It can provide information about progress and the ability to assess activities, programs and services. Evaluation does not have to be complicated but it does need to answer the question - have we accomplished what we set out to do? Why or why not?

Principles of Evaluation

There are four basic principles of evaluation to consider.

1. <u>Evaluation is an on-going process:</u> Evaluation should not be done once and then left behind. As each activity occurs, it should form a piece of the evaluation puzzle. Were we effective? Did this event contribute to our mission? Were costs controlled? What were the numbers of individuals participating and what contributions did they make? What was learned as a result of the evaluation?
2. <u>Evaluation is an integral part of planning.</u> Evaluation should be based on the defined goals and objectives established in the plan. As shown earlier in the planning cycle, evaluation is the step taken before planning begins. It cannot be separated from the cycle or omitted from the cycle, it helps build the planning based on evaluated results.

3. Evaluation must include follow-up. Recommendations derived from the evaluation should be built into your action plan. Evaluation is part of the continuum of planning and integral to the cycle.
4. Evaluation must address both effectiveness and efficiency. Many agencies are facing declining resources or looking at how to maximize current resources. Evaluation should consider whether the best service possible is delivered with the available resources.[4]

Types of Evaluation

Evaluation can be typed two ways:

- Internal vs External
- Qualitative or Quantitative

Internal vs external refers to whether or not the evaluation will be conducted by someone inside the department or program or by someone outside. The inside evaluator will have a more intimate knowledge of the program but the outside evaluation will probably be more objective.

A qualitative evaluation is one that looks at perceptions and attitudes as a measure of success whereas a quantitative evaluation looks at facts and figures. It is safe to say that the best evaluation is a mix of both qualitative and quantitative analysis.

Whatever type of evaluation is chosen, it is important to identify initially the result to be achieved and establish the evaluation method based on this intended outcomes.

The Evaluation Process

The evaluation process can be broken down into six relatively easy steps to follow.

1. Before initiating an evaluation, the question "why evaluate?" should be answered. This is called defining the purpose.

2. The second step involves articulating the expected results from the evaluation. This definition will help identify whether the goals were met, exceeded or fell short. If a manager wanted to involve 30 additional volunteers in a program, but was only able to recruit 20, evaluation of the recruiting techniques might show that the requirements were too stringent or that the program needs better advertising.

   Alternatively, evaluation of the 20 additional volunteers recruited might show that they have skill levels which exceed expectations, therefore the quality of recruitment outweigh the quantity required. Without stating the expected results of the evaluation in advance, it is difficult to determine whether the goals were achieved.

3. The third step is data collection. This step should be made as easy as possible and the data collected immediately after an activity, when the information is still fresh. There may be tools and resources within the organization to facilitate data collection. Are records computerized and can reports be generated from this? If the purpose of evaluation has been defined and expected results identified, this will assist with determining the types of data needed for the evaluation.

4. The next step is analyzing the data. It involves looking for themes, trends and results. Where are the gaps in information collected? The analysis of the data should lead to developing the recommendations and final report.

5. The final report will be shared with as many people as possible. Again, sharing provides an opportunity to train others about the scope of the work done in the volunteer services department, provides additional feedback about the activities, and may provide additional resources as others can see the results.

6. Finally, there is the follow-up which helps build the results into future planning. How and when follow-up occurs can be the first steps in the development of future plans.[5]

Outcome Based Evaluation

Increasingly programs and services are being asked to evaluate whether the service made an impact on the client or user of the service. This type of evaluation is commonly known as outcome based evaluation. Decision-makers and funders are moving to outcome based evaluation. They want to know if the financial investment in the program makes a difference. Outcome based evaluation is often longer term. For example, Big Brothers studied the impact their program has had on little brothers staying in school or out of trouble. In this case, they tracked little brothers for a ten year period. Through this tracking, Big Brothers has been able to identify the impact and outcome of the Big/Little Brother relationship on the child.

Outcome based evaluation may be a combination of statistical data and anecdotal information. An outcome of the volunteer program may be to increase the skills of the volunteers so that leadership positions within the agency might be filled by in-service volunteers. To gauge the success of this outcome, measures of actual numbers could be collected or volunteers could be interviewed to learn whether they are receiving the appropriate training to achieve the outcome.

Outcome based evaluation follows the same principles as evaluation of programs and services, and can be integrated into the planning process in much the same way. It is another tool which can be used to measure progress and provide success stories.

Conclusion

Planning and evaluation are critical to successful and sustaining volunteer services departments. The steps to achieve success in planning are relatively simple but they do take the commitment of both time and resources within an organization. Look for those tools or individuals who can assist with developing and implementing successful planning and evaluation strategies.

Planning and evaluation do not have to be perfected in the first instance but are an evolving and on-going process. The wise manager will learn from both the successes and from the mistakes. He or she will make the investment in planning and evaluation and watch the volunteer services department grow and gain credibility and respect within the organization.

Endnotes

[1] Kent, Judy, *Effective Organizations: A Consultant's Resource*, Ottawa, Ontario: Skills Program for Management Volunteers, 1992, page 138.

[2] Goodstein, L.D., Pfeiffer, J. W., and Nolan, T.M., "Applied Strategic Planning: A New Model for Organizational Growth and Vitality", *Strategic Planning, Selected Readings,* San Diego, California: University Associates, 1986, page 2.

[3] Wilson, Marlene, *The Effective Management of Volunteer Programs,* Boulder Colorado: Volunteer Management Associates, 1976, page 78.

[4] Johnstone, G. "*Training Notes - Algonquin College*" Ottawa, Ontario 1996.

[5] Ibid.

Chapter Review

This chapter has looked at planning and evaluation and the importance of this process to operational effectiveness.

1. Name and discuss three reasons why planning is of benefit to both the manager and to the organization.
2. What is the difference between strategic planning and operational planning?
3. Name the four elements of the environmental scan.
4. What does SMAC stand for in a SMAC objective?
5. List the six steps in the evaluation process.

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Goodstein, L.D., Pfeiffer, J. W., and Nolan, T.M., "Applied Strategic Planning: A New Model for Organizational Growth and Vitality", *Strategic Planning, Selected Readings,* San Diego, California: University Associates, 1986, page 2.

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CHAPTER 4: POLICIES FOR VOLUNTEER SERVICES

Key Points:

This chapter presents a basic introduction to policy development for volunteer programs. The central hypothesis is that very recent substantive and widespread changes in volunteering have made the development of policies mandatory.

This chapter addresses:
- ✔ definitions of policies and procedures
- ✔ the rationale for policy development
- ✔ where policies are needed
- ✔ the policy development process
- ✔ the basics of writing policies
- ✔ how to enhance compliance with policies

This chapter was written by Linda L. Graff, Senior Associate of GRAFF AND ASSOCIATES. It is based on the monograph "By Definition: Policies for Volunteer Programs (Graff, 1993). Excerpts are used here by permission of the publisher, GRAFF AND ASSOCIATES. This article is adapted from an earlier version by Linda L. Graff that appeared in "The Volunteer Management Handbook", Tracy Daniel Connors (Ed.), New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc. 1995.

> *"All of this is a far cry from the days when an agency staff member would pick up the phone periodically and call in some friends and neighbours to help with the task at hand."*[1]

Introduction

There are many excellent reasons to write policies around voluntary action in non-for-profit organizations. Here are just a few:

- to establish continuity;
- to ensure fairness and equity;
- to clarify values and beliefs;
- to communicate expectations;
- to ensure service consistency;
- to specify standards;
- to state rules.

There is no more compelling reason for immediate policy development, however, than the consequences of not doing so.

Case Study: When Things Go Wrong

Sandy, a volunteer friendly visitor in a program for isolated seniors arrived for her regular shift at her client's house to find the client quite unwell. The client, Mrs. Fritz, didn't want to make a fuss and tried to keep Sandy from notifying anyone, but finally allowed her to call the family doctor. The doctor said, "Bring her in." While driving wasn't really part of the volunteer job, Sandy thought it important to get help right away and drove Mrs. Fritz over to the doctor's office.

The doctor thought that Mrs. Fritz might have had a mild heart attack, scheduled some tests, and told Sandy to take her home. Sandy objected, but when the physician insisted, Sandy helped Mrs. Fritz into the car and they headed off home. On the way, Mrs. Fritz cried out, put her hands to her chest, and slumped forward. Sandy reached over to hold Mrs. Fritz up, and drove into a tree.

If this happened in your volunteer program, you would probably be wringing your hands, rushing to check your insurance coverage, and wondering where things went wrong.

The fact is that this kind of example, and thousands like it, describe accidents waiting to happen in volunteer organizations throughout Canada. And while there is nothing anyone can do to guarantee that injuries and loss will not occur as the result of volunteering, there are many things that agency administrators and managers of volunteers can do to help prevent serious incidents, and to minimize harm and reduce liability when they do occur. Policy development is one of the most critical of those.

This chapter will define policies and procedures, discuss how policies fit in an overall risk management program, and outline four important types and functions of policies. It includes descriptions of the policy development process, how to write policies, and how to increase compliance with policies.

What Are Policies?

Definitions of Policy and Procedure

The word 'policy' is one with which we are all familiar, yet for most, it is difficult to identify exactly what it means in the context of our agencies and programs. It is difficult to sort out what a policy is, how it differs from a procedure, and the respective roles of each. The very word 'policy' can be intimidating. Few people work with policies on a regular basis. Most do not have the opportunity to understand policy or to feel at ease with it.

There are a variety of perspectives on what policy is or should be. A number of definitions of policy are presented here since each offers different elements of what policies are and what they can achieve.

<u>Webster's New World Dictionary</u> (Second College Edition) defines policy as "a principle, plan, or course of action." Two distinct themes emerge from this definition:

- Policy, in the sense of a principle, implies that some kind of position is being taken, a value or belief is being stated.
- Policy, in the sense of a plan or a course of action, would include specific steps, procedures, or perhaps, a method.

Both of these aspects of the definition of policies are relevant since not-for-profit organizations need to articulate their values and they also need to have procedural guidelines in place to instruct personnel (paid and unpaid) on what to do or not to do.

Robert Shaw[2] adds some thoughts on the nature of policies:

- They apply to everybody associated with the organization - its directors, staff, volunteers and clients.
- A policy states a boundary: inside the boundary, things are acceptable; outside the boundary, things are not.
- It is also in the nature of a policy that violations make one liable for consequences; in that sense, a policy is tough.

Paula Cryderman, who has written a manual on how to write policy manuals, helps clarify the difference between policies and procedures. She says policies tell people <u>what</u> to do:

> *"Policies form the written basis of operation secondary to legislation and the organization's bylaws. They serve as guidelines for decision making; they prescribe limits and pinpoint responsibilities within an organization. Policies can be viewed as rules or laws related to the facility's overall mission, goals and objectives. They are usually broad statements that are general in content. Despite this, policies may be detailed and particular if appropriate to the subject matter."*[3]

On the other hand, procedures tell people <u>how</u> to do what they must do. According to Cryderman:

> *"Procedures give directions according to which daily operations are conducted within the framework of policies. They are a natural outgrowth of policies, supplying the 'how to' for the rule. Procedures describe a series of steps, outline sequences of activities or detail progression. Thus the procedure manual is operational and is usually best expressed in a directive tone."*[4]

Cryderman says that the terms 'policy' and 'procedure' should not be confused - yet in practice, it is often difficult to distinguish between types of policies, or between policies and procedures. The distinction drawn above - policy as ***what*** and procedure as ***how*** seems straightforward, but in reality, the distinction blurs.

Levels of Policy

When we think about the term 'policy' we usually think about statements issued from the highest levels of the organization, that are both general in nature, and broad in scope. Proclamations issued from senior administration often take the form of policy statements. In fact, John Carver, who writes about policy governance by boards of directors, says that *"Conventionally, policy has referred to any board utterance."*[5]

Policies from the top of the organization typically have organization-wide applicability. For example, organizations develop broad policy statements on philosophy, values, and beliefs that apply to all aspects of the organization. Here is an example from the Volunteer Centre of Metropolitan Toronto that has implications for both external programming (e.g., who is eligible for service) and internal operations (e.g., who is hired as paid staff; who is recruited as a volunteer; how promotions are determined):

> *The Volunteer Centre of Metropolitan Toronto is committed to ensuring that its mission and operations embrace the community. It actively encourages the community to participate fully and benefit fully from its services. The Volunteer Centre ... is committed to racial equality and the elimination of racism in Metro Toronto. It strives to reflect the community in its structure (volunteer and staff) and to promote equal access to its services.*

Typically, policies at this level will be the responsibility of senior administration - paid and unpaid. Input from staff, direct-service volunteers and other organizational stakeholders may be invited, but the board is the key player in this kind of policy-making.

Many policies are much more specific and much more limited in scope. For example, organizations write policies about whether or not the newsletter volunteers in the home support program must pay for the coffee they drink while on duty. This too is a policy matter, but with limited applicability, influence, and importance. Policies of this nature are less likely to receive board and CEO attention. Rather, they are more likely to be the responsibility of departmental staff or program committees, although in smaller organizations, boards will sometimes involve themselves in policy matters of this sort.

Why Write Policies?

Why Now?

As discussed in chapter one of this text, volunteerism is undergoing radical transformations. Of relevance to policy development, there has been a convergence of several key trends in the voluntary sector that is beginning to necessitate policy development. Among these trends are the changing nature of volunteering; the increasing degree of risk associated with volunteering; the deficit of organizational and administrative support for volunteer programs; and the increasingly litigational nature of our culture. The critical point here is that changes to volunteerism as it is actually practiced, changes that are rocketing through not-for-profit agencies, and wider social changes are combining to make policy development in volunteer departments mandatory.

> Nora Silver in " At The Heart, speaks of the importance of organizational systems response:
>
> "The future of community organizations, and the independent sector as a whole, depends on the future of our volunteers. Right now that future is at risk. It is not for want of volunteers. It is not for want of good organizations providing good services. It is for want of the capacity of these good organizations to utilize people well."

As discussed in more detail in chapter five of this text, the more responsible and complex the work, the greater the risks associated with its completion. If volunteers are rolling bandages, for example, dangers are minimal and the need for policies to guide bandage rolling is virtually non-existent. But as we now ask volunteers to work directly with clients/consumers/patients, to deliver the services of our organizations, often right along side paid staff, policies become indispensable.

Rapid change and growth, combined with chronic under-funding to volunteer services, have produced a gap between the real complexity of volunteer involvement and the ability of organizations to understand and manage the valuable resource they have mobilized.

In contrast to the stereotype of volunteering held by the general public, and even by some agency managers (paid and unpaid), volunteering has developed into important work that deserves profound and immediate administrative attention. Unfortunately, administrators in many voluntary organizations do not understand that their attention is needed. Susan Ellis puts it this way:

> *"After years of training and consulting with so many leaders of volunteers, I have become convinced that many of their concerns stem directly from a lack of substantive support from their agencies' top administrators. This lack of support is not due to malice or unwillingness to be of help, but is rather due to the failure of executives to understand what is really needed from them."*[6]

As a consequence, many large scale and complex volunteer departments operate in a policy void, and, ironically, remain virtually invisible to the very people who will be held accountable when something goes wrong.

That someone will be held accountable for errors, omissions, accidents, injuries or loss grows more certain every day. In this increasingly litigational culture - the 'suit society,' according to William Conrad and William Glenn,[7] where people 'sue anybody for anything', voluntary organizations, and the good people who are ultimately responsible for the work undertaken in the name of the organization (themselves, volunteers), simply cannot afford to ignore such exposure to liability. As Brian O'Connell[8] indicates,

> *"There have been several legal cases where board members were held legally accountable, largely because they had failed to exercise reasonable oversight and objectivity ... the trustees had not taken responsibility for knowing what was going on."*[9]

In the courts, in the press, in the public mind, boards are being held accountable for mistakes, accidents, and negligence on the part of volunteers acting on behalf of the organization. "Not knowing" simply is not a good enough excuse - legally or morally.

The matter of policy development for volunteer services has become urgent. The formula is quite simple: the greater the degree of responsibility of volunteer work itself, the greater the need for rules to govern and regulate its accomplishment; the greater the need for guidelines to ensure safety; the greater the need for policies.

Policy And Risk Management

Policies supply rules. They establish boundaries beyond which volunteers should not wander. They specify what is and is not expected, what is and is not safe. To take the Case Study (When Things Go Wrong) at the beginning of this chapter regarding Sandy and Mrs. Fritz, there were several points at which the presence of policies could have prevented the tragedy that occurred. For example:

- What is the agency policy regarding volunteers who are tempted to exceed the limits of their job description?
- What is the agency policy regarding volunteers who encounter a situation with which they feel they cannot cope, or in which they feel uncomfortable making decisions?

- What is the agency policy regarding volunteer backup? Is there someone in authority on call at all times that volunteers are on duty - staff who can take over when the situation exceeds the limitations and responsibilities of the volunteer's role?
- What is the agency policy about friendly visiting volunteers driving their clients? Is it allowed? Is there a full set of policies regarding such volunteer transportation service? What is the agency policy regarding insurance coverage for non-owned automobiles?

If policies such as these had been in place and well known to Sandy, the story would most certainly have had a different outcome. The conclusions to be drawn here are obvious: policies can play a major role in preventing accidents; and policies can serve to minimize the harm that can result from accidents.

While there is nothing that any agency can do to guarantee that accidents will not happen, policies can reduce an organization's exposure to liability in the event that a law suit is launched. For example, there is no better proof that an agency has acted prudently and responsibly in attempting to reduce the likelihood of injury or loss than a full set of current, comprehensive policies and procedures, clearly in place, and consistently communicated to all relevant parties.

Policies As Empowerment
(Gaining Access To The Board)

Volunteer services are typically under-recognized and under-resourced. Boards and senior management have lost touch with the expansion in scale and significance of voluntary action, even in their own organizations. As Nora Silver (1988) points out, a gap has been created between the ability of managers of volunteers to create volunteer programs - to recruit, place, and supervise volunteers - and the organization's development of administrative, communications, and accountability systems to support those volunteer programs.

Susan Ellis[10] calls this 'benign neglect'. Nora Silver[11] calls it 'benign indifference'. Silver says:

> *"The Board of Directors provides leadership to the organization: it sets overall agency policy and assumes fiscal responsibility for the organization. As the board is ultimately legally responsible for the agency program, it is also responsible for the volunteer component. The board has the power to authorize the construction of a volunteer program, and it has the responsibility to ensure the effectiveness of that program. The board can - and should - call for program objectives, established policies and procedures, professional management, involvement and recognition of volunteers, and adequate budget for the volunteer program."* [12]

The question arises: "But how do we get the attention of senior management and boards of directors?" The answer may be: "Policies, in the context of risk management."

> "Board volunteers are suddenly realizing that not only can the voluntary organization they serve be sued; but there are instances in which *volunteers themselves* can be sued - as individuals." (William Conrad and William Glenn, 1976: 14)

When something goes wrong in the volunteer department, the ultimate responsibility will not fall to the manager of volunteers. As Silver notes, the board is ultimately legally responsible for all that occurs under the auspices of the agency and hence, the law suit, when it arrives, will settle on the board table. And board members, in general, are becoming increasingly aware of their own vulnerability to liability.

It is suggested then, that the best way to get the attention of senior management - boards and CEO's - is to alert them to the potential risks and hazards embodied in volunteering. In this view, policy development for volunteer services is the key to the boardroom door.[13] Some would suggest this to be fear-mongering, or manipulation by fear. In fact, managers of volunteers have an obligation to alert their supervisors to risks and liability. Not doing so is irresponsible. Only when risks are fully identified and assessed can they be managed properly.

But alerting management to the dangers is only half of the task. As we have seen, policy development is a key component in risk management. Boards generally concur that policy development is within the realm of board mandate and they can, therefore, be counted on to pay attention when someone exclaims, "We need a policy on that!"

The comprehensive strategy might be:

- identify the risks;
- draft policies and procedures that minimize the risk and/or limit the organization's liability;
- take these, together, to the board table.

When the board realizes that the activity being undertaken in the volunteer department is significant enough to create liability exposures for both the organization and board members personally, the volunteer department will be seen in a different light. Suddenly it will become a department worthy of board time and attention. From here, the manager of volunteers can build a case for adequate resources (e.g., budget, space, staffing), and agency support services (supervision, direction, insurance, policy and procedure development). Here is a concrete tool to accomplish what Ivan Scheier calls on all managers to do:

> *"Insofar as volunteer administration continues to see itself as derivative, passive and dependent, others naturally tend to see us that way too. Beginning to define ourselves as powerful, active and autonomous is the first step in becoming more so."*[14]

Policy development via risk management may be the most productive route for managers of volunteers to cultivate organizational recognition for the volunteer department. As Silver found in her research on organizational factors that engender effective volunteer services:

> *"... the commitment of the administrative leadership of an organization is necessary to raise the volunteer program to priority status. Without the leadership behind it, a volunteer program - no matter how well organized and potentially viable and valuable - simply will not have the organizational power necessary to progress and develop."*[15]

Where Policies Are Needed

With the possible exception of policies about confidentiality, a great many volunteer departments operate in a complete policy vacuum. Managers of volunteers ask anxiously, "What policies do I need?" and, "What if I miss something really important?" The answer to these questions varies from area to area, and inevitably hinges on the nature of the volunteer department, the kind of work done by volunteers, the nature and complexity of the organization, and the amount of resources available for policy development. In By Definition: Policies For Volunteer Programs, Graff presents sample policies on more than 70 different topics that would be applicable to most types of volunteer services. Nearly as many again could be added to cover the unique dimensions of any specific department.

Functions of Policies

There is a way of conceptualizing policies according to their function that can be used to determine which policies any specific program needs to develop. There are four general functions served by policies in volunteer programs:

- Policies as Risk Management;
- Policies as Values and Belief Statements;
- Policies as Rules;
- Policies as Program Improvement Tools.

Each is explored in some detail below.

Policies As Risk Management

As discussed above, policies are a critical component in an agency's overall risk management program. Through policies, boundaries can be established to delineate what is and what is not safe. Consider these examples.

On waivers:

> *All new clients must sign a liability release form as a standard component of the 'application for service' procedure.*

On agency backup for volunteers on duty:

> *It is important that all direct service volunteers have backup from the agency in the event that they encounter trouble in the course of their volunteer duties. An identified staff member or other agency representative will be on duty and accessible at all times when agency volunteers are on assignment.*

On volunteers driving:

> *While on duty, volunteer Friendly Visitors for the Acme Home Support Agency will not use their own personal vehicles to transport agency clients.*

The procedure to follow such a policy might look like this:

> *Should an emergency arise in which a client requires immediate transportation, and time permits, the volunteer will contact his or her manager of volunteers or agency backup at Acme for direction. If the circumstance is more urgent, the volunteer may use his or her own judgement regarding whether an ambulance or other emergency service is required. Immediately after an incident of this sort, the volunteer must notify Acme of the situation and of the actions the volunteer has initiated.*

Here is a final example of a policy established primarily for risk management purposes regarding the agency's obligation to inform volunteers of risks associated with volunteering, and the right of volunteers to refuse assignments:

> *The safety and well-being of all volunteers serving Acme is of paramount importance, and every effort will be made to eliminate all hazards related to the performance of volunteer duties. In circumstances where some element of risk remains beyond our control, volunteers will be informed, in advance, to the best of our knowledge and ability. This includes, but is not limited to, notification of any hazardous material, practice or process that volunteers may encounter while engaged in Acme business. Volunteers are entirely within their rights to refuse to perform volunteer assignments that appear to pose unacceptable risks.*

Using this particular policy function as a guide to determining which policies a volunteer department needs to develop, the manager would:

- look around the volunteer department;
- better still, walk around the volunteer work site(s);
- watch out for risks, hazards, dangers;
- play the 'What if ...?' game, and try to identify what could go wrong under a series of different circumstances. What would this room look like if filled with smoke? How would this activity differ from the perspective of a wheel chair? Would this activity be more dangerous in cold temperatures, in high winds, in the middle of an ice storm?

This, in fact, is a common first step in the risk management process. It is 'disaster imaging' and allows the manager to determine where policies might prevent accidents and injuries, minimize the likelihood of accidents and injuries, or minimize the harm should an accident happen. For example:

- If the manager, in walking around the day care centre, spots a skate board in the toy box, she may very well go back to her desk and issue a policy to the day care staff which prohibits use of skateboards on agency property.
- When the trail maintenance supervisor accompanies her volunteers on a shift and notices that they have disengaged the chain saw brake mechanism, she might very well write a new policy about <u>all</u> equipment safety features, and be certain that this new policy is highlighted in all volunteer training programs from here on in.

This technique is proactive and, of course, takes place under ideal circumstances. In reality, we often can not see accidents coming. We are alerted to dangers only after an incident, or a near miss. So write a policy that requires all staff and volunteers to report all accidents and other serious occurrences to you.

Make it a practice to consciously think about policy development whenever a serious incident report arrives on your desk. Accidents are bad enough. Re-occurrences because of inaction are inexcusable.

Policies as Values and Belief Statements

Every organization builds a web of values and beliefs about the world in which it works, the nature of the problem(s) it seeks to address, and the way in which it operates. Some of these are subtle and rarely discussed. Many are unwritten, but nonetheless well known and clearly understood. In addition, agencies often take positions on questions and issues, again, related to their services, as well as to their own internal operations. Policy statements are a mechanism for both articulating and communicating such values, beliefs, and positions. Following are some examples.

On anti-discrimination and affirmative action:

> *The Centre will not permit discrimination against applicants or employees (paid staff/volunteers) on the basis of race, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, socio-economic background or ethnicity. This applies to all areas of employment (paid staff/volunteers) including recruiting, hiring, promotion, assigning of work... provided the individual is qualified and meets the requirements established by the Centre for the position.* (Volunteer Centre of Metropolitan Toronto)

> *Equal opportunity practices and affirmative action techniques relative to minority involvement, training, development, recognition, and retention will be incorporated in volunteer recruitment efforts. Established affirmative action targets will be met within a specified time frame, tailored to local demographic realities, and include formalized, periodic evaluation.* (adapted from the American Red Cross, Volunteer 2000)

On the importance of volunteers to the organization:

> *The Achievement of the goals of this agency is best served by the active participation of citizens of the community. To this end, the agency accepts and encourages the involvement of volunteers at all levels of the agency and within all appropriate programs and activities...*[16]

> *Volunteers, and the contributions they make through volunteering, significantly enhance the quality of life, community spirit, and leisure time opportunities in Burlington. Volunteers are a valuable human resource requiring and warranting support and encouragement to maintain and develop their skills and to ensure their continued involvement in the provision of leisure opportunities throughout the City. The Parks and Recreation Department will continue to develop and provide support for volunteers and volunteer groups to ensure their continued involvement in leisure services and to develop this resource to its fullest.* (Parks and Recreation Department, Burlington, Ontario)

On the agency's right to fire volunteers:

> *The agency accepts the service of all volunteers with the understanding that such service is at the sole discretion of the agency. Volunteers agree that the agency may at any time, for whatever reason, decide to terminate the volunteer's relationship with the agency.*[17]

Values embodied in 'acceptable' terminology:

> *...greater policy direction be given and attention be paid, in both speech and the written and printed word, to the appropriate and accepted vocabulary in describing the Red Cross workforce. This is always 'paid and volunteer staff' or 'paid and volunteer consultants' or 'paid and volunteer instructors' etc., and never 'professional staff and volunteers,'....The entire organization, including volunteers themselves, are to be encouraged to think of volunteers as staff members, with all the organizational support and personal responsibilities which this implies. Such phrases and attitudes as "I am just a volunteer' or 'he is just a volunteer' are to be strongly discouraged.* (American Red Cross, Volunteer 2000)

The technique to identify policies of this sort involves thinking through the values, beliefs, and positions held by the organization. Answer these questions:

- What do we hold as important? What do we value that volunteers need to know about? What is our philosophy about volunteers, about the work we do, about how we do business around here?
- What positions has the agency taken on issues, questions, or problems?
- What does the organization believe regarding good and bad, right and wrong, proper and improper, ethical and unethical?

The answers to many of these questions might be substance around which policies should be written and communicated.

Frequently the most difficult policies to write - the ones around which there develops the greatest debate -are likely the policies that derive from values. And often, where disagreement surfaces in policy development, conflicting values will be the cause. Here are two case studies in which policy development will be difficult because the values that underpin the policies are both complex and not necessarily congruent with one another.

Case Study: Values Conflict #1

✔ We believe that volunteering is about caring for others, about simple motives to do good and help one's neighbours in times of need. It should not be over-bureaucratized and over-organized.

✔ We also acknowledge that rules and regulations around volunteer involvement - rules on topics such as application processes, thorough screening, and discipline and dismissal - have become necessary to protect the well-being of both volunteers and clients.

☛ Will the volunteer screening policy require background checks, references, and criminal records checks for all volunteers?

Case Study: Values Conflict #2

> ✔ Like many voluntary organizations, our mission is based on the struggle to obtain and preserve the values of inclusivity, individual rights and freedoms, and anti-oppression in all of its manifestations. We believe we have an obligation to extend those values both to our programming (outreach and equality of access, for example) and to our internal operations (hiring and promotions practices, for example).
>
> ✔ We also believe that clients have the right to demand, from us, services of the highest quality. Yet, what is our response when a client refuses to accept the services of a volunteer on grounds typically prohibited by human rights legislation (the volunteer is the 'wrong' age, the 'wrong' gender, the 'wrong' colour, the 'wrong' sexual orientation, ...)?
>
> ☛ Will we comply and find another volunteer and thereby collude with beliefs and behaviours that contradict our deeply held values regarding anti-oppression, or will we stand firm and refuse to re-assign a volunteer, thereby failing to fulfil our mission to deliver services?

These are values in conflict. Profound beliefs that run to the very heart of organizational existence can sometimes be found to clash with one another. In these circumstances, it is, first of all, useful to recognize that the source of disagreement is values in conflict. Having identified the problem, the organization must engage in a 'values sort', a process whereby values are prioritized, with those that emerge on top serving as the basis for policy development. Try it on the hypothetical situations above. Then consider if some of the most difficult policy questions in your volunteer department might pivot on values in conflict.

Policies as Rules

Policies can be employed as rules to specify expectations, routines, regulations, and guides to action. Policies of this sort help to establish minimum standards, consistency in volunteers' performance, and quality in service provision. The following example of a conflict of interest policy, excerpted from William Conrad and William Glenn[18] is a good illustration of a policy as a rule:

> *Any possible conflict of interest on the part of a director shall be disclosed to the board. When any such interest becomes a matter of board action, such director shall not vote or use personal influence on the matter, and shall not be counted in the quorum for a meeting at which board action is to be taken on the interest. The director may, however, briefly state a position on the matter, and answer pertinent questions of board members. The minutes of all actions taken on such matters shall clearly reflect that these requirements have been met.*

On the use of organizational affiliation:

> *Volunteers may not use their organizational affiliation in connection with partisan politics, religious matters, or community issues contrary to positions taken by the organization.*

On volunteers and picket lines:

In the event of a union-initiated work stoppage or legal strike, volunteers will not cross the picket line.

On paid employees as volunteers:

Paid employees may not serve in a governing, policy-making or advisory role - while employed by the organization, or within one year of terminating their paid employment with the organization. Paid employees may, however, serve in direct-service volunteer roles which are outside the scope of their paid work within the organization and which take place outside of usual working hours. (adapted from Canadian Red Cross - Ontario Division)

On family members as volunteers:

Family members of employees are allowed to volunteer but they may not be placed under the direct supervision or within the same department as other members of their family who are employees. (adapted from Canadian Red Cross - Ontario Division)

To determine required policies of this sort, the manager might spend time reviewing existing rules - written and unwritten, review past records such as memoranda, volunteer job descriptions, and volunteer performance review documentation to identify where rules have been articulated or directives issued. Think, also, about advisements or directives issued verbally to volunteers that have never been written down anywhere, but that nonetheless reflect 'how we do things around here'.

Policies as Program Improvement Tools

Upon occasion, it may be useful to 'upgrade' an expectation, a protocol, or a standard to the level of a policy, to give it more authority and importance. This technique is useful where an activity is important, but perhaps not seen to be important by, or at least warranting the attention of, those expected to comply. In this regard, policies help to establish standards and ensure quality of service.

Time sheets are a perfect example:

Volunteers will mail or deliver their activity logs to the manager of volunteers within five working days of month-end.

Sometimes policies can be used to ensure that a program operates smoothly or to improve the effectiveness of a program or service.

This policy on expectations of volunteers will enhance the service delivered:

Volunteers are expected to work within the parameters of their own volunteer job description while on duty with the agency. However, regular contact with clients can allow volunteers to make important observations about changes in the health and well-being of clients. Agency policy requires volunteers to report such observations to the Manager of Volunteers who will take appropriate action.

Implementing a policy that speaks to the operation of the program does not, of course, guarantee compliance, but the weight or importance of stating an expectation in the form of a policy can help. It will also provide a basis for pursuing consequences in the case of non-compliance.

To pinpoint which policies of this sort are required, the manager can simply consider aspects of the volunteer program that are not operating as effectively or as efficiently as desired. Having identified these, one might consider whether the additional weight of a 'policy pronouncement' would encourage improvement.

To conclude this section on functions of policies, it may be important to clarify that the four functions outlined above are not mutually exclusive. That is, a policy may be written specifically to reduce risks or limit liability and, at the same time function equally as a rule. To illustrate, a policy that states that all new board members must attend the basic board orientation session before assuming their board position with the organization serves both as a risk management policy and as a rule. Similarly, the sample policy above about volunteers not crossing the picket line in the event of a strike is clearly a rule type of policy, but it also embodies certain values and beliefs about limits around the role of volunteers, about the mandate of unions, and about workers' rights. There is nothing wrong if a policy serves more than one purpose. The point is to develop all of the policies that are needed. If some of them serve more than one function, all the better.

Equality or Elitism? Policy for Direct Service and Administrative Volunteers

It is rarely the case, in agencies where policies have been written to guide the volunteer component, that policies apply equally to direct service and administrative (board, committee, advisory) volunteers. In the same way that so many board members refuse to consider themselves as volunteers (is it because they consider the label below them?), board members often think of themselves as outside of (above?) the scope of policies written for volunteers.

This kind of two-tiered elitism among volunteer ranks has left administrative volunteering beyond both the control of, and the protection afforded by, risk management programs and policy development. The consequences of this situation are dangerous. Consider these examples:

- board members are rarely screened; formal application and interview procedures are rarely required;
- reference checks on board members are rarely required, even of those board members who have significant financial responsibilities (e.g., treasurers, comptrollers);
- the involvement of board members is rarely monitored, even though their actions and decisions are among the most important and influential in the whole organization; and
- board members are rarely disciplined or dismissed, even when clear cause exists.

It is recommended that policies written for volunteer programs include, in their scope, all volunteers, equally. Exceptions need to be identified clearly, and only with good justification.

For similar reasons, there ought to be a high degree of consistency between the policies that govern paid staff (personnel policies) and the policies written to govern the involvement of unpaid staff. In many, if not most, cases, there will not be any differences. For example, the following policies for paid staff and volunteers could be identical: screening;

dress code; conflict of interest; progressive discipline; appeals; sexual harassment; worksite safety. As above, exceptions need to be identified clearly, and only with good justification.

Policy Development Process

Who Sets Policy?

The precise way in which policies are drafted, reviewed, revised, approved and implemented varies a good deal from agency to agency. In some agencies, the board will hold within its own mandate, anything that even remotely resembles a policy. In other agencies, the Executive Director (CEO, Administrator or other senior staff member) may determine that drafting policies for board approval is their own responsibility. Some agencies may have, or decide to strike, a policy committee that will oversee all matters of policy for the agency. In other agencies, senior administration (paid and unpaid) will welcome the research, advice, input and drafts from front line staff regarding policies with broad applicability, allowing more specific policies or policies with limited scope, to be developed and implemented by department staff.

While none of these development systems is inherently right or wrong, it is probably best if organizations develop an internal culture that welcomes, from all agency personnel, paid or unpaid, notification of the need for policy development, review, or revision. It is not helpful for front line workers to think of policy as out of their realm, or somehow, 'above them.' People actually doing the work are often those most likely to identify risks, the need for improvements, the need for rules or changes in rules.

The Role of the Manager of Volunteers

It is important for the manager of volunteers to determine how policy development is typically handled in his or her own organization. This way the manager will be able to determine just what role he or she can play in policy development for the volunteer program. There is no question however, that the manager of volunteers is primarily responsible for identifying policy issues within the volunteer department, and for bringing those to the attention of senior staff/ administration. At minimum, it would be unethical not to report hazards or risks, and to do everything possible to ensure the safety and well-being of all volunteers.

With few exceptions, senior administrators, paid and unpaid alike, have little knowledge of the details, the complexities, or the scale of volunteering as it actually occurs within their own organizations. This makes getting the attention of senior administration more difficult, to be sure, but it is all the more reason why the manager of volunteers must take the initiative in policy development for volunteer departments. The process may have to include a good deal of education regarding the true dimensions and significance of volunteer work, and again, some mention of personal and collective liability exposure will often motivate board members and senior staff to listen more closely.

Ask For Help

As volunteer services grow larger, as risks and liabilities grow, and as volunteers become engaged in increasingly sophisticated and even technical work, managers of volunteers have more and more complexities to manage. And changes and growth outside of the volunteer department create new demands on the manager of volunteers.

> "All of the trends that surround us as a nation have an impact on the work of directing volunteer efforts. As the rapid pace of change escalates in the wider world, we find ourselves having to adapt to the impact of those changes on our daily work and the roles we play in leading volunteer energies."
> (Sue Vineyard, Megatrends and Volunteering, p. 179)

It is simply unreasonable to expect any single individual to have expertise in all of the areas in which volunteers are engaged, especially in large organizations or organizations with large volunteer programs. Developing policies for volunteer services can require skills and background in a wide range of fields, including:

- human resource management;
- athletics;
- labour law;
- fund raising;
- contract law;
- planning;
- human rights legislation;
- occupational health and safety;
- risk management;
- systems analysis;
- statistics;
- liability;
- insurance;
- accounting;
- information management; and
- education and training.

How many managers of volunteers who do not work in health care settings know enough details about communicable diseases and universal precautions to develop policies and procedures in this area? How many managers of volunteers know enough about liability and insurance to guarantee maximum coverage and protection?

No one can be expected to know enough to develop all policies alone, so ask for help. People from all walks of life are generally willing to volunteer for short-term positions as consultants. Ask them to prepare a draft policy, to work with you and/or other agency representatives to draft a policy, or to review or edit an existing draft. After all, managers of volunteers are experts at volunteer recruitment - they just do not think, as often as they might, about recruiting volunteers to help with their own work.

How To Write Policies

Six Principles Of Writing Policies

Be Concise: Write as much as is required for the policy to be clear and comprehensive. Remember, however, that the longer the policies and the thicker the policy manual, the more intimidating it will be, and the less likely it will be read and used regularly.

Be Clear: Policy writers must take great care to ensure that the policies they develop convey precisely and completely what is intended. Do not assume that the people reading and applying policies will take the identical meaning as was originally intended. Avoid technical terminology and jargon. Where it is necessary to use technical terms, explain them, either in the text or in an attached, and easily found, glossary.

Be Directive: Policies should very clearly tell people what is expected. While one would hope for complete compliance with all policies, it is obvious that compliance with some policies is much more important than compliance with others. It is appropriate, therefore, that some policies be more strongly worded and more authoritative than others. For example, there are some policies for which the imperative mood - a command - is entirely proper:

> *Volunteers will not give patients anything to eat or drink before patients' surgery.*

> *Volunteers will not disengage or otherwise tamper with any safety mechanisms on any equipment entrusted to their use.*

In all cases, remember that policies are policies. They must be directive and they must articulate, as Cryderman says, the ***what***.

Round The Edges: Not to diminish the importance of the three preceding principles, one must not lose sight of the fact that the subject of the policy development being discussed here is the work of volunteers. For this reason, it is suggested that the tone of many policies in the volunteer department be as palatable and inoffensive as possible.[19] Here are some sample policies to illustrate how rounding some of the rough edges of policies can make a big difference in tone.

On conflict of interest:

> *No person who has a conflict of interest with any activity or program of the agency, whether personal, philosophical, or financial shall be accepted or serve as a volunteer with the agency.*[20]

An alternate might read something like this:

> *Volunteers are often very busy people who often have many connections and who sometimes volunteer for more than one organization at the same time. It is, therefore, not unusual for volunteers to find themselves in a conflict of interest situation, regardless of whether they do administrative (board or committee) or direct service volunteering. Any volunteer who suspects that he or she may have a conflict of interest must notify his/her immediate supervisor in order to discuss application of the conflict of interest procedure, a copy of which is available from ...*

On turning volunteers away:

> *The agency reserves the right to decline involvement in its volunteer service by anyone it assesses to be unsuitable. The decision of the agency is final in these matters.*

Versus:

> *While the agency may need to decline offers of involvement by prospective volunteer applicants, every care must be taken, in turning such applicants away, to leave intact, the applicant's sense of self-confidence and dignity. In the process, emphasis must remain on the absence of a match between the gifts that the volunteer has to offer and what the position requires at the present time. Alternate placement opportunities or referral to the Voluntary Action Centre will be offered wherever possible. (See also, the Anti-discrimination Policy, outlined on page ...)*

The following series of policy statements regarding volunteer placement also conveys a deep respect for the rights and dignity of volunteers:

> *In determining suitable placements for volunteers, equal attention will be given to the interests and goals of the volunteer, and to the requirements of the agency and of the position(s) in question.*
>
> *No volunteer will be placed in a position for which s/he is not fully qualified or for which the organization could not provide adequate training.*
>
> *Volunteers will be fully and honestly informed of the expectations and responsibilities of their volunteer position along with any risk or liability which the position might entail.*
>
> *Volunteers will be made to feel comfortable in declining a suggested placement or in requesting changes to the position expectations at any point in their involvement with the organization.*
>
> *Volunteers have the right to expect work that is meaningful and satisfying to them.*
>
> *No position is too high in the organizational structure or too skilled for a volunteer, assuming appropriate background and time commitment.*
>
> *No position should be considered too tedious or unskilled as long as volunteers are given a clear understanding of the nature and importance of the work to be performed.*

Emphasize The Positives: Wherever possible, policies should enable, motivate and inspire. They should articulate outside limits, leaving as much room within them for flexibility and creativity. The presence of supportive and enabling policies can provide the encouragement and recognition that volunteers require to maximize their potential. Policies can demonstrate just how important the work is, and the very real consequence of error when standards are not attained or guidelines are not followed. As Rick Lynch[21] points out, we should never be surprised at the lack of results we get from volunteers if we never give them results to achieve.

Illustrate: Do not hesitate to draw pictures, illustrate steps and sequences, sketch methods or techniques. Diagrams and other graphic additions make the manual more pleasing to read, but more to the point, convey specific details that words sometimes cannot.

Which Policies? Which Ones First?

Policy development for volunteer services can seem completely overwhelming, particularly for those who are starting with few or no policies. The panicky question, "Oh dear! Where do I start?" is both typical and understandable at this stage. Given that developing a full set of policies for the volunteer department might take two or three years of fairly steady work, the task is to outline the range of possible policy topics, and then be certain that the most urgent are developed first.

Here is a simple, two-step process that is equally useful to managers of volunteers who are just getting started and to Managers who already have many policies in place.

Which Policies?

Developing a list of possible policy topics is the first task. Using the Policy Checklist, illustrated in Figure 1, the manager of volunteers can begin the process by listing all of the items she can think of. The brainstorming process can be prompted at this point by segmenting the Policy Checklist into separate sections for risk management policies, values and belief statement policies, policies as rules, and policies that will enhance the program's effectiveness.

> Consult the Table of Contents of Linds Graff's By Definition: Policies For Volunteer Programs (1993), which lists over 70 generic volunteer program policy topics.

Since this is a brainstorming exercise, no possibility should be ruled out at this point. It is also appropriate to include on this list, those policies that are already in place.

As possible policy topics arise, list them in the left-hand column. Complete the other columns

Figure 1. Policy Checklist

POLICY TOPIC	DEVELOPED: Date Of Last Review	IN PROGRESS	TO DO	NOT APPLICABLE
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				
11.				
12.				
13.				
14.				
15.				
16.				
17.				
18.				
19.				
20.				

Additional Policies Our Organization Should Develop
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.

for each topic as appropriate, indicating whether the policy exists, is in progress, or needs to be developed.

It is suggested that the manager of volunteers begin this process by listing the policies she can initially identify as required. More than one page may be required to contain the growing list of topics.

When the manager has listed all she can think of (at least for the moment), the checklist can be circulated so that others - staff, volunteers, clients, supervisor, board members, colleagues, outside consultants - may add to the list. They use the bottom portion of the Checklist, and since they are less likely to know what does and does not already exist, they do not need the additional columns. Again, no censoring should occur at this point, although the right-hand column does allow anyone to register their opinion that a policy topic(s), already on the list, is not applicable or not needed. These notations can be pursued by the manager of volunteers in more detail with the individuals in question.

Which Ones First?

An enormous list generated by this process is no reason to panic. Remember that the goal is to set priorities so that the most urgent and/or most important policies are being developed at any given time. What needs to be done is to rank each prospective policy topic on an 'urgency scale', from which can follow the list of policies <u>in order</u> of greatest to least urgency.

In order to assess urgency and importance, the manager of volunteers can again refer to the questions itemized earlier, on functions of policies. Each policy can be rated on its importance within each function. Figure 2, the Priority Scale, can be used to facilitate the process and record the results.

To begin using the Priority Scale, transfer the policy topics that were itemized on the Policy Checklist (Figure 1) to the left-hand column of the Priority Scale. Taking each policy topic in turn, assess its urgency on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 meaning not very urgent, it can wait; 5 meaning very urgent, needs development immediately) with respect to each of the four possible functions: risk management, values and belief statements, rules, and program improvement aides. Follow through this illustration on volunteer screening, asking the following questions about the urgency of need for policy statements:

Figure 2 Priority Scale

Page__ of __

POLICY TOPIC	<--- ASSIGN RATINGS * --->				
	Level of Risk	Need Value Statement	Need Rules	Need to Improve	Other	Totals
1.						
2.						
3.						
4.						
5.						
6.						
7.						
8.						
9.						
10.						
11.						
12.						
13.						
14.						
15.						
16.						
17.						
18.						

* Rate on a scale of urgency/importance: 1 = can wait ..... 5 = needs immediate attention

Risk Management:

- Are there risks associated with volunteer screening?
- Do we expose ourselves, our clients, the organization, to liability by not having a volunteer screening policy?
- How great are those risks?

Allowing for some variance depending on the nature of the work done by volunteers, the vulnerability of clients, and so on, it is likely that the risks surrounding volunteer screening will be quite high. Consider the implications of a violent offender or a paedophile being recruited into a day care centre because "He was such a **nice** man!" or the ramifications of accepting an expert in fraud as the Treasurer for the board of directors.

To complete the Priority Scale for the policy on volunteer screening, the score under the heading 'Level Of Risk' would, for most programs, be '5'.

Values and Belief Statements

- Do we have some values or beliefs about volunteer screening that need to be articulated?

There are always certain beliefs and positions held by organizations about volunteer screening that may seem self-evident to those in the field, but that are completely unknown to the general public. For example, many citizens still believe that seeking to do good unto others is the only criteria one must meet to become a volunteer. Being refused would be a shocking offense.

It is therefore quite important for the agency to be clear about its beliefs around volunteer screening, including messages about the agency's right to decline offers of involvement; the belief that the screening interview is an opportunity for mutual information exchange and assessment; that anti-discrimination and affirmative action principles will guide assessments of suitability.

The score for volunteer screening in the 'Need Value Statement' column would also be high - a '4' or a '5".

Rules

- Do organizations need to identify rules around the volunteer screening process?

Absolutely. Rules regarding key risks are very important, e.g., background checks, police checks, and references. Additionally, agencies need to state their rules around: what will be done with, and who can gain access to, confidential information obtained through the screening process? what constitutes grounds for non-acceptance? what are prohibited grounds for non-acceptance?

The score in this column, headed 'Need Rule', would be a '5' for most programs.

Program Improvement Tools

Each agency needs to assess its own functioning in this regard, but here is an example of a policy that could serve to improve the recruitment success rate:

> *Undue delay in following up with volunteers, after the screening interview, regarding their acceptance, is both disrespectful and potentially damaging to volunteers' motivation.*

A policy that commits the organization to contacting the volunteer within a specified number of working days of the screening interview could significantly alter the proportion of volunteers who are still willing to volunteer when the agency is able to confirm acceptance. How well the screening program is currently functioning will be a major determinant of how high the score will be in this column for screening policy.

To summarize, screening would rate high-to-very high in all four columns. It is a policy topic that requires thorough attention. To illustrate, by contrast, the range in urgency scores that various policy topics might receive, the policy on whether volunteers should or should not pay for their own coffee while on duty is an example of a policy issue that would rate fairly low on the urgency scale.

The fifth column on the Priority Scale entitled "Other" is there for use at the manager's discretion. There may be additional reasons for work on a specific policy to begin sooner rather than later: the organization just had a serious incident in an area where policy could prevent re-occurrence; the funder is insisting that all of its member agencies implement a specific philosophy of service; the manager's supervisor just came back from a course on safety in the workplace and is requiring immediate policy development on sexual harassment. This column allows the manager to assign 'urgency bonus points' in these kinds of circumstances.

To complete the priority scale, rate each policy topic in each of the five columns, add across each row to obtain a total score for each topic, and place that total in the right-hand column. Those topics with the highest scores need to be dealt with first. Those with lower scores can wait. Transfer the list of policy topics to a separate list in order from highest to lowest score, and consider this the 'Policy To Do List' for the foreseeable future.

Tracking Drafts And Input

Once the policy development agenda has been established, the manager can actually begin the process of researching, drafting, and revising policies. Some policies will be relatively easy to write; others will be extremely complex; some will demand input from outside experts; others will involve lengthy processing and values clarification.

Work on a wide range of policies can proceed simultaneously, particularly if a policy development team, a policy committee, or a collection of consultants/resource persons is recruited to assist with the task. Depending on the number of policies needing to be drafted, and on the number in progress at any given time, tracking where each policy is in its development may become cumbersome.

Figure 3 can be used as a tool to track the progress of policies as they are being researched, drafted, revised, and approved. Use one of these forms for each policy that needs to be tracked. Track development by indicating who needs to be involved and/or consulted, and who is responsible for each stage of the policy's evolution. The form allows the Manager to note due dates and completion dates for various activities. Use the two blank lines at the bottom to add other policy development activities that may need to be accomplished: external reading and editing; vetting by head office, staff, or union.

Figure 3: Tracking Policy Development

Policy Issue ______________________________

Policy Number ______________________

Who will be involved:

- ❑ Manager of Volunteers
- ❑ Staff Department Head
- ❑ Staff ______________________
  ____
- ❑ Volunteers ______________________
  ____
- ❑ Board of Directors
- ❑ Executive Director
- ❑ Policy Committee
- ❑ Legal Counsel
- ❑ Insurance Advisor
- ❑ Others ______________
- ❑ Others ______________

Version	Who is Responsible	Due Date	Complete (✔)
First Draft			
Second Draft			
Third Draft			
Approval			
Review/Revision			

Editing Policies

Careful review of policies after they have been drafted is a critical step that is often overlooked. It is recommended that at least four people read the newly drafted policy. Readers and editors from both within the field of volunteer management and from outside of it will round out the editing team. Different readers can be asked to attend to different aspects of policies. For example, legal counsel or insurance advisors can be asked to review from their professional point of view. Other readers may be asked to concentrate on meaning; others may attend to mechanics and sequencing, compliance with other policies, or terminology and grammar.

Compliance

A great deal of time and resources can be wasted on policy development if policies are not understood and followed. While there is nothing one can do to guarantee absolute compliance, there is a good deal one can do to increase the likelihood of compliance. Here are some suggestions.

Sensitive Wording

The way in which policies are worded can significantly enhance compliance. As noted above, rounding rough edges of policies can make them both more understandable and more palatable to volunteers who might otherwise be hurt or offended by apparent absence of trust or appreciation. See the 'Round The Edges' section above for examples.

State The Why

Including in the policy statement the reason for its existence reminds volunteers that policies don't exist just to make volunteering more bureaucratic for those engaged in it. This is not to say that agencies must justify every sentence of policy they write, or that the rationale for every policy statement must be an integral part of the policy itself. However, the rationale for some policies may not be immediately apparent to volunteers. In such cases, reference to reasons such as the well-being of clients, the importance of efficient expenditure of precious resources, the furthering of the mission of the agency, or the safety of volunteer workers will most certainly clarify its purpose and reinforce the importance of volunteers' compliance with it. Here is an excellent example:

> *Volunteers in this program are considered as non-paid, part-time staff and it is expected that volunteer relationships with clients will have the same boundaries as those of paid staff. Our role is therapeutic in nature. It is not appropriate to become friends with clients. This is not to say that volunteers cannot be friendly, caring or supportive. On the contrary. The reason that relationships with clients should not lead to friendships is because the relationship is not equal. Volunteers are privileged to more power by virtue of their position with the organization. Hence, clients are in a more vulnerable role. It is normal for clients to want to establish friendships with volunteers. They perceive volunteers to be caring individuals who pay attention.*

The procedure that accompanies this policy is:

1. *When "turning a client down" in terms of a friendship role, volunteers will do this in a supportive manner giving the basis of this policy as a reason.*

2. *Volunteers will notify the Co- ordinator of Volunteers whenever the nature of the friendship with a client is in question.* (Psychiatric Day Program, St. Joseph's Hospital, Hamilton, Canada)

This policy clearly outlines the 'why.' It is unlikely that a shorter version of the same policy that reads, `Volunteers are prohibited from developing social or friendship relationships with clients' would engender the same level of compliance simply because it does not communicate sound reasons for doing so.

Make Compliance Easy

The preceding sections notwithstanding, the shorter, more concise, more clear, and more straightforward that policies are, the greater the likelihood of compliance. Policy writers need to strike a balance between policies that are short and to the point, and policies that are more involved and detailed. Without trying to be facetious, the lesson here might be: Write as many and as much as you need to ensure understanding and compliance, and not one policy or one word more.

Make Policies Accessible

Produce policies in a format that makes them easily accessible to volunteers. For example produce a complete manual of policies and procedures for the volunteer program, and make them available to all volunteers. Extract the most critical of all policies for reproduction in a smaller handbook for each type of volunteer position, or for volunteers in each department. Print that subset of the most critical policies in a pocket- or purse-sized summary for day to day use. Distil these even further, and print the policies about emergency situations on a card the size of a credit card, have it laminated, and ask volunteers to post it near the phone at the worksite, carry it in their wallets, and/or carry it in the glove compartments of their automobiles.

Communicate Policies At Every Opportunity

Create and take every opportunity to communicate with and remind volunteers about, policies and procedures.

- begin to make reference to them in volunteer recruitment publicity by mentioning agency efforts to make volunteering safe and satisfying;
- notify volunteers at the initial screening interview that there are policies - rules, beliefs, and ways of doing things - that are integral to volunteering with your agency;
- include detailed coverage of agency policies and procedures in volunteer training and on-going training sessions;
- be certain to assess compliance with policies and procedures as a regular component of volunteer supervision and evaluation sessions;
- post relevant policies and procedures as reminders around the worksite;
- write articles about policies and procedures in newsletters and other communication vehicles, giving background, rationale, and implications .

Signed Contract

As part of the placement process, volunteers can be required to sign a contract. This kind of document, alternately called an 'agreement', or a 'memorandum of understanding' to soften its image, requires volunteers to attest to their commitment to follow policies and procedures. Placing one's signature on such a contract lends greater significance to the promise of compliance.

Typically, the commitment to compliance with agency policies and procedures is one of several items included in an initial volunteer/ agency contract. The sample drafted by Steve McCurley[22] includes other agreements: to serve as a volunteer; to perform volunteer duties to the best of his/her abilities; to meet time and duty commitments or provide adequate notice; as well as a section on adherence to rules and procedures.

It is suggested that a paragraph such as the following be included in the signed agreement:

I, ________________, affirm that I

have read, understood, and agree to comply with the policies and procedures of the ________ (name of agency) ___ as they are outlined in the attached job description, and in the volunteer ________ handbook/policy manual/....

An optional paragraph such as the following may be considered:

I understand that compliance with these policies and procedures is important to preserve the quality of service offered to our clients, and critical to the safety and well being of (agency) volunteers, clients, staff, and the general public. Further, I understand that any breach of agency policies and procedures will be taken seriously, and could be cause for discipline, suspension, or even dismissal.

Follow-Through

Consistently monitor compliance. Ensure that compliance with policies is a routine aspect of the volunteer performance review system. Offer speedy reinforcement, including awards for superior performance. Write newsletter articles about positive outcomes that have resulted from volunteers following policies and procedures.

Act quickly when policies are breached. Clarify what the consequences of failure to comply will be (and about which every organization needs policy, e.g., reminders, verbal or written warnings, suspension, dismissal, immediate dismissal). Do not hesitate to follow-through on their implementation.

Conclusion

Now is the time to engage in policy development for volunteer services. Because our expectations of volunteers have become more complex and more demanding, the practice of voluntary action involves more risks and creates greater exposure to liabilities for both volunteers and for the voluntary agencies through which they volunteer. Policy development is a crucial risk management tool that simply cannot be put off any longer. In addition, policies help volunteer services to communicate values and beliefs to guide action, articulate rules and develop guidelines that increase service effectiveness.

The development of a comprehensive set of policies for a volunteer department may take two to three years of concentrated effort. It is not unusual for managers of volunteers to feel overwhelmed by the magnitude of the task or by the fear that crucial policies will be missed. This chapter has outlined useful techniques for segmenting the policy development process into a manageable plan, including guidelines for determining which policies are required. Concrete suggestions have been offered regarding how to write policies and how to increase compliance with policies.

Readers are urged to immediately initiate comprehensive policy development in volunteer services since delays are almost certain to generate increased risks and dangers for volunteers, clients, staff, agencies, and the general public.

Endnotes

[1] Silver, Nora, *At the Heart: The New Volunteer Challenge to Community Agencies,* Pleasanton, CA.: Valley Volunteer Centre, 1988, page 86.

[2] Shaw, robert C., "Strengthening the Role of the Voluntary Board of Directors". Excerpts printed in *Boards of Directors' Resource Binder,* Ginette Johnstone (editor). Etobicoke, Ontario: Volunteer Ontario, 1990.

[3] Cryderman, Paula, *Developing Policy and Procedure Manuals,* (Revised Edition), Ottawa, Ontario: Canadian Hospital Association, 1987, page 10.

[4] Ibid., page 10.

[5] Carver, John, *Boards that Make a Difference - A New Design for Leadership In Nonprofit and Public Organizations,* San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1990, page 28.

[6] Ellis, Susan, *From the Top Down: The Executive Role in Volunteer Program Success,* Philadelphia, PA: Energize Associates, 1986, page 1.

[7] Conrad, William, R. and Glenn, William E., *The Effective Voluntary Board of Directors,* Athens, Ohio: Swallow Press, 1976, page 14.

[8] O'Connell, Brian, *The Board Members' Book: Making a Difference in Voluntary Organizations,* New York: The Foundation Centre, 1992, page 20.

[9] The frequency of legal action against not-for-profit organizations has increased dramatically in Canada over the last decade. The two prevalent assumptions a) that law suits are rarely launched in Canada, and b) that not-for-profit organizations are typically immune from exposure to liability and litigation, are both inaccurate *and* unwise.

[10] Ellis, Susan, *From the Top Down: The Executive Role in Volunteer Program Success,* Philadelphia, PA: Energize Associates, 1986, page 1.

[11] Silver, Nora, *At the Heart: The New Volunteer Challenge to Community Agencies,* Pleasanton, CA.: Valley Volunteer Centre, 1988, page 116.

[12] Ibid., page 116.

[13] Graff, Linda, "The Key to the Boardroom Door: Policies for Volunteer Programs", *The Journal of Volunteer Administration,* Volume XI (4), Summer 1993.

[14] Scheier, Ivan, "Empowering a Profession: Seeing Ourselves as More than Subsidiary", *The Journal of Volunteer Administration,* Fall 1988, pages 29 to 34.

[15] Silver, Nora, *At the Heart: The New Volunteer Challenge to Community Agencies,* Pleasanton, CA.: Valley Volunteer Centre, 1988, page 117.

[16] McCurley, Steve, *Volunteer Management Policies,* Downers Grove, Illinois: VMSystems - Heritage Arts Publishing, 1990, page 2.

[17] Ibid., page 3.

[18] Conrad, William, R. and Glenn, William E., *The Effective Voluntary Board of Directors*, Athens, Ohio: Swallow Press, 1976, page 16.

[19] There is no reason why the policies that are written for paid staff should not follow this same model. As Ivan Scheier has argued for over a decade, the paid work sector could learn much from managers of volunteers about the creation of supportive, motivating, and humane work environments.

[20] McCurley, Steve, *Volunteer Management Policies*, Downers Grove, Illinois: VMSystems - Heritage Arts Publishing, 1990, page 4.

[21] Lynch, Richard, "Designing Volunteer Jobs for Results", *Voluntary Action Leadership*, Summer 1983, pages 20 - 23.

[22] McCurley, Steve, *Volunteer Management Forms*, Downers Grove, Illinois: VMSystems - Heritage Arts Publishing, 1988, page 10.

Chapter Review

This chapter covers the role and development of policy in volunteer services.

1. Why is it now so important to develop policies for volunteer services?
2. What is the key difference between policies and procedures?
3. List the four main functions of policies. How can these functions help managers to determine which policies are needed?
4. What is the connection between organizational and departmental values and policies?
5. Who should be involved in the policy development process?
6. What are the six principles of policy-writing?
7. What can be done to encourage volunteers to comply with policies?

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CHAPTER 5: RISK MANAGEMENT

Key Points

Risk management is now an indispensable component of every not-for-profit organization that involves volunteers.

This chapter addresses
- ✔ the dramatic changes in the voluntary sector which have caught many volunteer departments without adequate planning or protection
- ✔ the increasing legal action, community standards and more demanding and complex task assignments for volunteers that make risk management an integral managerial function
- ✔ a four-step risk management model
- ✔ the danger of exposing an organization, its personnel and its customers to unacceptable levels of risk if risk management is not in place.

This chapter was written by Linda L. Graff, Senior Associate of GRAFF AND ASSOCIATES. Segments of this article originally appeared in "Taking Volunteerism Into The Twenty First Century: Risk Management Is Essential" in The Journal of Volunteer Resources Management (Graff, 1995: 6-8). These excerpts are used with permission.

> *Risk management, reasonably applied, is not synonymous with management by worst case thinking. It is responsible and contemporary best practice that places due and appropriate priority on personal safety, program effectiveness, and organizational well-being.*[1]

Introduction[2]

Not too long ago in a workshop I was doing on risk management and policy development, I was helping board members and branch administrators of a large, provincial organization to identify policies that would reduce the likelihood of any of their hundreds of volunteers from injuring themselves and others. This was an organization that, like many, could not survive without volunteers, and that has a long tradition of assigning responsible, and even at times, somewhat dangerous tasks to its volunteers. About three-quarters of the way through the day a gentleman stood up and said:

> *"This is all very interesting, young lady, but I don't know why we have to start worrying about all of these things now. We have been operating this organization since 1953 and no one has been seriously injured yet."*

What I have come to realize from that comment is this:

There are still a good many well-meaning people, some of whom are in positions overseeing volunteer work, and some of whom are ultimately responsible for the work done by volunteers, who still believe that volunteering is about Lady Bountifuls with bonnets and baskets administering unto the sick and the orphaned, rolling bandages and serving tea!

Without intending to be offensive to anyone, the response to that kind of thinking needs to be something like "But it simply isn't 1953 any longer."

Disaster Imaging

The fastest way for managers of volunteers to catch up to current risk realities is to engage in an exercise called disaster imaging. Consider for a few moments, the range of answers to the following question:

> *What are the worst things that you can imagine going wrong in your volunteer department, or because of the involvement of volunteers at your organization?*

- think about direct service volunteers and administrative (board and committee volunteers);
- think about accidents, injuries, financial and public trust issues;
- think about personal and organizational liabilities.

Here is a typical list from workshop participants who answer this same question:

- accident;
- injury;
- volunteer stepping outside of job description, exceeding skills or authority;
- sub-standard performance resulting in harm;
- breach of confidentiality;
- loss or damage to property: physical, financial, electronic, intellectual;
- theft, misappropriation of funds, fraud;
- abuse of client: physical, emotional, sexual, financial;
- loss of reputation, organizational credibility, public trust;
- loss of ability to raise funds in the future;
- death.

One does not have to stretch the imagination to identify multiple disaster possibilities that could actually happen any day of any week. The risks associated with voluntary action come in many shapes and sizes, but one thing is certain: the risks are both bigger and more prevalent than ever before.

In anticipation of the critics who caution the field not to engage in or be ruled by "worst case thinking," the problem is that there are still too few managers of volunteers in the field right now who consider the extent of risk that currently exists in voluntary action. True, some practitioners may feel overwhelmed or even immobilized by the potential for disaster, but these are outnumbered by those who still ignore the risks that volunteer involvement generates for clients, staff, volunteers, and the organization.

The underlying assumptions to the application of risk management in any setting are these:

- *There are no absolutes and no guarantees in risk management. No* *risk management system in the world can prevent all risks. Things can and do go wrong.*

- *But ignoring the potential for trouble never makes it go away and often exacerbates the outcome.*
- *Facing risks head on and making every effort to control them can sometimes avert disaster or minimize the magnitude of harm that results.*
- *If something does go wrong, any attempts that have been made to anticipate and prevent the loss or tragedy through a risk management process will constitute concrete proof of diligence, and consequently reduce personal and organizational exposure to liability.*

Change As The Context To Understanding Risk

It is almost trite these days to say that things are changing, but change is perhaps the most significant factor to consider in constructing a context for risk management in volunteer services.

The kinds of changes that have been experienced in the human and community service system in the decade before the millennium surpass any other period of change in the history of service provision.

Fundamental shifts are permanently altering health care, education, social services, and other aspects of community life. All of these changes have direct consequences for the work of volunteers and the volunteer movement itself.

This might be gallows humour, but the saying is right for the times:

> *"You think you understand the situation but what you don't understand is that the situation just changed."*[3]

Volunteering has grown to enormous proportions and now hardly resembles what it was as recently as 1990.

Not all that long ago organizations needed to be encouraged to consider involving volunteers at any level beyond the legally necessary board of directors. Now, it is difficult to identify not-for-profit organizations that do not involve volunteers at all organizational and program levels, in both administrative (board/committee) and direct service positions.

Further, and perhaps most importantly, as governments withdraw funding for services across the country, and as other funding sources are inadequate to fill the in gaps, not-for-profit organizations, often in desperation, say "Let's get a volunteer to do it!" There is no question that volunteers are being engaged in direct service delivery in ways that just five years ago would have been considered outrageous, inappropriate, or even unethical.

There are both positive and negative consequences that follow from such changes. For the purposes of this chapter, the key consequence is the dramatic increase in risk that has accompanied the new, more sophisticated, more responsible, and often more risky volunteer positions that volunteers are now being asked to fill.

Volunteers are not only in board rooms making the critical financial and service decisions, but they are also on the front lines, often side by side with paid staff, working directly with clients and program participants.

As Marlene Wilson said more than 20 years ago, and clearly it is ever more true today:

> *"What we are just beginning to realize is that as our communities grow and the problems increase and become more complex, helping one's neighbor becomes more complex as well."*[4]

As volunteers are recruited to perform increasingly responsible and demanding tasks, working directly with clients and service participants, helping to keep the cost of service delivery down, tackling serious social problems and working on the front lines of neighbourhood reclamation and urban repair, they are placed at risk. (Graff)

The more complex and direct the work of volunteers, the greater the liability to the volunteer, the organization, and its management, and the greater the risk of injury to the volunteer and/or staff and/or service recipient.

Consider these real-life examples:

- *Volunteers are transferring wheelchair patients in and out of vehicles without training.*
- *Volunteer counsellors staff a crisis line with little training, including how to deal with potential suicides, and they have no professional backup.*
- *A volunteer friendly visitor carries his 'client' up and down a flight of stairs each week to take her shopping.*
- *A pharmacist volunteers as a befriender for a mental health organization and is giving advice to clients about which of their prescription medications they should and should not bother to take.*
- *An elderly woman, who has been a volunteer porter at the hospital for over two decades, is beginning to lose her faculties. Last week she took a patient in a wheel chair to the wrong clinic where the patient waited for three hours before staff were able to locate him.*
- *Female volunteers are sent out to do home visits with male ex-offenders - some of whom have been convicted of violent crimes. The volunteers go alone, with no briefing on the nature of the offence.*
- *High school students volunteer at a home for the aged, helping to feed residents, but they are not told what to do if the resident begins to choke.*

Existing risks and liabilities are exacerbated by two associated trends:

First, Canadian society has become significantly more 'litigational'. In a clear trend no longer confined to the United States, people are suing others more often, and not-for-profit organizations are far from immune from legal accountability. Organizations are being sued across the country, sometimes specifically because of the activities of volunteers.

Second, as resources are stretched to their absolute maximum, which is more and more often the key reason why volunteers are invited to take on increasingly responsible positions in the first place, there are fewer supervisory staff to ensure adequate performance standards among volunteers. Less supervision invites greater risks. Worse still, in some settings, the very position that should be considered indispensable, the manager of volunteers position, is being cut to solve budget problems.

The consequence is obvious: the risk of injury/ malpractice/accident increases directly and the likelihood of legal action is greater.

> As long as volunteers are confined to simple and routine chores, away from direct contact with clients or the public, agency administration has little to concern itself with regarding risk. As soon as an organization chooses to assign demanding, responsible, and direct-service work to volunteers, the consequence of error multiplies, and an obligation arises to responsibly manage volunteers as the real workers they have been asked to become. As their employers, organizations have corresponding ethical and legal obligations to ensure that volunteers work in the safest manner possible, in the least hazardous environment that can reasonably be created. (Graff)

The general pattern across Canada is that volunteers almost everywhere are being asked to take on riskier work. What follows is that management of volunteers across Canada must be concomitantly more sophisticated.

Are You Working In Silver's Gap?

Many managers of volunteers feel a sense of unease over some of the positions their organizations have required them to create for volunteers. Others suffer a well-formed, full-blown dread of injury, harm, and loss that appears altogether too likely to result from the placement of volunteers in positions of great risk.

Too often, when managers of volunteers try to respond appropriately to risk identification, when they try to advise their administration that placement of volunteers in certain positions is too risky, or when they request the time and resources for policy development and risk management, they are met with comments from administration such as, "Don't worry about that. They're just volunteers." or "Why are you always waving red flags and looking for trouble?"

At some point, the lag created by rapid and radical change catches up and, as Nora Silver[5] points out, for our field the result of rapid growth and change in volunteerism has been the creation of a gap between the real complexity of volunteer involvement and the ability of <u>organizations</u> to understand and comprehensively manage the valuable resource they have mobilized.

> The future of community organizations, and the independent sector as a whole, depends on the future of our volunteers. Right now that future is at risk. It is not for want of volunteers. It is not for want of good organizations providing good services. It is for want of the capacity of these good organizations to utilize people well. (Nora Silver, 1988:1)

Managers struggle to do the best they can but for many, support from their organization is absent. Clearly, misconception and ignorance still surround the field and practice of volunteering, and boards of directors and senior management in voluntary organizations are among the worst offenders.[6]

Organizational systems such as the following are not in place for volunteers:

- communications systems;
- reporting systems;

- accountability systems;
- policies and procedures;
- resource planning and development;
- insurance;
- risk management systems.

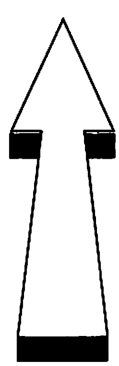
> Best practices that were considered adequate, well-managed, and safe just a few years ago would be judged as woefully sub-standard if not wholly negligent by today's standards. (Graff)

A few recent high profile cases of abuse by volunteers in positions of trust have served to dramatically raise legal standards and demands for public accountability. These changes have risen so quickly that managers who have not significantly increased their attention to risk management in volunteer services in the last two to three years, are very likely exposing both volunteers and clients to greater risk of harm and their organizations to greater liability.

To summarize, it is critical that we begin to acknowledge the complexity and significance of the work

a. that we mobilize in others - that we face openly the degree of sophistication and responsibility that characterizes much of what volunteers now do; and

b. that managers of volunteers themselves do, as their management practices, skills, and expertise must increase in direct correlation with the demands on their workforce



Risk management has become an indispensable function in the management of volunteer resources.

The Risk Management Process

The Aims Of Risk Management

There is no risk management model that comes with a guarantee. There is nothing that anyone can do to absolutely guarantee that nothing will go wrong ... short of stopping services and closing the doors. Similarly, there is no way to completely eliminate the element of risk from voluntary action. That is, the possibility of accident, injury, loss or damage is always present. But this is the case in nearly everything we do, all of the time.

It is important not to ignore risks, but it is equally important not to become immobilized by them either.

What is needed is a rational, systematic approach to risk management that reduces and controls risks as much as reasonably possible.

There are two central and distinct aims of every risk management process:

Prevention of harm and loss must always be the first priority of every risk manager. It is clearly preferable to keep things from going wrong in the first place than it is to deal with the consequences of tragedies and disasters.

Liability reduction is a close second aim of every risk manager. Given that things can and do go wrong even with the best prevention mechanisms in place, it is entirely appropriate to undertake measures that reduce personal and organizational liability exposure.

Risk Management Is Not Difficult Or Mysterious

Risk management may sound complicated and highly technical, but the reality is that in most circumstances, it is neither. In fact, when one explores models of risk management, it becomes clear that we all engage in risk management all of the time; we just do not label our actions and decisions as such, and we are not as systematic about our efforts as we probably should be.

> Risk of any sort may not be the primary consideration in the hundreds of small and large decisions faced every day, but risk is a sub-theme that runs at or near the surface of most daily activities. (Graff)

When one considers that all avenues of human endeavour bring some measure of risk - from stepping out of bed in the morning to finding the way back there at night, all that goes between is about risk management.

Everyone is constantly engaging in often barely conscious risk management:

- *Test the temperature of the water before stepping into the shower.*
- *Fresh fruit and low fat cottage cheese for breakfast rather than bacon and eggs reduces the risk of heart disease.*
- *An umbrella would be well advised to protect that new suede jacket from the rain currently in the forecast.*
- *Use public transit or take the car? Late meeting tonight means a walk from the bus stop after dark.*
- *Take the car? Which route - highway may be faster but definitely more dangerous; okay, so you can accept the risks of driving by the highway route ... have enough gas? Tires inflated properly? Which lane? Pass now? What speed? Let that transport truck pull into your lane in front of you?*
- *GIC coming due next week - reinvest with low risk and low return, or go for mutual funds? Precious metals doing well lately, how about some Bre-X stocks?*

We engage in risk-related decision-making virtually all of the time; we just do not recognize it as such, label it as such, or approach it systematically.

For these reasons, the following comment about risk management offered by Tremper and Kostin makes good sense:

> *"At its heart, risk management is not a new trick, and it's not something mysterious. It's an orientation to everything you do that is highly consistent with every charitable mission. Risk management is not just looking for trouble, it's looking for solutions that make your organization more effective.*[7]

Risk management is not new. We engage in it continually, even if often unconsciously.

It is not mysterious or even difficult. One does not need to obtain a college certificate in risk management to substantially reduce and control risks in most volunteer programs.

Risk Management Is A Process

In an organization or a volunteer department, one does not "go and do" risk management and then say, "there, that's done" and forget about it. Doing so would be comparable to attempting to anticipate all of the risks that might surface in a day, making decisions and choices among options, setting a plan, and then going through the remainder of the day with no consideration to any of the hundreds of big and small risks that might surface unanticipated.

Risk management needs to be integrated into existing systems - program planning, cost-benefit analyses, program evaluation, performance reviews, agency governance .... This is not to say that risks govern all, but rather that risks need to be considered along with any number of other variables in actions and decisions throughout every organization, on a regular, if not continuous, basis.

On Resistance

> There is nothing inconsistent about managing risks in not-for-profit, charitable organizations. Doing good offers no exemption from doing good well. (Graff)

Those who would say "why are you always waving red flags" need to hear that risk management, reasonably applied, is not synonymous with management by worst case thinking. It is responsible and contemporary best practice that places due and appropriate priority on personal safety, program effectiveness, and organizational well-being.

The Risk Management Model

The essence of risk management is planning and prevention. The aim is to anticipate risks in advance and then take deliberate and appropriate measures to control or reduce those risks to a tolerable level.

The following model is a four step planning process that leads the manager systematically through a series of questions, allowing and encouraging consideration of a range of action and decision alternatives. It may look complicated at first, but it works quite simply.

The internal workings of the flow chart are reviewed first so that the reader gains a sense of the overall system, and how decision-making should progress in a systematic fashion. When the model has been outlined, a more detailed discussion of how to implement each of its components is presented.

Start by choosing a sub-section of the organization to work on: any program or service; any job description, task or position; board functioning, direct service volunteer involvement, or paid staff role. The area or function to be investigated can be large or small. It is advisable, however, to break the agency into component parts and engage in the risk management process with each part in turn, rather than trying to apply the model to the whole agency at one time.

This model works equally well with paid and unpaid work/service, and at every level in the organization, including governance, administration, support services, maintenance, and delivery of services to clients.

The reader might find it useful to study the risk management flow chart while its mechanics are reviewed.

Step One

All risk management begins with the question, "Are there any risks here?"

Consider the component of the agency under examination and ask that question. It will be a very rare agency or service in which the answer will be "no." However, if you are examining a service where there are no detectable risks, the diagram points you out the left side of the "Identify Risks" box, and drops down the left side to the "Review" box. This reflects the fact that there are no current risks detectable, but given that things are continually changing, the model suggests that you periodically re-ask the "Are there any risks here?" question.

If, in answer to the "Are there any risks here?" question, you do detect risk - of any sort or magnitude - then the model directs you out the right side of the "Identify Risks" box, and on to the next box below.

Step 2

The second step in risk management involves evaluating the risks identified so far. The question to be applied to all risks on the list at this point is, "Is this a big risk or a little risk?"

The distinguishing factor between "big" risk and "little" risks lies in the answer to this question: "Can we live with this risk without any further action to reduce or control it?"

Those risks that fall within the **risk tolerance zone**, that is, identified risks that the organization can live with without further action, direct the manager out the left side of the "Evaluate Risks" box and once again drop to "Review," indicating that while there may be comfort with no further action on this risk at this point, things change and it is advisable to re-examine this risk again in the not too distant future.

> RISK TOLERANCE ZONE
>
> As much as we might wish for unequivocal direction about risk management, final decisions will often come down to a matter of judgement. We cannot be more technical or scientific than this:
>
> *Each organization must locate its own "risk tolerance zone," within which it is comfortable with the level of risk and liability exposure, and outside of which it feels compelled to take some form of risk management action.* (Graff)

Those risks that are rated outside the risk tolerance zone, those that are assessed to be "high"[8], point out of the right side of the "Evaluate Risks" box and direct attention downwards to the next box in the model.

Step 3

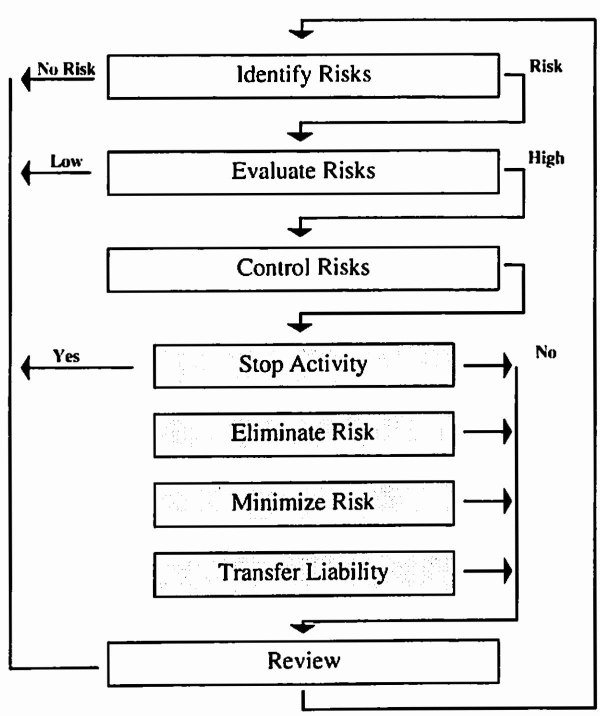
The risks still on the list are those that require some kind of control action. The next phase of the model directs us through a range of four control options. These are the four grey boxes.

The first risk control mechanism - the first action - to consider is to stop engaging in the risky activity. Ask the question, "Is this the kind of risk, or a big enough risk, that the appropriate risk management response would be to quit the risky action, extract the organization and its personnel from the risky situation, or at minimum, cease involvement in its riskier elements?"

If the answer to the, "Should we stop the activity?" question is "Yes," then the diagram leads to the left and down to the "Review" box, indicating that once the activity is stopped, no further control actions need be taken (at least for the time being) because there is no involvement in the risky activity. However, it is recommended that the situation be reviewed periodically ... because things change.

If the answer to the question, "Should we stop this activity?" is "No," then the model points down to three other possible risk control mechanisms: Eliminate Risk, Minimize Harm, and Transfer Liability. Each of these is discussed in more detail below.

Risk Management Model



Step 4

Ultimately, all arrows lead to "Review," reinforcing the critical point that risk management is never done. The arrow from the "Review" box leads to the right and back to the top of the flow chart, indicating that the model represents a process that is never complete. One needs to continually engage in risk management, scanning for risks and changes in both the environment and the organization's risk threshold that would recommend changes in policy and procedures and that would bring actions, decisions, personnel and services back to within the risk tolerance zone.

Operationalizing The Model

Let's look at detailed suggestions of how to operationalize each step of the risk management process.

Step 1. Identify Risks

- Brainstorm a list of possible dangers, situations or problems that might occur in the operation of programs or the governance or the organization.

- Tremper and Kostin[9] suggest there are four main classifications of risk to look out for: People, Property, Income, and Goodwill. You might use the accompanying Risk Checklist as a tool in risk identification.

- Invite participation from others who are familiar with the volunteer department and the various roles and responsibilities assigned to volunteers; ask for help from those who are completely unfamiliar with the operation of your organization. Both will identify risks.

- Review both current and past operations and occurrences.

- Review existing policies, procedures, personnel, and operating manuals; ensure that they comply with all relevant legislation, regulations, codes, licensing agreements, and so on; consider them from the perspective of risk and hazards.

- Examine each aspect of service delivery and all job descriptions; disassemble them into component parts and consider what might go wrong in the various pieces and steps.

- Do not conduct your own risk management efforts from behind your desk; engage in the perhaps-still-most-effective management model: management by walking around. Go to the locations where clients receive their services; go to all of the sites, floors, wards, branches... where volunteers perform their duties. Walk the premises and try to pinpoint risks and dangers. Consider the safety of the work site, the safety of working conditions. Examine equipment, inspect the building, observe staff-client and collegial relationships. Ask:
- Do people know where the emergency exits are?
- Do people know where the fire extinguishers are?
- Do people know where the first aid supplies are?
- Do people know who to call in an emergency?
- Do people know what priorities should prevail (e.g., always the safety of persons first) in the event of a threat or disaster?
- Do volunteers know that they have the authority to act in such a way as to protect themselves and others when in danger, and equally, what the limits of that authority are?

- Try to imagine the setting in an emergency situation and ask: what would need to be done and who should do it?

- Safety records, workers compensation claims and serious incident occurrence reports are good sources of past dangers that may need additional attention.

- Institute a "near miss" procedure through which staff and volunteers are required to report any potentially serious events that just about materialized so that administration has the opportunity to implement preventive measures before the next "near miss" becomes a tragedy.

- Develop a positive organizational culture about risk management that both empowers and rewards all personnel for risk identification, reporting, and control initiatives; risk management should never be considered "squealing" on a colleague.

All of these techniques will assist in the creation of the master list of risks. Remember that at this stage in the risk management model, all risks, no matter what magnitude, should be recorded. Even risks that are currently assessed to be "under control" should be included on the list.

Risk Identification Checklist

PROGRAM: ______________________________ DATE: ____________________

RISK TYPE	NO APPARENT RISK	RISK PRESENT	COMMENTS
PEOPLE:			
Clients	( )	( )	
Volunteers	( )	( )	
Paid Staff	( )	( )	
Board	( )	( )	
General Public	( )	( )	
Other			
PROPERTY:			
Real Property - Buildings, Equipment, Vehicles, etc.	( )	( )	
Financial Property - Operating, Capital and Reserve Accounts, etc.	( )	( )	
Electronic Property - Data Bases, Donors Lists, Client and Personnel Records, etc.	( )	( )	
Intellectual Property - Manuals, Books, Training Modules, Documents, Forms, etc.	( )	( )	
Other			
INCOME:			
Contracts, Licenced and Mandated Services	( )	( )	
Donations, Grants, etc.	( )	( )	
Other			
Goodwill:			
Agency Reputation, Credibility, Stature	( )	( )	
Agency Profile	( )	( )	
Public Trust	( )	( )	
Other			

Step 2. Evaluate Risks

When the master list of risks is compiled, each item will need to be evaluated. The question areas follows:

- Is this a 'big' risk or a 'little' risk?
- Does this risk fall within our risk tolerance zone?
- Is this a risk that we can comfortably live with without any (further) form of risk reduction attention?

There are two key perspectives from which to evaluate each risk.

- Likelihood of Occurrence;
- Magnitude of Harm;

Likelihood of Occurrence

To assess whether the organization can "live with" a risk at its current level, consider first, the potential for the risk to materialize. It is impossible to apply a mathematical equation here and pure science should not be the aim. Rather, consider what the odds might be of each specific risk taking shape into actual loss or harm. An informal rating system like the following can prompt a systematic approach. It also provides organizational personnel a tool by which to compare and discuss their respective "guestimates" and to pinpoint divergence. This might be a particularly useful tool to work through with, or at least share with, a board of directors who are reluctant to acknowledge the existence of risks in the volunteer department, or who will not authorize the development or risk management policies and procedures for the volunteer department because "they are just volunteers, after all."

RISK RATING SCALE

RISK	LIKELIHOOD OF OCCURRENCE (Rate 1 to 5)*	TOLERANCE ZONE We Can Live With It	 We Cannot Live With It	COMMENTS
		( )	( )	
		( )	( )	
		( )	( )	
		( )	( )	

* Assign a "Likelihood Rating" such as:
1 = Very unlikely that this risk will materialize into harm, loss, or liability
3 = Somewhat likely that this risk will materialize into harm, loss, or liability
5 = Very possible that this risk will materialize into harm, loss, or liability

It will be obvious that risks that have a moderate or great chance of materializing will need some form of risk control treatment.

Risks that exist, but that are very unlikely to materialize may, at first, seem to require no further attention. An organization might be tempted to dismiss them as nothing to worry about and set them aside for no further attention. However, it is recommended that even risks that are rated at the lowest end of the 'likelihood' scale be examined from the second perspective that follows, before being dismissed.

Magnitude Of Harm

The second perspective from which to evaluate each risk on the master list of risks is 'magnitude of harm'. Here the evaluator considers the range of possible consequences should the risk actually materialize. Ask these questions:

- How significant might the injuries, losses, harm, or liabilities be?
- Are the potential consequences something the organization should pay attention to, or are they, once again, something that can be lived with? For example, children at the day care centre play. It is inevitable that a good number of them will fall down and, predictably, routinely, hurt themselves;
- How big might the hurt be?

To illustrate: Take the case of the day care centre that has paid attention to the safety of its grounds and premises with regard to children at play. It has ensured, for example, that there is no particularly risky playground equipment on site, no sharp edges to tables or furniture in the play room, children are well and continuously supervised, all rambunctious players are attended to quickly, and so on. That day care centre might determine that even though the likelihood of a bump or bruise to children at play is quite significant, the magnitude of the harm of such occurrences for both the children and the centre is something the centre can quite easily live with.

Remember that all risk management decisions have implications not just for personal safety and organizational well-being. They also have ethical implications and consequences. It is useful to apply the "headline test" to risk management activities: consider how the risk management decisions (regarding organizational actions and inactions) would look as the substance of the headline in the local paper the morning after a tragedy at your site. Try the "hindsight test": Ask the question, "If we are ever looking back at our decision-making in the wake of a tragedy, will we feel we implemented proper and sufficient risk management protocol?" "Will we be perceived by the public and our peers as having done enough?"

Risk management almost always forces organizations to identify and explore their ethical obligations and their organizational values as well as their organizational liabilities. (Graff)

Consider the same illustration at a day care centre where skate boards are a routine fixture in the toy box, cleaning supplies are kept on the bottom shelf of an unlocked cabinet, the swing set is never inspected for wear, and funding cut backs have reduced the children-to-adult ratio to below safe levels. Children in this setting may play just the same as in the first example, but both the likelihood of occurrence and magnitude of harm are probably much greater in the second example.

Risks that involve a significant degree of harm, even those risks that are less likely to occur, may require further management attention.

Those risks that fall within the risk tolerance zone - risks that are assessed to be among those that the organization can live with without additional risk control measures - can be set aside at this point in the process, and targeted for review at some identified point in the future.

Those risks that, because of the likelihood of their occurrence, magnitude of harm, or a combination of the two, fall outside of the risk tolerance zone, will be targeted for further control treatment.

Step 3. Control Risks

Risks that cannot be tolerated must be reduced, somehow. A range of mechanisms exist, and the risk management model directs us to consider one or more of these, in the following order.

a) <u>Stop/Avoid the Activity</u>

Certain risks are best controlled by simply stopping, or ceasing involvement in, the risk-producing activity.

This may sound like a radical solution, but it need not mean cancelling the service or the program, or closing the doors of the agency.

Stopping the activity might mean terminating an action or service that has come to be increasingly unsafe, suddenly or gradually, over time. For example:

- do not allow children to spend considerable time in the company of just one person in an isolated setting - drop the overnights from the program and find another way to teach leadership, self-esteem, competence, or whatever the aims of the cancelled activity were;
- revise the volunteer application form and delete all sections that would now be considered discriminatory under human rights legislation;
- elaborate on client eligibility criteria and refuse to deliver a service to violent and abusive clients who pose a danger to staff and volunteers.

Stopping the activity might mean postponement to a safer time or place. For example:

- postpone the picnic when lightening begins to; cancel the ski trip when there has been five centimetres of freezing rain the night before;
- wait until a second camp counselor is available before conducting tent checks after lights out;
- after the tree in the back yard is damaged in the wind storm, keep the children inside until the debris can be cleared away and the stability of what remains is assessed;

Stopping the activity might mean cutting out a portion of it that is most dangerous, leaving the remainder to operate within risk tolerance boundaries. For example:

- palliative care volunteers never accept gifts of any sort from clients and never involve themselves in clients' financial affairs;
- stop the friendly visitors from driving their clients - that is not an essential function of the friendly visitor job description.

In practice, managers of volunteers "stop the activity" frequently because of risk. This step does not necessarily mean termination of an entire service, or cancellation of the whole volunteer program. However, managers will, from time to time, identify a volunteer position, or a specific service or activity that has, indeed, become too risky.

When the magnitude of the risk warrants it, radical action should not be avoided.

b) Eliminate The Risk

In this step of the risk management model, when the decision has been taken to proceed with the activity in question, and a significant (ie. intolerable) risk exists, consider changing the operation of the program to reduce the likelihood of risk occurrence.

This step, in essence, is about prevention: do what is reasonable to keep the identified risk from materializing into harm. Here are some examples:

- change procedures, update equipment, implement new rules, set additional boundaries to keep volunteers safe;
- pay closer attention to personnel requirements, increase the minimum qualifications for the position;
- hire security guards or police officers to guard fundraising events where there is a lot of cash on hand (e.g., bingos, carnivals, casinos, etc.);
- have staff, rather than volunteers, feed those patients who are at greatest risk of choking;
- add additional elements to the volunteer screening protocol that require proof of driver's licence, proof of insurance, or proof of any other professional or academic qualification before acceptance to the program is confirmed;
- insist that volunteer activity take place on-site or only in the presence of others; increase training and supervision for volunteers; implement a performance review system that promotes early detection of errors or other substandard performance;
- remove the skateboards from the equipment boxes at the after school program;
- install handrails on all stairs, grab bars in all showers;
- move the petty cash box from the shelf in the main office to a locked cabinet or cupboard to which only two people have a key.

In reality it is virtually impossible to eliminate all risk, but this step encourages the manager to consider all reasonable mechanisms that will reduce the likelihood of loss, injury, or liability.

c) Minimize Harm

Even where all reasonable risk control mechanisms aimed at eliminating risk have been implemented, it is likely that some measure of risk will still be present since it is virtually impossible to eliminate risk entirely.

Here are a few examples of techniques that help to minimize the magnitude of the harm that might result from a "go wrong":

- train fundraising staff and volunteers thoroughly - if the casino is held up, hit the dirt and let 'em have the cash!
- insist on protective clothing, special equipment, safety boots, etc. wherever appropriate;
- allow the client to walk on his own if that is important to his independence and rehabilitation, but insist that he wear a helmet so that if he does fall, his injuries will be less;
- allow residents to smoke if they must, but

only outside. All matches, lighters, and cigarettes are to be handed in at the front desk before bedtime. Install extra sensitive smoke detectors in all bedrooms;

- keep no more than $50.00 in petty cash box at any given time; if it does sprout legs and take a walk, the loss is minimal;
- keep detailed files on all risk management deliberations, and maintain up to date agency policies and procedures, so that if something does go wrong and a legal action is launched, the organization has tangible proof of all it has tried to do to control risks and prevent harm;
- allocate responsibilities in such a way that only staff and volunteers who are calm, stable, and reliable are assigned to positions of first response in the event of a calamity.

d) Transfer Liability

Increasing numbers of charitable organizations across the United States, and latterly, in Canada as well, are facing legal action because of accidents, injuries, abuse, and the allegations of negligence that follow.

When all other avenues have been pursued and every reasonable effort has been made to reduce risks and minimize harm; when the organization believes that it has met its ethical obligations and satisfied its duty of care; when these measures have been implemented and some measure of risk still exists, it is entirely appropriate for the organization to consider its own liability in connection with its operations.

Please note, however, that it is neither legally nor ethically defensible to identify a risk and then move automatically and directly to liability reduction, bypassing all attempts at prevention and control. Rather, everything reasonable should be done to prevent and reduce harm before attention and resources are devoted to liability reduction.

This is not to say that responsible organizations are not obliged to tend to their own liability exposure. On the contrary, and this "Transfer Liability" step in the risk management process directs the organization to move remaining liability to another party, via mechanisms such as memoranda of agreement, save harmless agreements, waivers[10], contracting out, or insurance policies.

Here are some suggestions:

- transport the really ill client by ambulance, not by volunteer driver;
- hire a company to clean the outside of the windows on all above the first floor;
- hire a moving company;
- fully investigate insurance needs; there are many kinds of insurance products available; read and research about insurance, and consult an insurance advisor or broker concerning your organization's insurance requirements;
- institute waivers and save harmless agreements;
- contract the most risky activities to another organization or company that is better qualified, better prepared, and is a specialist in that field.

Whenever liability is transferred to another party, credentials need to be checked thoroughly. When an organization transfers a liability, it retains an accountability to have done so responsibly. Be certain the other organization, firm, or individual is appropriately screened, licensed, insured, bonded, or whatever other qualifications are fitting.

MYTH: "Insurance Will Save Us"

A caution is offered about over-dependence on insurance since one so often hears managers, executive directors, and board members all make the same immediate leap from "Are we at risk?" to "Are we insured?"

Insurance, like waivers, is useful, and maybe even essential, but unfortunately, insurance cannot be relied upon as total protection. There are at least three important reasons not to rely on insurance:

- Insurance does not cover everything. For example, no insurance policy can repair damaged organizational reputation or the shaken faith of supporters after a disaster or an incident of abuse. Insurance will not restore lost public trust, or heal the negative publicity wounds that so often follow tragedies, accidents, and disasters. Insurance can not recover the time and anguish spent defending against a claim;

- Depending on the circumstances and the nature of the insurance coverage, protection may be void in the presence of a finding of negligence;

- The payout of all insurance policies is limited and there is always the potential that the judgement will be for a sum greater than the insurance provides.

There is no question that insurance is an important part of risk management, but smart managers know that insurance covers only a small portion of the loss. Purchase it, but do not depend on it.

Step 4. Review

Risk management is a process - a way of thinking. That means it needs to be continuous. It should never be considered finished.

Build a review of the risk management system into the annual evaluation, policy review, and personnel appraisal systems.

Keep an eye open for changes in legislation, bylaws, community standards, and legal precedents that may alter organizational responsibilities and/or liabilities. Contract the (volunteer) services of a lawyer who agrees to watch out for legal decisions that might impact on the standards that apply to your organization.

Review jobs carefully to ensure that conditions have not changed, or new hazards emerged.

Make certain all equipment and facilities are checked regularly and procedures updated accordingly.

Ask these questions:

- How effective are the controls we put in place?
- Are we still willing to bear the burden of risk we thought acceptable the last time?

The Connection Between Risk Management and Policy Development

The reader may have recognized the integral link between risk control and policy development. Policies and procedures are indispensable in all risk control steps. Policies set the rules and the guidelines about what will be done and how it will be done. They establish the boundaries beyond which volunteers should not stray. They define what is, and is not, acceptable, and specifically what to do in the event of trouble.

Policies, therefore, are critical to risk management as a preventive device. They are as important with respect to reducing liability exposure. They are concrete evidence of all the agency has done to try to identify risks and prevent harm. A comprehensive set of policies demonstrate that the organization has been prudent in assessing risks, setting safety limits and standards, and generally and specifically attending to the health and well-being of those connected to agency services. They are tangible proof of attempts to be diligent, to attend to the duty of care. Policies and procedures are indispensable to risk management.

Summary

Risk management may sound like a lot of work, and it can be. Remember that organizations and their personnel are actually doing much of it all the time, anyway - just not systematically. Following the risk management model outlined in this article prompts the manager to ask not only the right questions, but the right questions *in the right order*, that help to produce risk management solutions throughout the volunteer department, and indeed, throughout the agency.

Remember that there are very few programs that involve no risks and there are very few risky situations that are managed with only one risk control mechanism. Fully evaluating the range of risks that prevail and then systematically exploring all risk reduction mechanisms in a way that generates a properly tailored constellation of those mechanisms for each situation will help organizations operate within their own risk tolerance zones. This kind of comprehensive program review generally produces more productive and satisfying volunteer involvement, and more effective services to consumers as well.

Not engaging in risk management will not make the risks go away. In fact, not managing and controlling risks will merely increase liability, and increase the odds of losing a legal action if or when one is launched.

Don't find yourself waking up one morning saying ***"if only I had paid more attention to ...."***

Endnotes

[1] Graff, Linda L., 1997.

[2] Readers are cautioned that this is an introductory review only. It is not intended as a comprehensive guide to risk management. It is recommended that additional material and expertise be consulted in order to implement an effective risk management process. The "References" section which follows includes a number of excellent risk management resources. It is a good place to start.

[3] A Putnam Investments advertisement, quoted in Price Pritchett's *New Work Habits For A Radically Changing World*, Dallas: Pritchett & Associates, Inc. 1994. p. 3.

[4] Wilson, 1976.

[5] Silver, Nora, *At the Heart: The New Challenge to Community Agencies*, Pleasanton, California: Valley Volunteer Centre, 1988, page 1.

[6] For managers who are working in "Silver's Gap" and need help to convince their administrators, executive directors, or board members of the necessity of risk management in volunteer services, three resources are recommended. The Tremper and Kostin (1993) resource No Surprises is an excellent primer for agency administration (paid and unpaid) since it makes a strong case for risk management for both direct service and administrative (board and committee) volunteering. It is small and easily read. For those administrators who are not likely to read a book, or who might be persuaded to at least listen to a tape on the way to and from work one day, consider the *AudioWorkshop*™ Policy Development For Volunteer Services by Linda L. Graff (1996). It situates the need for policies in risk management and makes a strong case for policy development as an essential risk management device. The third resource to help administrators understand their role in effective volunteer services is Susan Ellis' From The Top Down, a book written specifically for executive directors and board members.

[7] Tremper, Charles, and Gwynne Kostin, *No Surprises: Controlling Risks in Volunteer Programs,* Washington, D.C.: Nonprofit Risk Management Centre, 1993, page 4.

[8] "High" in this instance does not necessarily mean an enormous risk. It simply denotes a risk that requires some form of risk management action. The action may turn out to be minimal.

[9] Tremper, Charles, and Kostin, Gwynne, *No Surprises: Controlling Risks in Volunteer Programs,* Washington, D.C.: Nonprofit Risk Management Centre, 1993, page 5.

[10] For a decade or more, prevailing advice suggested that waivers provided little, if any, protection from liability and were not worth the bother. Current wisdom recommends reconsideration of waivers. They are far from guarantees, but they serve as one piece of tangible evidence of informed consent. Best practice recommends use of waivers but further recommends full application of all other reasonable risk management techniques. In brief, implement waivers where useful, but do not rely on them.

Chapter Review

Risk management is no longer optional in the administration of volunteer resources. This chapter has presented a case for the integration of risk management in all organizational and volunteer services systems. A simple, four-step risk management model has been outlined, with details on how to operationalize its components.

1. Why is it important to consider change as a context for risk management?
2. Explain "Silver's Gap" and how it influences what a manager of volunteers might be required to do to implement risk management in the volunteer department.
3. What are the two central aims of risk management? Are these aims addressed in your agency/organization? Explain.
4. List six techniques for risk identification.
5. Define "likelihood of occurrence" and "magnitude of harm" and explain their application in risk evaluation.
6. What is the connection between policy development and risk management?
7. List three reasons why it is unwise to rely on insurance as a risk management measure.

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CHAPTER 6: FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

This chapter examines the importance of financial management and the financial management tools available to the manager of volunteer services.

This chapter discusses:
- ✔ operational budget
- ✔ cash flow budget
- ✔ cost/benefit analysis
- ✔ financial statements
- ✔ managing petty cash
- ✔ the auditor

This chapter was written by Nicole Dufresne Baker, Controller, Ritchie Feed and Seed (1982) Ltd.

It has always been a thorn in the manager of volunteer services' side to have to worry about financial concerns. After all, how can one concentrate on making the world a better place when something as pragmatic as money and finances interferes? While one might be tempted to skip this chapter because financial management seems such a chore, I encourage you to read this chapter because good financial management is vital to all organizations whether the goal is profit or otherwise.

Indeed, why should the manager of volunteer services have to worry about managing financial resources?

Importance of Good Financial Management

In the private industry where the main goal of companies is to earn a profit and share value, there is a lot of pressure to stretch the dollar. Nevertheless, this does not automatically translate into good financial management; inefficiencies are often passed on to the consumer. Not-for-profit organizations do not have this luxury. Frequently service is provided at a nominal rate. In order to be able to provide services on an on-going basis, the costs and revenues need to be closely monitored.

Since spending is directly related to the organization's goals and objectives, financial results is one way of measuring the performance of a program or activity. Good financial reporting leads to better decision-making.

The success of the not-for-profit organization is dependant on the support of the community it serves. In this regard, the organization has a responsibility to the society at large and as such is expected to act responsibly.

Even in cases where organizations have a good reserve of funds, it is important to carefully manage these resources. Users of the service who count on the organization to continue providing services beyond the immediate and sound financial management will help reach that goal. It may even be possible to extend the service to a larger number of individuals.

Good financial management is consistent with the OAVA[1] standards of practice and is indicative of an organization's commitment to excellence.

Financial management practices also help build credibility with donors. These individuals and corporations will not continue to support a program if they feel their contribution is being squandered or supporting high administrative costs. There are many worthwhile causes and funders expect to see their donation spent appropriately.

Larger funding bodies such as government agencies and central fund-raising agencies are increasingly imposing financial discipline. They request audited financial statements and may even audit an organization to ensure that the funds are being used as intended.

Charitable Organizations

The above is particularly true for charitable organizations. Revenue Canada recognizes a distinct group of not-for-profit organizations as charitable organizations. Revenue Canada uses a broad definition to include all organizations that do good works in social programs, research, medicine, the arts, and others, and assigns these organizations a registered charity number.

The benefit of being a registered charity is the opportunity for attracting donors. Individuals that make donations to charities can claim the donation as a tax credit. In other words, there is a tax advantage to individuals who donate to a registered charity. This credit can only be claimed if accompanied by an official receipt, which includes the registration number, from the charity. The charity is required to track the receipts that have been issued throughout the year and report it to Revenue Canada yearly.

To find out if an organization is a registered charity, one may consult the letterhead or receipts where the registration number might be found.

A receipt is issued not only for cash donations but also for donations in kind. The donation is evaluated at the fair market value for that product or service. For instance, if someone donates artwork, the fair market value would be the evaluation provided by an independent party. On the other hand, if a professional janitor donates his or her services, the value of his time would be measured by how much he would earn if he or she were paid by his regular employer.

This tax advantage for individuals can go a long way in attracting donors.

Financial Management Tools

By closely managing limited financial resources, it will be possible to stretch them as far as possible. Certain financial tools help determine if resources are being used as expected and if there are any potential shortfalls.

Practices such as budgeting are also needed for members of the board of directors or senior management who are not involved in the day-to-day activities of the department. Budgets are a means for monitoring the activities and ensuring that the plan is being followed.

During the course of managing projects and programs, there are a few financial management tools that can assist in managing resources.

The operational budget: A budget is the expression of the operating plan in dollars. It is often used as the basis for obtaining funds and is issued as a tool for controlling expenditures.

Cash flow budget: The cash flow budget estimates the incoming cash receipts against the outgoing cash expenditures on a month-by-month basis.

Cost/benefit analysis: This analysis tool measures whether or not a project will provide a net gain to the organization.

These tools are an essential part of management. During the planning process, various projects will be reviewed and analyzed to determine which ones will be implemented and which ones will be set aside. During this

selection process, the cost/benefit analysis will be used to determine whether or not the project in question will be implemented.

Once the operational plan has been agreed upon, it becomes necessary to prepare an operational budget in order to determine the anticipated revenues and costs.

Finally, during the course of implementing the project, you will want to ensure that there are sufficient funds to fully implement the project. This will require estimating incoming funds in order to determine when expenditures can be made. This exercise consists of preparing a cash flow budget.

The operational budget

The operational budget represents the operating plan for a particular program or service expressed in dollars.

Frequency

Budgets are an integral part of the planning and control process and are typically prepared on a yearly basis. The budget summarizes the activities for the year and will be used later on to measure the performance, or the extent to which actual operations met expectations.

The operational budget summarizes the revenue and expenses for the year resulting in a net excess or net deficit. The following is an example of an operating budget

Format

Revenues are categorized by type and if relevant, by source. The details help management assess the relative success of each fund-raising activity and/or obtaining monies from funding organizations. It will also indicate the extent of the organization's dependency on one or more sources of revenue. The level of detail is determined by the relative importance of the items to the decision-making process..

For instance, interest may be earned on surplus cash throughout the year but experience shows that it is volatile and not very significant in relation to the other sources of revenue. As such, it may not be significant enough to

NFP Organization - Volunteer Services Budget for the year ended Dec 31, 19xx	
Revenues	
Allocation from program funds	36,000
Donations	5,000
Total revenues	*41,000*
Expenses	
Salaries and benefits	30,000
Office supplies	1,000
Volunteer newsletter	5,000
Recognition	2,000
Training	2,000
Enabling fund	500
Uniforms	400
Total expenses	*40,900*
Excess of revenue over expenses	**100**

include as a separate item in the budget and may be grouped with miscellaneous income.

Similarly, expenses are categorized according to their nature. There should be sufficient detail to provide useful information to the decision-maker. The greater the detail, the greater the amount of control that can be exercised.

One should guard against providing too much detail, however, as this makes it difficult to distinguish the important issues. For instance, providing a schedule supporting the cost of office supplies is likely too detailed considering its relative importance to the cost of the program. It could become difficult to identify the real trouble areas and, consequently, to make the best decision. Budgeting should be kept as simple as possible.

Content

Once the format for the budget has been agreed upon, the next step is to come up with the numbers. This is the most challenging aspect of the budget. Possible sources of information are previous year's operational results and budget and, in some cases, budgets of other organizations. Other people within the organization may also have some suggestions or valuable input.

Note that while last year's operational results are a good source of information, it is unlikely that the current year's results will be exactly the same. Last year's results can be used as a basis and adjusted to reflect the operational plan for the current year as well as any intended changes. The budget is a reflection of stated goals and approved plans.

It is useful to document all assumptions and estimates. This will assist in preparing next year's budget, but more importantly, it will help analyze results.

The following is a summary of estimates and assumptions used for calculating the budget in the previous example.

Budget assumptions
Allocation from program funds Per head of program, our budget will be same as last year with a cut-back of 10%. Last year's budget was $44,000.
Donations revenue A local office supply store has agreed to donate office supplies as well as the supplies needed for the newsletter.
Salaries and benefits Represents full year salary for manager of volunteer services.
Office supplies Usage expected to be similar to last year's. Use last year's operational result.
Volunteer newsletter 6 newsletters per year at a cost of $833 per newsletter. Budget: 6 x $833
Recognition Estimate based on last year's expenditures.
Training See next year's training schedule; includes one training session on first-aid; client-service training; other.
Enabling funds Includes cost of taxi chits, bus fare, and parking.
Uniforms $20 per volunteer @ 20 volunteers.

The difficult part will be to have a reasonable estimate of expenses. The best place to start is to identify the expense that will likely be the largest. This is what is called the "cost driver". This item drives the budget because the smallest of variances regarding this expense will have a significant effect on the overall budget. It will also influence the resources available to distribute among the other expenditures.

For instance, the manager has the responsibility of establishing a budget for setting up the volunteer lounge. The goal is to have a lounge that provides a place for the volunteers to rest comfortably, possibly have lunch or a snack and provide a gathering place for casual conversation. The room would likely contain counter space with a sink, furniture such as tables, chairs and a sofa. It would have a refrigerator, possibly a microwave and some small appliances and kitchen supplies.

Assuming that everything is purchased new, a refrigerator is likely to be the most expensive item. The cost of these items will determine the availability of funds for the other supplies in the lounge. Put another way, if the budget will influence the request for funds, it will be important to have the cost of furniture pinned down, otherwise funds will run out quickly. This is also an opportunity to identify additional requirements or to explore other ways of funding supplies such as donations.

There are usually relationships between certain budget items. For instance, the cost of the member newsletter will be directly related to the number of members. It will also affect the membership revenue. There should be consistency among these items; if membership revenue is expected to increase than so should the newsletter costs.

There may be situations where there are no sources of information to prepare the budget, usually because the program is so new that there are no bench marks or points of reference.

Assumptions will have to be made in order to make reasonable estimates. The revenue can be determined by estimating the number of participants and multiplying by the rate per person or may be as straightforward as the funds that have been authorized.

Managing the budget

The budget is not a document that should be prepared, laminated and stored away for prosperity. It is document that must be used as a reference throughout the management process. As in the operational plan, it should be dog-eared and marked-up by the end of the planning cycle.

As with any other plan, the operational goals will be reviewed and evaluated against the budget. Differences and discrepancies will need to be explained and if necessary, mid-course adjustments made. It is an opportunity to determine whether operations are yielding their expected results.

If there are significant differences between operations and the budget, this could be an indication that the plan is not being followed. It can also draw attention to weaknesses in the budget estimates.

On the other hand, one may find that certain elements did not cost as much as expected; this may provide additional resources for other activities. If the costs are higher than expected, it may be necessary to reduce some of the activities or obtain additional funds in order to meet all commitments.

The differences can also be attributed to an accounting error and should be brought to the attention of the accounting department.

Budgeting is an integral part of the management cycle. The continued process of preparing budgets and evaluating operations will result in the detection of trends which help the manager understand the operating environment even better. As this cycle continues, the process will become easier, and more importantly, the budgets will become more reliable.

Finally, the budget can also serve another purpose of a communication tool. Since it summarizes the planned activities for the next year, it is a useful document for the staff and volunteers to see. The more they know about their organization, the more they can do for the organization.

Cash Flow Budget

Cash flows in and out like the tide and needs to be managed. There are many documented cases where projects were financially successful but had to be cancelled because the organization ran out of funds. The goal is to avoid cash shortages. The cash flow budget is the best tool for managing this resource because it outlines the timing of revenue and expenses. It helps to plan spending to ensure that funds are available when needed. It will also identify those times where financing may be required and allow the manager to take the necessary steps ahead of time. In those lucky cases, there may be excesses that can be invested and thus increase revenues.

As explained earlier, a cash flow budget tracks incoming receipts against out-going cash expenditures. It is usually divided on a month-by-month basis which is consistent with most revenue and payment cycles, i.e. most bills are paid on monthly basis.

As illustrated on the next page, the first part of the cash flow budget determines incoming cash while the second half represents cash usage. The net difference represents a net increase or decrease in cash and then will determine the available cash at the end of the month. The end of month balance becomes the starting point for the next month.

Note that over the year the cash position improved by $1,500 which corresponds to the surplus forecasted in the operational budget shown in the previous example. The surplus represents unused funds and in this example, these funds are in the form of cash.

The estimated bank balance should be compared to actual results and significant differences investigated. Where necessary, changes in spending patterns will have to be made or the transfer of temporary funds from another program might be required.

What if the manager does not have a budget?

In some cases you may be responsible for a program or activity but not have an official budget. It is still important to have a good sense of your program's financial contributions as well as its costs.

The organization may have financial reports that one might access. This will give the manager a sense of how well the program is measuring up.

The manager needs to be in a position to illustrate the value of the program to senior management as well as the need for resources, be it financial or human resources.

Summary of assumptions: Their effect on the monthly cash flow estimates

Description	Budget	Assumptions	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Opening cash balance			1000	600	1900	500	1800	1400	700	350	1700	-100	1200	900
Revenues Allocation Donations	 36000 5000	The head of program has indicated that we will be getting our funds in 12 instalments. It is assumed that donations will be received every 2 months..	3000	3000 1000	3000	3000 1000	3000	3000 1000	3000	3000 1000	3000	3000 1000	3000	3000
Available for expenses	41000		3000	4000	3000	4000	3000	4000	3000	4000	3000	4000	3000	3000
Expenses Salaries	30000	Salaries are earned evenly throughout the year.	2500	2500	2500	2500	2500	2500	2500	2500	2500	2500	2500	2500
Office	1000	Office supplies are replenished every other month.		150		150		150		150		150		250
Newsletter	5000	Newsletters are sent out every two months starting in Jan.	850		850		850		850		850		750	
Recognition	2000	Two major events - one in Jun and one in Sep.						1000			1000			
Training	2000	Training usually take place in Mar and Jun.			1000			1000						
Enabling Fund	500	Spread evenly throughout the year excluding Jul and Aug.	50	50	50	50	50	50			50	50	50	50
Uniforms	400	Provided at the beginning of the season.									400			
Total cash expenditures	40900		3400	2700	4400	2700	3400	4700	3350	2650	4800	2700	3300	2800
Increase (decrease) in cash			-400	1300	-1400	1300	-400	-700	-350	1350	-1800	1300	-300	200
Net cash balance			600	1900	500	1800	1400	700	350	1700	-100	1200	900	1100

Cost/benefit analysis

Cost/benefit analysis is the exercise of reviewing the cost of a project or investment and weighing it against the benefits it will bring. This type of analysis should only be performed for the proposed projects that have already been subjected to a pre-selection based on stated mission and goals. Does the project fall within the organization's mandate?

A cost/benefit analysis is incomplete unless it covers a quantitative and a qualitative analysis.

Quantitative analysis

The first step in the quantitative analysis is to quantify the benefits generated by the activity. It could be a 30% increase in membership revenue or a commitment for additional donations. It may be the reduction in costs of printing the newsletter. These benefits have to be weighed against the cost.

The next step consists of assessing the cost of implementing the project. In this case, the incremental costs incurred to realize this project are included, that is the additional cost that will be incurred due to the implementation of the project. Another way of looking at it is by asking the question, will this cost be incurred if the project is not implemented?

Another cost that is often overlooked when making these types of decisions is the opportunity cost. This represents the revenues or savings that will be given up or in order to implement the project. For instance, interest revenue lost when money is spent represents an opportunity cost. There may be systems in place that already track this information, if so, the manager should review them. In some cases the information is not available and it may be necessary for the manager to institute his or her own record-keeping.

If the benefits exceed the costs of the project, then on a quantitative basis, the project should be recommended. This difference should be significant. A slight excess of benefit over cost is not an overwhelming endorsement and may simply represent an estimation error. The results should be convincing before further steps are taken. The planning committee may want to establish a minimum requirement that has to be met in order to justify further analysis.

Qualitative analysis

The acceptability of a project is not determined by numbers alone. There are other factors, though difficult to measure in dollars, to be considered. They can include such things as reputation, furthering the corporate mandate, staf morale, membership perception, membership goodwill, relationship with stakeholders and volunteers. The review of these factors is called the qualitative analysis.

Priority ratings could be attributed to these factors to provide some form of measurement. A value is attributed to each criteria and then the project is assessed on a scale of (e.g. 1 to 5) and a weighted average is calculated. Projects that score high on the priority rating would be recommended.

In cases where projects are implemented, actual results should be compared to the analysis to evaluate the reliability of the analysis and determine which improvements could be applied to the next analysis.

Measuring Volunteer Contribution

In the course of assessing the value of one's program, one must not forget the economic contribution of volunteers. The manager needs to determine the cost of obtaining the services provided as though the volunteers were not there. In other words, how much it would cost to obtain counsellors rather than volunteers in a palliative care unit. Once an hourly rate is determined, it will be multiplied by the number of person-hours provided by volunteers. The table below provides a guideline for rates that can be used. The manager is now able to attribute a dollar value to the service.

Location	Avg hourly rate
Canada	$15.84
Newfoundland	$16.34
PEI	$12.42
Nova Scotia	$13.99
New Brunswick	$13.37
Québec	$16.03
Ontario	$16.73
Manitoba	$13.96
Saskatchewan	$13.78
Alberta	$14.76
British Columbia	$15.55

Average hourly wage in community, business, and personal services, by province. (1)

One element which should not be forgotten is those factors that cannot be measured, such as community support. Strong volunteer involvement is a good indication of community support and that should be brought to the attention of senior management.

Financial Statements

Regardless of their level, managers will be exposed to financial statements, either the ones from their own organization, financial statements for their program or division, or financial statements of funding organizations. These documents can provide a wealth of information when they are given a closer look. Financial statements are typically prepared on an annual basis. Some organizations will also prepare financial statements on a monthly basis to get a better understanding of their financial situation.

The most common financial statements are:

- a balance sheet, and
- a statement of revenues and expenses.

Balance sheet

The balance sheet tells us the financial position of the organization at a given date. It is divided into two sections:

- assets, and
- liabilities and equity.

The Society for the Appreciation of the Cashew *Balance Sheet*		
Assets	19X1	19X0
Current assets		
Cash	$29,558.	$20,338.
Accounts receivable	20,000.	00.
Inventory	2,300.	1,800.
	51,858.	22,138.
Computer equipment	10,000.	
Less: accumulated depreciation	(2,000.)	00.
	8,000.	
Total assets	$59,858.	$22,138.
Liabilities and Surplus		
Current liabilities		
Bank loan (Note 3)	$18,000.	$ 00.
Accounts payable	5,134.	2,300.
	23,134.	2,300.
Accumulated surplus	36,724.	19,838.
Total liabilities and surplus	$59,858.	$22,138.

Assets represent those items which have future value. Cash, office equipment and monies receivable by the organization all examples of assets.

Liabilities are obligations of the organization. They usually consist of goods and services received but not yet paid for (i.e. accounts payable) and any other debts.

Equity represents the accumulated surplus from operations over time.

On the balance sheet, assets should equal liabilities plus equity. In other words, assets less liabilities is the equity or surplus.

A balance sheet will determine the following aspects of the program's financial situation:

- Does the program or department have sufficient liquidity, i.e. is there sufficient cash on hand to meet short term obligations? The cash along with items that are easily converted into cash should be compared to short term obligations.
- In the case of a tuck shop for instance, are accounts receivable being collected or are they remaining stagnant? This question is best answered by reviewing the average number of days it takes to collect on receivables as well as analyze the trend.

Ideally, this average should be kept as low as possible.

- Are the accounts payable being paid on a timely basis? By reviewing the average number of days before an invoice is paid, the manager can get a sense of whether or not the suppliers are being paid on a timely basis. Suppliers need to be kept happy in order to continue the goodwill between the two parties as well as avoid paying any unnecessary finance charges.

Finally the surplus. The entity needs sufficient surplus to meet all obligations that would arise from the termination of the program such as final rent payments and severance. As well, the entity may want to accumulate surplus for future projects. These funds should be allocated in a separate reserve.

The statement of revenues and expenses

This financial statement summarizes the operations over a certain period whether monthly, quarterly or for the year. This statement outlines the revenue earned and the expenses incurred during the period and tells the reader whether a surplus or deficit has resulted.

The results should be compared to the budget in order to assess the extent to which the organization is operating within stated plans. It also tells whether or not things happened as expected.

The Society for the Appreciation of the Cashew
Statement of Revenues, Expenses and Accumulated Surplus
For the year ended

	19X1	19X0
Membership revenues	$73,410.	$31,625.
Expenses		
Salaries	34,412.	00.
Rent	14,400.	7,200.
Telephone	3,159.	1,743.
Depreciation	2,000.	00.
Professional fees	1,500.	500.
Interest	495.	00.
Office supplies	389.	2,344.
Miscellaneous	169.	00.
	56,524.	11,787.
Net operations	16,886.	19,838.
Accumulated surplus, beginning of year	19,838.	00.
Accumulated surplus, end of year	$36,724.	$19,838.

Financial statements will not likely provide the definitive answer but will lead the manager to ask the right questions and in the end, obtain more information about the entity.

Managing Petty Cash

In some situations the manager is given a small amount of cash to be used for small, incidental expenditures; this is called petty cash. Monies taken out and returned to the fund are tracked using a ledger with multi-columns. A separate column is used to record the date of the transaction, description, incoming, outgoing and total; much like a cheque book. All transactions should be supported by a receipt or other documentation. See the following example.

Date	Description	Ref	Incoming	Outgoing	Balance
	starting balance				$100.00
Jan 5	postage stamps	1-1		$4.30	$95.70
Apr 19	office supplies	4-1		$33.99	$61.71
May 9	courier charge	5-1		$5.99	$55.72
Jun 26	head office	6-1	$44.28		$100.00

From time to time, a request is made for a replenishment of funds. Receipts need to submitted to support the request. For easy reference, an identification number can be put on the receipt as well as in the register.

The Auditor

Most organizations are subjected to external financial audits. This means that an outside auditor has been hired to ensure that the financial statements prepared by management are presented fairly.

During the course of the audit, the auditor will want to obtain information on various aspects of the organization and may interview the manager of volunteers in order to become more familiar with the service. In cases where the manager is responsible for a certain portion of the budget, they may be required to confirm the financial information reported by senior management regarding their department.

The best way to get a better understanding of the goals and intentions of the auditor is to be direct and ask them questions. While they will not reveal confidential information, they should be in a position to help the manager understand the process.

Auditors are people too. One should not hesitate to discuss issues with them.

Endnotes

1. Prepared by The Centre for International Statistics using *Statistics Canada Employment, Earnings and Hours, June 1993*, Ottawa: Minister of Industry, Science and Technology, 1993, catalogue no. 72-002.

2. From: Dufresne Baker, Nicole, *Taking Care of "Cash"ews*, Carp, Ontario: Johnstone Training and Consultation (JTC) Inc., 1992.

[1] In 1998, the Ontario Association for Volunteer Administration (OAVA) merged with the Ontario Directors of Volunteers in Healthcare (ODVH) to form Professional Administrators of Volunteer Resources - Ontario (PAVR-O).

Chapter Review

Good financial management is an achievable goal with a little experience and good work habits.

1. Briefly outline the benefits of good financial management.
2. Obtain, if available, the budget and statement of operations for your program or service and review it. How do the results compare to the budget? Do changes need to be made to next year's plan?
3. Develop a budget for your program or service. Determine which cost is the "cost driver" and quantify it.
4. Assess the value of your volunteers in dollars by quantifying the hours of volunteer services provided and multiplying it by the rate one would use in the market place for such services.

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CHAPTER 7: PREPARING FOR VOLUNTEERS

KEY POINTS:

This chapter will take managers of volunteers through the various elements needed for effective planning in preparing for volunteers both in large organizations and small agencies.

This chapter will include:
- ✔ getting management support
- ✔ consulting with staff
- ✔ forms and records
- ✔ placement descriptions
- ✔ assessing needs for space and equipment
- ✔ comparing notes with similar agencies

This chapter was written by Shirley Jenkins Co-ordinator of Volunteers at the Ottawa-Carleton Health Department.

Preparing for volunteers can be a daunting task and careful planning up front is crucial to its success. Too often this phase is not carefully thought out and leads to difficulties down the road. Rushing too quickly to get volunteers without all the necessary elements in place can lead to frustration and failure. Each element is like a building block and together these elements provide the structure for an effective volunteer service. This chapter will take managers of volunteers through the various elements needed for effective planning in preparing for volunteers both in large organizations and small agencies.

Getting Management Support

A key element to the success of every volunteer service is the endorsement of or "buying in" at all levels, particularly management. Promoting volunteer involvement to management can be a challenging responsibility and the approach will vary from organization to organization.

Advocating for the position of Manager of Volunteer Services

The importance management puts on the position of the Manager of Volunteer Services often reflects the significance the organization puts on the volunteer service as a whole. Paying a "lip service" type of endorsement is not enough. Volunteer services provide an incredible wealth of human resources and must be recognized as a vital part of the organization. The task of managing volunteers is huge and requires competent skills. Too often it is seen as a task which can be done by personnel with no specialized training. Albeit that coordination is an important function of most managers of volunteer services, the managerial function is sometimes downplayed by both management and human resources departments alike. Once hired, managers of volunteer services must take the responsibility to advocate for the profession, provide leadership and strive to be included in the managerial team. Here are a few tips which may be helpful. The manager should:

- take every opportunity to make management aware that there are standards and practices for managers of volunteer services and provide a copy of Ontario Association for Volunteer Administration (OAVA)[1] Standards and Practices to executive directors, program managers;[2]
- ask to be included in all decisions pertaining to volunteer involvement within the organization;
- advocate for all aspects of the volunteer service at every opportunity, including such things as an appropriate location for the office for the Manager of Volunteer Services, adequate resources to run the program, better "perks" for the volunteers, meaningful tasks, etc.;
- be pro-active and familiar with all factors that could potentially impact on the volunteer service; and
- be the expert and resource person in matters relating to volunteer management for the organization.

Preparing To Seek Management Approval

Before setting out to "sell" a volunteer service to any level of management be it the CEO, Executive Director, Program Manager, Director or even an immediate boss, the manager should prepare for any questions management may have regarding volunteers in the organization. Four key areas will undoubtedly arise:

1. the rationale of volunteer involvement;
2. the benefits volunteers bring to the organization;
3. the drawbacks regarding volunteer involvement; and
4. the cost to the organization.

Rationale of volunteer involvement

The Manager of Volunteer Services must ask: "If money was no object, would volunteers still be included in our organization and why?"

Just as a mission statement is the essence of every organization, the rationale of volunteer involvement is the essence of every volunteer department. Yet, it is amazing how many organizations, even those that can't function without volunteers, cannot articulate it.

Managers of volunteers must first of all be clear why their organization needs and wants volunteers. They must look at what the organization is all about, the organization's goals and objectives and how volunteers fit in the picture. Management will want to know all this, as well as, how volunteers will impact on the organization. Managers of volunteers must take the time to carefully think this through and consult with the appropriate personnel to come up with a clear and apropos rationale. Here are two samples of rationales for volunteer involvement which might be helpful.

Our agency encourages the teamwork of salaried staff and volunteers so that we can offer our consumers the best services possible. Volunteers contribute their unique talents, skills and knowledge of our community to provide personalized attention to consumers, enable the salaried staff to concentrate on the work for which they were trained, and educate the public about our organization and its cause.[3]

> *Population based approaches to health promotion increasingly are relying on community-based organizations and citizens to plan and carry out the work to educate, develop policy and make environment/cultural changes to support healthful behaviour. This focus is well based in experience at the community level which indicates that involvement and leadership from community members is essential for effective, sustainable initiatives to occur. The participation of volunteers may be one of the most effective means of diffusing knowledge and producing community-wide cultural change.*

> *A healthier Ottawa-Carleton community can be achieved by passing on information and skills to community members and receiving their valuable input. Volunteers are partners in programs; their participation is intended to enrich and enhance program activities and not to replace staff roles. Volunteers are an integral part of a team. Without them, we would be unable to offer the outstanding quality of programming that we provide to our clients*[4]

Benefits volunteers bring to the organization

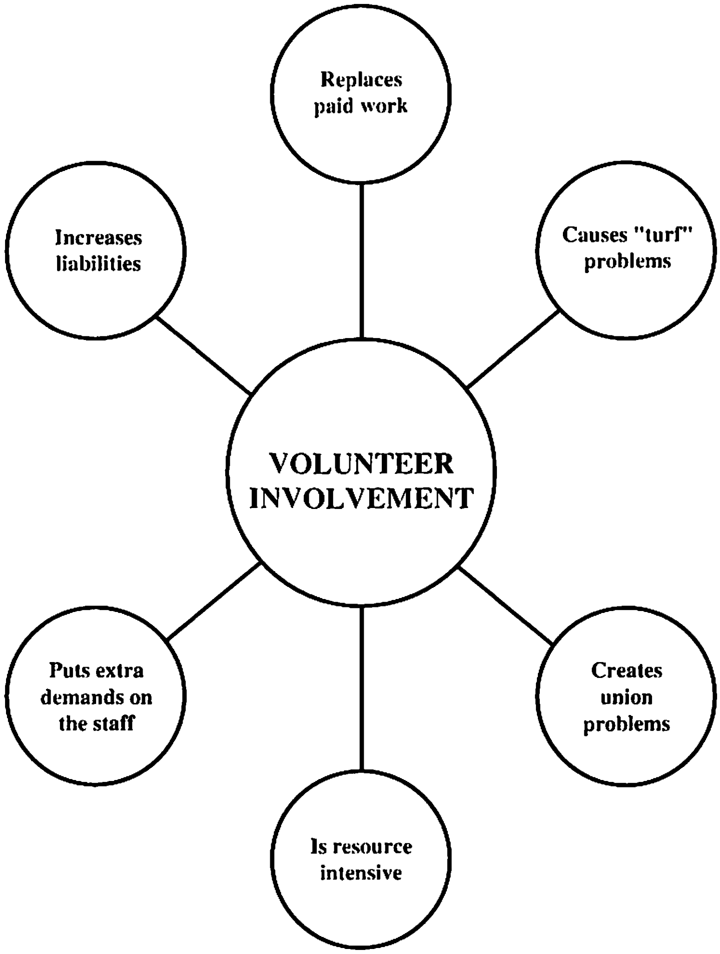
Once the rationale for volunteer involvement has been defined, the impact volunteers will have on the organization needs to be explored. A good exercise to prepare for this is to list all the pros and cons of volunteer involvement on paper. This can produce surprising results, often times with the list of benefits clearly outnumbering the list of drawbacks. To obtain a comprehensive list it is important to link with members of the staff, volunteers, and other stakeholders to get their views of how they see volunteers benefiting the organization. Benefits will vary from organization to organization. Some organizations clearly can't function without volunteers and depend on them for fund raising and service delivery. Others depend on volunteers to provide input to the organization's programs, as advocates for their cause, as representatives of the community, as change agents, and the list goes on and on. Managers must be creative and think of how to best present the benefits to get the endorsement of management. An example is to create a volunteer wheel which is a handy tool to have for presentations to management, for orientations or for marketing the volunteer service in general. Below is an example of one which has been used in a health organization.[5]

Drawbacks regarding volunteer involvement

No matter how astute a manager of volunteer services is at selling the many benefits of volunteer involvement to management, organizations will still need to consider the drawbacks to volunteer involvement. The manager must be pro-active and prepared to respond to management about such issues as liability risks, union considerations, costs, staff implications, etc. As most of these issues will be covered at length in other chapters, I will not elaborate on these here. Below is a volunteer wheel depicting common drawbacks encountered by many organizations.

Cost to the organization

Volunteers are sometimes seen as free labour and with that concept comes the notion that there is very little expense attached to the volunteer service or that volunteers are not worth much. It is of benefit to submit a budget to management outlining all the foreseen costs associated with setting up and maintaining a volunteer service. Too often managers of volunteers are left with very few financial



resources for supporting the volunteers. This leads to frustration, apathy and volunteer drop-out. Costs vary depending on the number and role of volunteers but generally a volunteer budget includes:

a. the salary of a full or part time manager of volunteer service and clerical support;
b. office space, equipment and supplies;
c. reimbursements for out of pocket expenses e.g. parking, mileage, uniforms, baby sitting, meals, etc.;
d. volunteer recognition;
e. marketing, e.g. recruitment and campaign ads, printing expenses, brochures, etc.;
f. training, e.g. trainers, rooms, equipment, parking, etc.;
g. professional development for both staff and volunteers e.g. conferences, in-services, etc.;
h. volunteer liability insurance; and
i. administration funds, e.g. postage, photocopies, phone bills, etc.[6]

Approaching management

Once the preparatory work has been

completed, determining how best to approach management comes next. There are various ways of doing this depending on the type and size of the organization.

Getting Board Approval

If an organization is run by a board of directors it will be necessary to seek the support of the Executive Director and ask him or her to make the board aware of the volunteer contributions and what that entails. The Manager of Volunteer Services will brief the Executive Director so that his or her information is current and accurate. The manager can also suggest doing a joint presentation with the Executive Director. That way the Executive Director can answer questions related to the organization itself and the manager can answer the volunteer specific questions. One point to consider is that the people sitting on a board of directors are most likely volunteers themselves. This can be beneficial. Nonetheless, the board may have concerns regarding volunteer liabilities and accountabilities as they shoulder the responsibilities.

Establishing A Volunteer Services Advisory Committee

The establishment of a volunteer services advisory committee is an effective way of reaching management in larger organizations, especially if on-going approval of volunteer policies and activities is needed at a very senior level. The purpose of this committee is to advocate for volunteer involvement in the organization and to make recommendations to senior management on such things as union, liability, financial and legal volunteer issues once the volunteer service has been established. It is important to have people on this committee who can make the appropriate decisions and to have at least one member who can bring the volunteer issues to the table at senior management meetings. Membership on this committee might include:

- the Manager of Volunteer Services,
- the direct supervisor of the Manager of Volunteer Services,
- program supervisors,
- staff representatives,
- volunteer representatives,
- union representative, and
- other resource persons on a needs basis.

The first step is to formulate terms of reference for the committee. Important points to include in the terms of reference are: goals and objectives of the committee, accountability, membership, and proceedings of the committee.

The goals and objectives will be specific to each organization but might include:

Goal #1: To link with senior management for approval of policies and operations relating to volunteer services.

Goal #2: To provide advice and recommendations on policies and operations related to volunteer services to all programs who work with volunteers.

Objectives:

- *To review and update guidelines and standards for management of volunteers.*
- *To review, recommend and update volunteer policies.*
- *To recommend and monitor guidelines regarding volunteer roles and responsibilities within a unionized environment.*

- *To propose solutions to address legal and liability issues specific to the management of volunteers.*[7]

The appropriate person to chair this committee is the Manager of Volunteer Services as she/ he is aware of emerging needs that have to be addressed.

Duties of the Chair include:

- *calling and presiding over meetings;*
- *ensuring that agendas and background materials are prepared and distributed in advance of the meeting;*
- *ensuring that minutes are prepared and distributed;*
- *responsibility for follow-up action; and*
- *preparing draft proposal/policy for committee to review.*

The committee may decide to meet quarterly or on a needs basis. The smooth running of this committee creates a win-win situation by allowing staff and management input in the process of managing volunteers. This fosters a trusting and supportive relationship.

Approaching management on an ongoing basis

It is wise to keep management informed as to what is going on at all times. Managers should:

- See that volunteer service annual reports are distributed to all levels of management, boards of directors, immediate supervisors and staff.
- Circulate volunteer newsletters to all levels of management, boards of directors and throughout the organization.
- Include volunteer policies in the corporate policies of the organization.
- Make sure that the volunteer service is included on the organizational chart. Sue Ellis, in her book entitled *From The Top Down* suggests creating a *functioning* organizational chart by indicating employees with circles or squares and volunteers with a differently shaped box. She stresses using titles when referring to volunteers.[8]
- Invite senior management and boards of directors to volunteer recognition events.

Consulting With Staff

Staff consultations should be done before involving volunteers in the organization and on an on-going basis to ensure healthy staff/ volunteer working relationships.

How to get staff on board

Getting staff on board is not always an easy feat but can be a very challenging and rewarding task. The Manager of Volunteer Services should:

- instil positive attitudes,
- clarify the purpose of volunteer involvement;
- set parameters, and
- dispel myths of working with volunteers.

> "If you can get staff to have a positive attitude toward working with volunteers, you are half-way there." (Shirley Jenkins, 1997)

Instilling positive attitudes

Positive attitudes towards working with volunteers is of vital importance and sets the tone for good working relationships. However, these do not always come naturally and often times the forging of positive attitudes becomes a task for the Manager of Volunteer Services. Every opportunity must be taken to promote these amongst the staff and at in-services. A list of positive attitudes can even be posted in the foyer of the organization for all to see. Fostering positive attitudes does not always happen overnight and will require patience. Sometimes a change will only occur after staff and volunteers have worked with each other for some time and both parties begin to trust one another.

In their book entitled, *No Excuses, The Team Approach to Volunteer Management* , Susan Ellis and Katherine Noyes list various attitudes which are particularly helpful. These can be adapted to suit different organizations and include:

- belief in the value of volunteers;
- recognition of people's potential capabilities, rather than their formal credentials;
- desire to make the program work to its fullest potential;
- openness to diversity of volunteers: ages, backgrounds, ideas, etc.;
- willingness to stand up for the rights of volunteers; and
- enjoyment of working with volunteers (its fun!).[9]

Clarifying the purpose of volunteer involvement

> "The mixing of volunteers and paid staff adds spice to any organization." (Shirley Jenkins, 1997)

Staff may have difficulty buying into the concept of volunteer involvement because they are not aware of, or have misunderstood, the reason for the organization's commitment to volunteerism. Organizations generally want to include volunteers because they:

- represent the community and as such bring varied input and energy;
- enhance program components;
- provide a supporting role for professionals;
- fulfil the organization's mandate;
- provide an extra pair of hands; and
- are clients or consumers wishing to contribute to the organization.

The blending of community members and paid staff, professional or otherwise, creates a more diversified and vibrant organization. Sometimes it takes awhile for staff to appreciate the benefits and synergy that volunteers bring to an organization. Managers of volunteers need to outline the organization's commitment to volunteerism at volunteer orientations, staff in-services, and when doing presentations about volunteer services. What really works is to ask a staff member, who has personally experienced the synergy of working with volunteers, to act as a "champion" to promote volunteerism with co-workers.

Setting parameters

It is unethical to replace staff positions with volunteers.

There can be various reasons why staff members have difficulty working alongside volunteers and may not want them in the organization. Staff may feel that volunteers:

- encroach on their territory;
- are not fully qualified to do the job;
- will "steal" their jobs.

Strategies to overcome this include:

- establishing policies defining the parameters of volunteer involvement;
- creating clear placement descriptions for volunteers;
- getting union approval for volunteer roles; and
- obtaining a commitment from management that paid staff will not be replaced by volunteers.

In these times of downsizing, cutbacks and workfare, this threat looms larger than ever. Managers of volunteer services are called upon to place volunteers in new territories which may impact on the staff, volunteers and clients. More than ever guidelines are needed to avoid placing volunteers in areas that will cause union conflicts or in inappropriate territory.

In light of this, a working group consisting of representatives from the volunteer and union sectors developed the paper "Who Does What and Why? - A Discussion Paper on the Role of Volunteers and Paid Workers in Non-profit Organizations and Public Institutions" and circulated it to a number of people working in the field of volunteerism for comments. From that "The Principles on the Role of Volunteers and Paid Workers in Non-profit Organizations and Public Institutions" evolved. These principles have been endorsed by various organizations including the Ontario Association of Volunteer Administration (OAVA) and Ontario Association of Directors of Volunteers in Healthcare Services (ODVH)[10] and will assist managers of volunteers in placing volunteers.
The principles are listed below and include the following:

1. *Voluntary activity is that which is undertaken*

   a. by choice;
   b. in service to individuals informally or through organizations; and
   c. without salary or wage.
   People required to do unpaid mandatory service placements such as community service orders, co-op placements, or workfare assignments, etc., are not volunteers.
2. *Social and fiscal policy must create an environment in which such activity can occur. This means public policies which make for full employment at decent wages, accessible public education and training, housing, a strong safety net, food, peace, a clean environment and a safe workplace. Both paid work and voluntary community service promote self-esteem and skills development.*
3. *There is a need for strong stable public services adequately funded and maintained providing essential and complementary services and programs to all Canadians through non-profit organizations and public institutions.*
4. *Within this web of services and programs, there is room and appropriate roles for both paid workers and volunteers.*
5. *Society must recognise the value of volunteer activity in complementing public services and the need for stable support for the infrastructure of*

volunteerism which includes volunteer centres and the professional administration of volunteer programs.

6. *There is a need for balance and appropriate division between the role of volunteers along with paid workers, support for the maintenance of that distinction and recognition of the value of both volunteer and paid work.*
7. *Profits should not be made from the promotion of voluntary activity or the placement of volunteers.*
8. *In unionised workplaces the collective agreement provides the dispute resolution process.*
9. *Co-operative decisions about the role of volunteers must be made within the above principles. Decisions shall be based on specific criteria concerning the levels, types and conditions of voluntary activities.*

Dispelling myths of working with volunteers

People who volunteer want to do a good job.

Some people often have preconceived ideas about volunteers that are not factual. Common myths are that volunteers:

- are not dependable,
- take too much time,
- have ulterior motives,
- are there to do the "dirty work", and
- are free labour.

Dispelling these myths takes time. Volunteers are generally very eager and willing to help wherever they can. What they need from the staff is proper direction, respect and an unbiased chance to do a good job. To accomplish this managers of volunteers need to:

- ensure that volunteers get proper training, including orientations and on the job training;
- involve staff in the training process as much as possible as this helps bond staff and volunteers;
- develop proper schedules and a backup system in case volunteers can't make their shift;
- give staff an opportunity to have input in developing appropriate placement descriptions for the volunteers;
- do evaluations to determine staff and volunteer satisfaction; and
- invite staff to volunteer recognition and social events.

Consultations with staff can be done through needs assessments and by establishing a volunteer services team.

Needs Assessments

Needs assessments can be conducted prior to establishing a volunteer service or periodically thereafter to analyze many facets of volunteer involvement. It can be conducted with staff, volunteers or stakeholders. Kinds of information needs assessments provide include:

- whether or not an organization should include volunteers;
- how volunteers can be incorporated within the organization;
- how staff sees the role of volunteers within the organization;
- which areas or programs can most benefit from having volunteer involvement;
- how open staff is in working with volunteers;

- what kind of assistance is needed for staff to work more effectively with volunteers; and
- what resources are needed to support the volunteers.

Needs assessments are most often carried out by means of a **questionnaire** but can also be done by conducting **focus groups**. When formulating a needs assessment, managers of volunteers must first determine what kinds of information to obtain, who the target is, and design the questionnaire accordingly.

When designing a questionnaire, it may be helpful to think of the following:

- Managers must think about which activities are most important in working towards the volunteer service's outcomes, when considering possible questions,.
- It is important to choose questions that are high priority for the Manager of Volunteer Services and other stakeholders.
- The **smart** principle should be applied to each of the priority questions:
  Specific: Is the question specific? Is it clear?
  Measurable: Can the question be answered?
  Actionable: Will the answers to the questions asked provide the information needed to make decisions about the volunteer service?
  Relevant: Are there questions that are simply "nice to know" as opposed to "need to know".
  Timely: Is it important to ask the question now?
- Confidentiality should be stressed for ethical reasons and also to obtain frank answers.
- If the questionnaire is being mailed out, a self-stamped return envelope should be included.
- Questions can be close-ended (with pre-set categories) or open-ended (in people's own words) or a mixture of both. It is best to keep questions short and to the point and to pay attention to the literacy level.

Once the results of the questionnaire are tabulated they should be shared with participants and management alike.[11]

Following is a sample questionnaire to assess how staff feels about volunteer involvement.

Focus Groups

Conducting focus groups as a needs assessment can be particularly useful especially if the Manager of Volunteer Services wants to provide some opportunity for small group discussion around specific issues regarding volunteer involvement.

A focus group involves a discussion, lead by an objective leader who introduces the topic to a group of respondents and directs their discussion of the topic in a natural and focused fashion. The objective of the discussion is to explore the opinions of the participants, and how they arrived at these opinions, in an impartial way. Focus groups are helpful to explore perceptions, feelings, opinions, attitudes, etc. and provide the Manager of Volunteer Services with qualitative data. When preparing for the focus groups it is important to establish the following:

SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE

We are interested in setting up a volunteer service in the new wing of the Long Island Hospital. The Manager of Volunteer Services will be responsible for the overall management of volunteers and supporting the staff working with the volunteers. Volunteers will be provided with clearly defined roles and will not replace staff positions. Your input is greatly valued in helping us set up this new service. We appreciate you filling out this questionnaire, please be frank with your answers.

1. How would you rate the priority of involving volunteers in the new wing of the Long Island Hospital at this time?
   Please circle:
   high medium low none at all

2. According to you, which areas would most benefit from volunteer involvement?
   ____

3. What do you see as appropriate roles for the volunteers?
   ____

4. Have you previously worked with volunteers? Yes____No____
   If yes, in what capacity? ____

5. Listed below are volunteer management tasks which staff may be asked to help with in order to support the volunteers. If volunteers were placed in your department, would you be willing to assist with any of these. Check all that apply.

Orientation	❑	Training	❑
Supervision	❑	Recognition	❑
Other	❑	None of the above	❑

6. Do you see any barriers with involving volunteers in your department? If yes, please elaborate.
   ____

7. Please state any comments or concerns you may have regarding volunteer involvement in your department.
   ____

Thank you for your time. The responses will be kept confidential, only group results will be shared. Please return this questionnaire to the Volunteer Services Office by November 25, 1997.

- What is the problem or issue to be explored?
- What is the purpose of the focus group?
- What types of information are important to obtain?
- Who want the information and what will it be used for?

Once these are established the next step is to identify the group of participants and decide how to do the recruitment. The method of recruitment will depend on whether the participants are staff in the organization, volunteers or stakeholders. Recruiting can be done through the telephone, by mail, or by posting notices in the staff room. Helpful recruitment strategies include:

- emphasizing the value of their input;
- mentioning that comments will be used anonymously;
- sending letters of confirmation;
- offering to reimburse out of pocket expenses.

To help assure smooth running of the focus group, time must be taken to carefully plan the questioning route, a guide for the moderator, and a discussion outline. Questions should be open-ended, clear and focused.

The discussion should take place in a comfortable setting with no distractions. The discussion resulting from the questions should be recorded, this can be done either by means of an audio tape recorder (with permission of the participants) or written notes (transcribe verbatim). A discussion outline could include:

- Welcome
- Overview and Topic
- Ground Rules e.g. respect each other's point of view, confidential aspect, all opinions welcomed, etc.
- Introductions
- First Question (Warm-up)
- Main Discussion
- Closure

A summary report is then written up and group results are shared with the appropriate persons.

SAMPLE FOCUS GROUP

Purpose: To assist the Manager of Volunteer Services with recruitment tactics.
Research question: What do people consider when deciding whether or not to do volunteer work?
Focus group participants: recently retired people, men and women, previous volunteers and non-volunteers.
Recruitment source: pre-retirement seminars, volunteer centres, etc.

Set of questions to be asked:

1. What are some kinds of volunteer work that you or your family are involved in?
2. What are some of the reasons why people volunteer?
3. If you were interested in volunteering where would you go to get the information?
4. What would prevent you from volunteering?
5. What are some considerations you would think about before volunteering?
6. What would you expect from the organization?[12]

Establishing a Volunteer Services Team

Creating a dynamic volunteer service with good staff/volunteer working relationships is a challenge. The Manager of Volunteer services needs to be a leader, manager, co-ordinator and team player. Even the most skilled manager cannot do all that needs to be done alone. Creating a volunteer services team is an effective way of pulling together the necessary resources to do the job. A volunteer services team is really a workgroup which deals with the implementation of the various components of volunteer management and is particularly helpful when first setting up a volunteer service. The person ultimately responsible to oversee that all functions of volunteer management are carried out is generally the Manager of Volunteer Services. A volunteer services team assists the manager in carrying out the necessary tasks and provides valuable input, support and resources. A volunteer services advisory committee on the other hand, advises the team on matters of policy, legal and liability issues and brings forth recommendations to senior management on the team's behalf.

To make the volunteer services team successful, three things are important:

a) recruiting suitable team members;
b) setting goals and objectives; and
c) creating a good workplan.

Suitable team members might include:

- the Manager of Volunteer Services as chair;
- staff members who work with volunteers;
- volunteer representatives;
- a member of the board;
- program managers (who manage programs with a volunteer component);
- other resource persons on a needs basis; and
- a community representative, if appropriate.

Once the team is in place the next step is to establish goals and objectives. These will form the basis for the team's operational plan and should be reviewed periodically to evaluate progress and updated annually. These goals and objectives must be achievable and measurable. Examples of goals and objectives might include:
Goal: To involve and support volunteers in the delivery of activities and programs of the organization.

Objectives:
a) To develop effective systems and necessary forms for managing volunteers.
b) To ensure proper screening of all volunteers.
c) To ensure effective training and support for all volunteers.
d) To ensure appropriate recognition for all volunteers.
e) To address day to day issues related to volunteer services management and make recommendations.
f) To market volunteer services internally and externally.
g) To support the staff members who work with volunteers.[13]

The goals and objectives are achieved by means of an operational plan. It is important to list the activities needed to carry out each objective, identify person(s) responsible to carry out the activities, list the resources needed and set a target date. The operational plan should be approved by management as this often provides leverage to obtain the resources to get the job done. The operational plan is collectively developed by the volunteer services team and the team is jointly accountable for it. For further details on operational plans, refer to chapter 3 on planning and evaluation.

Providing ongoing support for staff

Managers of volunteers need to be available to the staff for ongoing support, consultations, conflict resolutions and trouble shooting.

Ways to accomplish this include:

- making time for staff to meet with the Manager of Volunteer Services either by appointment or on a needs basis whenever possible;
- assisting with training and orientations and in other areas as needed;
- holding in-services for staff who work with volunteers, the agenda should meet the needs of the staff;
- doing progress interviews as a proactive measure; and
- carrying out discipline interviews whenever necessary.

Forms and Records

This section discusses basic forms and records necessary to set up an efficient system to manage volunteers. Forms and records are specific to each volunteer service and have to be adapted to meet the needs of the organization. Samples of key ones currently being used in the field have been included here but the list is by no means inclusive.

Application Form

The application form is an important tool to assist managers of volunteers in gathering specific information about a perspective volunteer. Application forms vary widely depending on the type of organization and the volunteer role. Application forms are also a screening tool and should include questions pertinent to the skills or type of volunteer required. In some cases it is also used as a contractual agreement between the volunteer and the organization. Application forms must always respect human rights codes and any other legislation pertinent to the organization, such as Municipal Freedom of Information Protection and Privacy Act, etc. It should also be written in simple language and with larger print especially if recruiting volunteers who are seniors.

Generally information obtained from the application form should include:

- basic information about the volunteer such as name, address, languages spoken, etc.;
- availability of the volunteer;
- emergency contact;
- talents and interests;
- past volunteer experience;
- education background if applicable;
- specific set of skills, knowledge or certification;
- names of references (usually two);
- reason for volunteering;
- type of volunteer work available;
- what volunteer hopes to gain from volunteering; and
- how volunteer heard about volunteer service.[14]

Below are two sample applications. Sample #1 is fairly generic while sample #2 is particular to a specific program.

SCO
Health Service

SCO Hospital
Saint Vincent Pavilion

Volunteer Services[15]
Enrolment Form

Date: ______________________________

Name: ______________________________

Address: ______________________________

City: ______________ Province: ____________ Postal Code: ____________

Telephone Number: (Home) ______________ (Office) ______________

Fax Number: ______________ E-mail: ______________

In Case of Emergency:

Name: ______________________________

Telephone Number: ______________________________

Language Spoken:

French: ____________ English: ____________ Other: ____________

Availability:

Daytime: __________ Afternoon: __________ Evening: __________

Days:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday:	
Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday:

Hours: ______________

Is there a particular type of volunteer work which you would be interested in?

- One-to-one with single patient
- One-to-one with more than one patient
- Working directly with staff
- Working in a leisure environment
- Working in a service to client environment
- Assisting with clerical duties
- Other interests: ______________________

Talents and Interests:

____

____

Educational Background:

School: ____________________
College: ____________________
University: ____________________

Volunteer Experience:

____
____

References: (please give two names)

1. ____________________ 2. ____________________
____________________ ____________________
____________________ ____________________

Please feel free to complete the following:

Social Insurance Number: ____________________

Date of Birth: Year ________ Month ________ Day ________

SAMPLE #2

COMMUNITY FOOD ADVISOR[16] VOLUNTEER APPLICATION FORM

Please answer the following questions. If you need more space, attach a separate sheet.

1. Name: ______________________________
2. Address: ______________________________
   ______________________ Postal Code: ______________
3. Telephone: Residence (   ) ____________ Business (   ) ____________
   Fax: Residence (   ) ____________ Business (   ) ____________

4. In an emergency, notify:
   Name: ______________________________
   Telephone: ______________________________

5. Page four indicates some of the topics to be covered in training. List those in which you feel you have some knowledge or experience.
   ____
   ____
6. Describe any previous training you have had relating to food (what, when and where).
   ____
   ____
   ____
7. List any related hobbies and areas of special interests you have relating to food.
   ____
   ____
8. What sources of information do you currently use for information relating to safe and nutritious food selection, preparation and handling?
   Magazines/Newspapers ____________ *Family/Friends* ____________
   Cookbooks ____________ *Government Publications* ____________
   Other: (please describe) ______________________________
9. What other skills or experiences have you had working with people (as a volunteer, on the job, in a community group, professional association)?
   ____
   ____

10. Why do you want to become a **Community Food Advisor**?

____

____

11. Is there anything else you would like to tell us that relates to your becoming a **Community Food Advisor**?

____

____

12. Times you would be generally available for training and giving volunteer service. Check all that apply.

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Morning	____	____	____	____	____	____
Afternoon	____	____	____	____	____	____
Evening	____	____	____	____	____	____

13. Dates you now know you would be **unavailable** for training or service (vacation or family commitments for instance)

____

____

14. If accepted into the Community Food Advisor Program, I:

- am willing to attend an initial training program consisting of 70 hours of classroom training and 20 hours of community experience;
- agree to commit at least 20 hours of volunteer work per year in direct consultation with the public;
- will share only the information provided/ recommended by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs;
- will refer to myself as a Community Food Advisor only after successfully completing the training program;
- will not wear my name tag nor refer to myself as a Community Food Advisor when working for or representing any company or agency;
- will not imply endorsement of any brand name product or store; and
- will return all manuals, references and other items provided by the program should I leave the program before completing the training program and one year of volunteer community work.

__________________________ ________________________

Signature Date

Note: When references are requested on an application form, it is a good practice to obtain a signed permission from the volunteer, giving the organization permission to contact the references listed on the application form.

Volunteer Services Agreement Form

The Volunteer Services Agreement Form is an agreement between the volunteer and the volunteer service or organization. It is usually a commitment on behalf of both parties about what is expected from the volunteer and what the volunteer can expect from the organization in return. It can include many aspects such as organizational policies, volunteer policies, rights of volunteers and rights of the staff working with the volunteer, etc. Below are two samples, sample #1 is a stand alone form and sample #2 is part of an application form.

SCO
Health Service

SCO Hospital
Saint Vincent Pavilion

Volunteer Services Agreement Form

This agreement is intended to indicate the seriousness with which we treat our volunteers. The intent of the agreement is to assure you of our deep appreciation of your services and to indicate our commitment to do the very best we can to make your volunteer experience here a productive and rewarding one.

I SCO Hospital

We, ____________________________________ (Saint Vincent Pavilion),

agree to accept the services of ____________________________ (volunteer)

beginning ________________________ and we commit to the following:

1. To provide adequate information, training and assistance for the volunteer to be able to meet the responsibilities of his/her position.
2. To ensure diligent supervisory aid to the volunteer and to provide feedback on performances.
3. To respect the skills, dignity and individual needs of the volunteer, and to do our best to adjust to these individual requirements.
4. To be receptive to any comments from the volunteer regarding ways in which we might mutually better accomplish our respective tasks.
5. To treat the volunteer as an equal partner with our staff, jointly responsible for completion of our hospital mission.

II Volunteer

I, ________________________ agree to serve as a volunteer and commit to the following:

1. To perform my volunteer duties to the best of my ability.
2. To adhere to the rules, regulations and policies of the SCO Hospital, including record-keeping requirements and confidentiality of institution and patient information.
3. To meet time and duty commitments, or to provide adequate notice so that alternate arrangements can be made.

III Agreement

Volunteer ____ Date ____________________

Director, Volunteer Services ____________________________ Date ____________________

This agreement may be canceled at any time at the discretion of either of the parties, but will expire automatically on ________________________________ unless renewed by both parties.

Notes: ____

____

SAMPLE # 2

Volunteer Agreement/Release and Waiver Form[17]

I, ______________________________, (full name) in applying to perform duties for the Regional Municipality of Ottawa Carleton as a volunteer, fully understand and agree to the following:

- That I will not receive any remuneration, salary, wage or payment or any employee benefit whatsoever, or be covered by Worker's Compensation Benefits.
- That except as authorized, I will not use the Regional facilities and equipment or disclose or make any use of any confidential information.
- That I acknowledge that volunteer work may involve personal risk and could result in property damage or personal injury. Notwithstanding this acknowledgment, I hereby release the Regional Municipality of Ottawa- Carleton from all claims for said damage or injury resulting from my participation as a volunteer, unless such damage or injury is caused by the negligence of the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton.
- That I understand that the Region carries liability insurance, which would, subject to the conditions of the policy, cover me in the event of a claim arising out of the good faith performance of authorized volunteer duties for the Region.

By signing this form, I acknowledge having read, understood and agreed to the above conditions, release and waiver.

Signed at ______________________ this ________ day of ______________ , 199____ .

______________________	______________________
(Volunteer)	(Witness)

Confidentiality Form

Many organizations and agencies require that volunteers and staff sign a document stating that they will not divulge any confidential information pertaining to the organization and its clients. This document needs to be tailored to each specific organization and will vary depending on the nature of the volunteer work and the degree to which the volunteer has access to confidential information.

Many volunteers work in areas where confidentiality is important. At times there can be some reluctance from the staff to share confidential information with the volunteers. Managers of volunteers need to instil trust and help staff realise that volunteers can be reliable and discreet. If volunteers are truly part of the organization and expected to perform their duties in a professional manner, they have a right to necessary pertinent information.

SAMPLE

DECLARATION OF CONFIDENTIALITY

I do swear or solemnly affirm that in the performance of my duties as a volunteer of the Health Department of the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton, I will observe and comply with all the requirements of the Department pertaining to the confidentiality of health information.

Except as I may be legally required or authorised in the course of my duties, I will not disclose or give to any person any confidential health information or document that comes to my knowledge or possession by reason of my involvement with the Health Department of the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton.

Furthermore, I understand that breach of my obligation of confidentiality may result in disciplinary action.

Dated at Ottawa this ____________ day of________________ 19______ .

Sworn or affirmed by:____

Witness: ____

Request for Volunteer Services Form

This form is helpful, especially in large organizations, for staff to make a formal request for volunteers. This form would normally be filled out by the staff and sent to the Manager of Volunteer Services. It is useful in tracking how many volunteer requests have been received during the year for statistical purposes. Two samples are provided, one from a hospital setting and one from a school board. This form is very useful for an organization which has many departments or volunteers in sub-offices in the community.

SAMPLE # 1

Royal Ottawa Hospital
Volunteer Role Description[18]

Volunteer Position Title: ______________________________
Location in hospital: ______________________________
Date submitted : ______________________________
By: ______________________________ Extension: ____________

Day and time volunteer is requested: ______________________________
Number of volunteers required: ______________________________
Volunteer is required immediately: ______________________________
or on following date: ______________________________
Volunteer is reporting to: ____________________ Extension: ____________

Description of volunteer role: ______________________________
____
Reason/need for volunteer in this program: ______________________________
____
____
On-the-job training provided to volunteer (please list components)
____
____
____
Qualifications or criteria for recruitment: ______________________________
____
____

It may be helpful to add a section entitled, for office use only, to document how many volunteers were recruited and which method of recruitment was most successful.

OBE VOLUNTEER SERVICES
REQUEST FOR UNIVERSITY STUDENT/COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS
ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS[19]

Teacher's Name: ______________________ Date: ______________________
School: ___________________________ Grade: ______________________

No. of volunteers required_________________________________

1. **Specific Areas** where a volunteer could assist:
Subject(s) / Program: ______________________________________
One-to-one __________ Small group __________
General classroom assistance__________ Other __________

2. **Work location:** Within the classroom __________
Outside the classroom __________

3. **Responsibilities** of this assignment:

____

4. **Skills** helpful for this position:

____

5. **Expected outcomes of volunteer's involvement:**

____

6. **Day(s)** ______________________________ am ______ pm ______
Time______________________________ am ______ pm ______
Frequency*______________________________ am ______ pm ______

* Initial referral usually 1/2 day per week, each volunteer.
Some volunteers will go more often.

Please return to : address on reverse

Volunteer Placement Form

A volunteer placement form confirms the volunteer's assignment to the staff supervising the volunteer, the volunteer services department, and the volunteer.

Each party receives a copy, therefore avoiding misunderstandings down the line.

Royal Ottawa Hospital[20]
Royal Ottawa Hospital Volunteer Placement Form — Interview Date: ______ Volunteer Name: ______ Phone: ______ Address: ______ (street, city, postal code) Director of Volunteers: ______ Ext.: ______ Volunteer/Staff Liaison: ______ Ext.: ______ Volunteer Position: ______ Location: ______ Date and Time Available: ______ Orientation Date and Time: ______ Location: ______ Tuberculosis Test: ______

Tracking Forms

Tracking forms can be used in a number of different ways. One usage is to track calls received from potential volunteers inquiring about volunteer opportunities available within the organization. Tracking this information is useful to:

- do pre-screening (some candidates may be unavailable for required shifts or training, not suitable for or interested in the position you have to offer);
- keep a waiting list of people interested in volunteering for a specific task;
- evaluate a marketing or recruitment tactic.

SAMPLE

New Volunteers Tracking Sheet

Name	Address	Phone No.	Initial Contact Date	Referred By:	Volunteer Opportunity Requested	Action

Another usage of a tracking form is to track the number of volunteer hours on a monthly or yearly basis. Tabulating the number of volunteer hours contributed annually to the organization is valuable quantitative information. The number of volunteer hours:

- denote the magnitude of volunteer involvement;
- can be translated to a dollar value;
- help market the volunteer service.

Volunteer hours can be tabulated by the Manager of Volunteer Services, by the staff or volunteers themselves. There are various methods of collecting volunteer hours including having volunteers fill out a volunteer log book or having staff or volunteers submit volunteer stats monthly to the office of volunteer services, etc. Below are two sample forms, one from a hospital setting, one from a health promotion centre.

SAMPLE # 1

Tracking Form [21]

Date	Name	# Hours, incl. prep	Travel time (to and from centre)	Walking & exercise programs ✔	Drop in books puzzles knitting etc. ✔	Meetings ✔	Other ✔

ROYAL OTTAWA HOSPITAL
VOLUNTEER HOURS RECORDS[22]

Volunteer's Name: ______________________________

Volunteer's Role: ______________________________

Dates: Start: ______________ **Finish:** ______________

	Apr.	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sept	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar
1												
2												
3												
4												
5												
6												
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Tot												

Letters Of Acceptance

Some organizations send letters of acceptance to their volunteers to officially welcome them once all the necessary screening and other paper work has been completed. As well as welcoming comments you may wish to include such things as the date of the volunteer orientation and other training sessions (if applicable) and the date, time and person the volunteer reports to on their first day. A letter of acceptance adds a nice touch and makes the volunteer feel appreciated and well received by the organization.

Reference Forms

References are obtained in the interest of client safety and to facilitate appropriate volunteer placements. It is preferable to do reference checks by phone rather than by mail as the tone of voice, hesitations in answering questions, etc. can be indications that further probing is needed. The importance of doing reference checks will be covered in details in the chapter on screening.[12]

SAMPLE

Volunteer Services- Reference Check [24]

Date: ______________ Name of applicant: ______________

Name of person contacted: ______________

How long have you known the applicant? ______________

What is your relationship to the applicant? ______________

Describe the applicant's overall personality. ______________

____

On a scale of 1(low) to 5 (high) describe the applicant in regards to:

Dependability: ______ Ability to interact with others: ______

Commitment: ______ Ability to work independently: ______

Suitability: ______ Communication skills: ______

What special qualities does the applicant have to offer?

____

Are there any groups of people the applicant would be uncomfortable working with?

____

Does the applicant have any particular qualities that might hinder a successful experience?

____

Can you recommend him/her for our volunteer program? ______________

Additional comments: ______________

Signature of person obtaining reference ______________

Personal information contained on this form is collected under the authority of s. 5 of the Health Protection and Promotion Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. H. 7 and will be used to determine eligibility for volunteer services in the Health Department. Questions about this collection should be directed to : the Co-ordinator of Volunteers, 495 Richmond Road. Telephone 722-2328, ext. 3724.

Volunteer forms containing personal information about a volunteer should be kept in a locked cabinet in the office of the Manager of Volunteer Services. In organizations bound by the Municipal Freedom of Information Protection and Privacy Act, a clause should be included at the bottom of the form stating the authority to collect the information, how the information can be used, and where to direct questions. Volunteer forms should conform to human rights code. If unsure of human rights legislation, managers should contact their local office.

Designing Volunteer Placement Descriptions

"Recruiting before designing jobs is rather like trying to dance before the music begins. The possibility of ending out of step is very good indeed. (Marlene Wilson - The Effective Management of Volunteer Programs)

The title of Volunteer Placement Description is used interchangeably with Volunteer Job Description. However, the title Volunteer Placement Description is more user friendly and less threatening in a unionized setting. A volunteer placement description does what it implies, it defines the task that is required of the volunteer. Volunteer placement descriptions should be in place before recruiting the volunteer to ensure a proper match and to ascertain that the volunteer is aware of what the placement entails and what is expected of him/her.

Volunteer placement descriptions can be generic in nature or very specific depending on the tasks involved. In some organizations placement descriptions are written up as a contract and the volunteer is asked to sign that he/she understands and accepts the responsibilities of the placement.

When preparing volunteer placement descriptions all the essential information needs to be included and it often pays to have a resourceful team working with you. Here are some things the manager can do:

- write the placement description with the staff requesting the services of volunteers;
- link with managers of volunteers in similar organizations and compare notes;
- ask senior volunteers to provide input to help create more realistic and meaningful volunteer placement descriptions.

When writing volunteer placement descriptions keep in mind that they should:

- meet the organization's goals and objectives;
- be designed with input from the staff working with the volunteers;
- not conflict with staff position descriptions;
- respect union and collective bargaining agreements;
- provide meaningful tasks for the volunteers;
- clearly outline the volunteer's duties and responsibilities; and
- be comprehensive enough to provide the essential information to the volunteer.

A volunteer placement description can take various forms and generally includes information such as:

a) Title of the volunteer placement The title in essence describes the volunteer role and should be simple and clear as possible, e.g. Friendly Visitor, Volunteer Driver.

b) Area or location of placement It is important to specify this as some placements may be located outside the organization e.g., client's homes, community, etc. and require some travelling.

c) Person to whom the volunteer reports The person to whom the volunteer reports on a day to day basis is generally the person directly supervising the volunteer. However, the volunteer may be asked to report periodically to the Manager of Volunteer Services especially at the end of the probation period and to conduct evaluations. The Manager of Volunteer Services should be a resource person for the volunteer at all times and may be the person the volunteer reports to off site.

d) Volunteer responsibilities or duties. These should be clearly outlined, specific and understood by the volunteer. In more complex volunteer placements it is important to list the duties in details.

e) Requirements/qualifications/skills Some placements require special certification such as CPR, first aid, etc. or a valid driver's license. Volunteers may be asked to provide proof that these are current. Certain placements require specific skills such as good communication and listening skills, computer skills, etc. These may be a prerequisite for the placement.

f) Commitment expected from the volunteer It is important here to state duration of each shift as well as the minimum time expected from the volunteer on a monthly or yearly basis. Some organizations require that the volunteer commits herself/himself for a period of months or a year. This should be clearly spelled out.

g) Training requirements All aspects of training should be included e.g. on - site training, formal training sessions, refreshers, continuing education requirements, certifications, etc. Some positions require fairly extensive training and highlighting the training sessions is helpful.

h) Evaluation If the position involves a probationary period or any other type of evaluation, this should be stated on the position description, along with time lines.

i) Benefits to the volunteer Some organizations list key benefits, this is particularly helpful for people wishing to gain new skills or different experiences.

Below is a sample of a Placement Description which covers most of these points.

SAMPLE

PLACEMENT DESCRIPTION CONTRACT[26]

Program Name: VOLUNTEER VISITOR
Volunteer Name:
Client's Name:
Client's Address: **Phone Number:**

Volunteer Program Co-ordinator: **Phone Number:**
Alternate Contact: **Phone Number:**

Objective:
- To provide continueing companionship and support

Responsibilities:
- Visit client on a regular basis.
- Keep client company through friendly conversation.
- Ensure the safety of the client at all times, but remember, volunteers are not to administer medication, lift or toilet clients or perform house cleaning.
- Contact the client as soon as possible if unable to visit at agreed time or away on holidays.
- Notify the Volunteer Program Co-ordinator if you have any concerns regarding the placement.
- Complete and submit Volunteer Time/Activity Report on a monthly basis.

Time and Place:
- At client's home, at a mutually agreed time.
- Give advance notice of vacation plans to client.

Commitments:
- Minimum 3 hours per week for 3 months.
- Extension of 3 months commitment is encouraged following renegotiation.

Training and Orientation:
- General orientation to the Region of Peel and Peel Health Volunteer Program.
- Task-specific orientation by referring staff, if required.
- The Peel Health Volunteer Program does not ask nor accept volunteers to transport clients.
  As discussed during the initial volunteer interview, $1 million Automobile Liability Insurance is required should you, at your own discretion, choose to transport a client in your vehicle.

Evaluation and Follow-up:
- You will be contacted 3 weeks following your introduction to evaluate satisfaction.
- At completion of placement (3 months) you will be contacted to renegotiate your current placement or be reassigned if available.

PLACEMENT DESCRIPTION CONTRACT[26]

Benefits:
- Contributing as an active member in the community of Peel.
- Satisfaction that comes from helping others.
- Change from your daily routine.
- Opportunity experience is a valuable reference.

Peel Health Expectations:
- This placement will be carried out within the guidelines established by this agreement.
- If you wish to keep your home number confidential, dial *67 and wait for the dial tone before calling your client.
- In case of emergency, dial 911, then call ______________ at ______________.

Comments: ____

____

____

I understand and accept the responsibilities as outlined in this Placement Description Contract and have received sufficient orientation to become a Volunteer Visitor on behalf of the Peel Health Volunteer Program. I agree to honour confidentiality at all times.

______________________	______________________
Volunteer Name (Please print clearly)	Dated

____

Volunteer Signature

____

Witness to Signature
(Peel Health Program

Notice with Respect to the Collection of Personal Information
(Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act)

The information is collected under the legal authority of the Health Promotion and Protection Act, R.S.O. 1990, c.H.7 and in conjunction with the Ministry of Health/Manadatory Programs and Services Guidelines for the purpose of ensuring a high quality of delivery of Health Services. If you have any questions concerning the collection of this information, please contact Peel Health, 199 County Court Blvd., Brampton, ON, L6W 4P3, 791-7800 ext. 2622.

Assessing Needs For Space And Equipment

As mentioned previously many resources are required to sustain a volunteer service including such things as space and equipment.

These items cannot be taken for granted and must be budgeted for. It is the responsibility of the Manager of Volunteers to make sure that volunteers have the necessary resources to do their job and have a place to "hang their hat". This includes:

Office Space

The office of the Manager of Volunteer Services should be located in an area easily accessible to volunteers and should have ample space to keep files and other volunteer paraphernalia. A private office is preferable to a cubicle arrangement as privacy is needed to do interviews, evaluations, reference checks, etc.

Office space may be required for volunteers to do phoning or office work for the organization. Sometimes volunteers share office space with the Manager of Volunteer Services. As this is not always practical, it may be necessary for the manager to negotiate office space for the volunteers in another area.

Training and Meeting Space

Space is needed to hold orientations, training sessions and volunteer meetings. It is often the responsibility of the Manager of Volunteer Services to book appropriate rooms when needed. If ample space is not available within the organization, it may be necessary to book rooms off-site.

Lounge Area

It is very nice for organizations, especially the larger ones, to provide an area for volunteers to have coffee or lunch breaks and "put their feet up". The lounge can also serve as a meeting room for staff and volunteers. It is an ideal place to post volunteer notices, pictures, awards, etc.

Office Equipment

It is the responsibility of the Manager of Volunteers to make sure that volunteers have the necessary equipment to do their job. Office equipment generally includes:

Desk(s), tables, chairs
Filing cabinets
Telephones
Bookshelves
Desk Lamps
Bulletin Boards
Calendars, etc.

In and Out Boards

These are necessary for organizations who have a large volunteer component to keep tract of who is in on different shifts.

Stationary and Office Supplies

These should be readily available to the volunteers and include a whole range of things such as: paper, pencils, pens, paper clips, rulers, stamps, binders, file folders, etc.

Photocopying Machine

If required, volunteers should be able to have access to the photocopying machine and be given a code to use and instructions on how to use the machine.

Computers

Some volunteer positions may require the use of a computer. If a volunteer has to share a computer, arrangements for computer time need to arranged beforehand.

Coat Racks/ Lockers

These should be made available and should be located in an area convenient for the volunteers.

Uniforms

Some organizations require that volunteers wear uniforms. Volunteers should be given instructions regarding care, cleaning, storage, etc.

Name Tags

Instructions should be given regarding where and when these are to be worn and where they are to be kept. Volunteers should be informed of the procedure to follow in the event their name tag is lost or misplaced.

Parking

It may be necessary to provide parking spaces or passes. This needs to be arranged by the Manager of Volunteer Services.

Comparing Notes with Similar Agencies

The old adage of not reinventing the wheel holds true in the management of volunteers. Often times, it is advantageous to look at what similar organizations are doing in their volunteer service and compare notes. Generally, the Manager of Volunteers Services is a one of a kind position within the organization. It is therefore helpful to network with other managers in the same field and share information. Areas managers will want to look at include:

- appropriate volunteer placements; (Where are volunteers involved?)
- staff "buy-in"; (What promotes positive volunteer/staff relationships? How to best involve the staff?)
- volunteer budget; (What should be included in the budget? Are there hidden costs?)
- liability issues; (What type of screening is necessary? What kind of liability insurance is needed to cover the volunteers?)
- volunteer forms; (Which ones are most helpful? What should be included in them?)
- policies and procedures; (What needs to be included?)
- union issues. (Which ones have been encountered?) (How to overcome these?)

Managers of Volunteers should also take the opportunity to network with local volunteer associations, volunteer centres, and provincial volunteer associations. It is vital for managers to keep current and informed of the latest principles in the management of volunteers.

Endnotes

[1] In 1998, the Ontario Association for Volunteer Administration (OAVA) merged with the Ontario Directors of Volunteers in Healthcare (ODVH) to form the Professional Administrators of Volunteers - Ontario (PAVR-O)

[2] See chapter two for more information on the Ontario Association for Volunteer Administration's Standard of Practice.

[3] Graff, Linda L. *By Definition: Policies For Volunteer Programs,* Etobicoke, Ontario: Volunteer Ontario, 1992.

[4] Reproduce only with permission of the Ottawa-Carleton Health Department, Volunteer Services.

[5] Reproduce only with permission of the Ottawa-Carleton Health Department, Volunteer Services.

[6] For more information refer to Chapter 6 in this text.

[7] Adapted from Ottawa Carleton Health Department Volunteer Services Coordinating Committee.

[8] Ellis, Susan J. *From The Top Down: The Executive Role in Volunteer Program Success,* Philadelphia: Energize Associates, 1986, pages 21 -23.

[9] Ellis, Susan J. and Noyes, Katherine H. *No Excuses: The Team Approach to Volunteer Management,* Philadelphia: Energize Associates, 1981, page 4.

[10] See endnote 1.

[11] Porteous, Nancy L., Sheldrick, Barbara J., Stewart, Paula J. *Program Evaluation Tool Kit : Blueprint for Public Health Management*, Ottawa, Ontario: Ottawa-Carleton Health Department, 1997.

[12] 9 Porteous, Nancy L. Workshop material from "Introduction to Focus Group Research", Ottawa, Ontario : Ottawa-Carleton Health Department, 1996.

[13] Adapted from the Ottawa Carleton Health Department Volunteer Services Team.

[14] See chapter 9 for more information on Application Forms.

[15] 11 Reproduced with permission from Volunteer Services, Sisters of Charity of Ottawa Health Services, Saint Vincent Pavilion.

[16] Reproduced with permission from Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA), Community Food Advisor Program.

[17] Reproduce only with permission of the Ottawa Carleton Health Department.

[18] Reproduced with permission from Volunteer Services, Royal Ottawa Hospital.

[19] Reproduced with permission from Volunteer Services, Ottawa Board of Education.

[20] Reproduced with permission from Volunteer Services, Royal Ottawa Hospital.

[21] Reproduce only with permission of the Ottawa Carleton Health Department.

[22] Reproduced with permission from Volunteer Services, Royal Ottawa Hospital.

[23] For more information on reference checks refer to chapter 9, Beyond Police Checks: Volunteer Screening and Placement.

[24] Reproduce only with permission of the Ottawa-Carleton Health Department.

[25] For more information see chapter 9, Beyond Police Checks: Volunteer Screening and Placement - section on Job Descriptions.

[26] Reproduced with permission from Regional Municipality of Peel Health, Brampton, Ontario.

Chapter Review

Preparing for volunteers takes knowledge, tact and skills.

1. List four things a manager of volunteers can do to get management approval for volunteer services.
2. What are key elements when consulting with staff?
3. Design a Volunteer Placement Description.
4. Name five volunteer forms used by managers of volunteers and describe one of these in detail.
5. Outline space and equipment necessary to accommodate volunteers in an organization.

References

Ellis, Susan J., *From The Top Down: The Executive Role in Volunteer Program Success,* Philadelphia: Energize Associates, 1986

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Ellis, Susan J. and Noyes, Katherine H., *No Excuses: The Team Approach to Volunteer Management*, Philadelphia : Energize Associates, 1981.

MacLeod Flora, *Motivating and Managing Today's Volunteers*, Self-Counsel Press: 1993.

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CHAPTER 8: VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT

KEY POINTS

Recruitment is a constant challenge for managers of volunteer departments.

This chapter addresses

- ✔ what is recruitment
- ✔ what is marketing
- ✔ current trends affecting recruitment
- ✔ effective approaches to recruitment
- ✔ implementing a recruitment plan

This chapter was written by Lenore Good of Health Sciences Centre, Winnipeg.

What is volunteer recruitment?

Volunteer recruitment is a process in which the manager of volunteer resources secures the commitment of an individual or group to provide a service or accomplish a specific outcome for the agency or organization.

What is marketing?

"Marketing is a management process directed at satisfying customer needs and wants through an exchange process."[1] "As a process it is systematic. It employs well-crafted programs as opposed to random actions to achieve results. And the desired result? Exchange product or service for cash. Contribution to a cause. Commitment of time as a volunteer."[2]

A successful recruitment plan adopts a marketing approach, convincing people or groups to volunteer by meeting their needs. There are five main aspects of marketing to consider when developing a recruitment plan:

- **Product** - What you are offering the prospective volunteer?
- **Publics** - Who you're going to exchange the product with, and how does it benefit them?
- **Price** - What it is going to cost them to "buy" your product?
- **Promotion** - How you are going to let them know about the product?
- **Place** - Where are they going to "purchase" your "product"?

Let us look at each of these aspects individually.

Product
What product is being offered to the prospective volunteer? Is it an opportunity to meet their needs and satisfy their motivations

by volunteering for the organization? The key question is:

> *"What volunteer needs might be met by a volunteer involvement?"*

Much has been written on the topic of motivation. For a more complete discussion of motivation theory, see Chapter 11, "Motivation and Recognition." Understanding motivations is a key to volunteer recruitment. Not everyone engaged in volunteer activity does so for the same reasons.

The motivations that lead individuals to volunteer are as diverse as individuals themselves are. Here are number of key motivations for volunteering:

Cause/issue - People who have a strong belief in a cause which makes them willing to do what is necessary in order to advance the cause. Belief in the cause continues to be the largest single motivator for volunteers of all ages.

Service - People who genuinely want to make their community a better place through service.

Making a contribution - People who need to make a mark in order to feel satisfied with their lives.

Achievement - People who need to experience a sense of accomplishment.

Involvement/participation - People who feel alienated and need to be a part of something.

Social contact - People who are lonely and crave interaction with other people.

Power/leadership - People who need to be in control and calling the shots.

Career exploration - People who are uncertain about which path to take with respect to career and would like to explore alternatives.

Skills development - People who would like to learn a new skill but do not have the opportunity to do so in their present work or family lives.

Work experience - People who have skills but are unable to market their skills to an employer because they lack experience.

Religious Convictions – Many religious faiths include a commitment to good works.

Status - People who are seeking to improve their perceived status in the community.

When considering volunteer motivations, it is important not only to consider why someone would volunteer, but also, what might prevent him or her from doing so. The 1997 Statistics Canada survey, lists the single largest reason given as "Do not have extra time" (70%) followed by "Unwilling to make a year-round commitment" (50%). These factors should give managers of volunteer resources a major clue as to how to go about designing volunteer assignments. Wherever possible, assignments should be developed to be carried out in short, flexible time frames, as well as through shorter-term commitments. More and more people are only prepared to be "episodic" volunteers, or volunteers that are prepared to commit to a very short term assignment.

Cultural considerations have an impact on the motivation to volunteer. In February, 1992, the Volunteer Centre of Calgary published the results of *Project Kaleidoscope* in which representatives of the various ethnic groupings of the Calgary community including Chinese, Filipino, Ismaili, Muslim, Latin America, Aboriginal, Polish and Sikh provided feedback on how their community perceives volunteerism. "Motivation for volunteering ranged from a sense of duty to an ingrained belief in the value of volunteerism for spiritual enhancement. In three out of seven communities, volunteerism was viewed apprehensively by some segments because of past political or class connotations".[3] While volunteering was viewed positively by most of the groups, immigrants from an eastern bloc country associated "volunteering" with the forced volunteering they had been familiar with in their homeland.

Every person is motivated by a uniquely personal combination of factors. The challenge with volunteer recruitment is to isolate a group of people with similar motivations and market to these individuals.

Publics

Sue Vineyard, defines "public" as "any identifiable segment of society that surrounds your program or agency. Publics are groups that you *might* or *might never* have a relationship with".[4]

A "market", on the other hand, is "an identified public with whom you wish to establish a trade relationship".[5] These are your prospective volunteers.

The key question is

> *"What is the profile of the individual that is likely to be attracted to your volunteer opportunity?"*

The more information known about the person or persons the manager is attempting to attract, the better. In addition to motivations, it is necessary to consider such things as age, sex, race, religion, skills, interests, education, availability, experience, physical ability, and any limitations which can be accommodated or which could restrict a person from being involved in the volunteer activity. What are some barriers that might restrict their participation? The more one is able to describe the characteristics of the volunteer being approached, the easier it will be to design a recruitment strategy that will be successful in attracting that volunteer.

Let us look at several identifiable groups, that could make up some of the publics that might be attracted to volunteer service.

Youth

Youth between the ages of 15 and 24 are more likely in the late 1990's to volunteer than people in any other age group. However, the amount of time they are willing to commit is low compared to other age groups.

Youth volunteers are typically attracted to recreation and social clubs, social service organizations, and religious organizations. The activities that they typically undertake as volunteers include canvassing, organizing events, coaching, collecting, serving and delivering food, and environmental protection.

Youth volunteers are particularly likely to volunteer in order to improve job opportunities, explore abilities, and use their skills and abilities. They are less likely to be motivated by cause or religious affiliation.[6]

New Canadians

There are a number of community and government agencies helping people make the transition to Canadian citizenship. Working with these organizations is an excellent way to recruit volunteers. They can also assist with making the approach culturally appropriate, and with understanding cross-cultural differences.

Sometimes, a key reason New Canadians may volunteer is to develop proficiency in either official language. They are looking for assignments where they can improve their language skills in a safe environment. Another consideration with this group is work experience and the development employment related skills.

University/College Students

More and more university students are selecting volunteering as a career exploration strategy and as a way to enhance their chances of entrance into a variety of fields - particularly in the health and social service sectors. These students are looking for assignments related to their educational goals. Universities and community colleges are generally very helpful and facilitate the recruitment process on their campuses.

Adults - to age 55

Adults may volunteer for a wide variety of reasons. It is necessary to define the target market within this category more precisely. For example, one may wish to attract people who are looking to enter the work force and wish to develop or enhance their skills. This group can be accessed through a myriad of programs and organizations geared towards providing skills training and work experience for their clients. The key to working effectively with such organizations is clarifying expectations and negotiating a working relationship.

It is important to remember that the goal of such organizations is to provide placements for their clients. The manager's goal is to recruit individuals to fulfill a particular volunteer role. If their goals match with the manager's needs, there is a basis for an effective partnership. However, there are many areas where possible problems can arise, so it is necessary to be sure that both parties understand each other's needs. One may be able to attract employed individuals who are interested in making a contribution or who would like to take on a very different challenge or learn a new skill. The more carefully the potential volunteer is profiled, the easier it will be to identify where they might be found.

Seniors

Seniors are an increasingly large group of society and as the baby boomers move into this category, they will become the majority. Seniors can be reached through a wide variety of organizations - churches, service clubs, golf clubs, seniors centres, etc.

Aboriginal Community

Increasingly, First Nations people are migrating to the cities and seeking greater educational and employment opportunities. The aboriginal community has developed a host of organizations designed to help their people make the adjustments that are required. Often, volunteering can be a very effective strategy for aboriginal youth seeking career guidance and considering employment options.

Corporate Sector

Involving the corporate sector in meaningful community projects is an emerging trend of the nineties. When working with this sector, it is important to recognise that their motivations must be met, just as if they were an individual. Corporations are increasingly taking an active role in community projects in order to improve community life. They want to be perceived as being actively involved in bettering the community and in being leaders in that field. Their image and status in the community is of vital importance to them. Recognizing these potential motivations for corporate involvement is important when developing an approach. If their goals are compatible with organizational needs, there is the basis for an effective partnership.

Figure 1 has been developed to help plan a targeted recruitment strategy. The manager will assess the public being targeted. Then, he or she will check off the motivations that most apply to this group. Communication with the group must reflect the primary motivations that have been identified.

Price

What "price" will the prospective volunteer be prepared to pay to participate in volunteer activity?

The manager will need to ensure that the price is not too high or the individual will not volunteer. Figure 2 illustrates some "price" issues and solutions to them.

Promotion

The key question is

"Where are the people matching the volunteer profile likely to be found and how can they be reached?"

Through promotion activities, the intention is to move the individual through four phases:

1. Awareness, where the prospective volunteer becomes aware of an organization or volunteer service.

2. Comprehension, where the prospective volunteer develops an understanding of the volunteer opportunity.

3. Conviction, where the prospective volunteer is convinced of the value of the volunteer opportunity.

4. Decision, where the prospective volunteer makes a decision to commit to the organization.

Effective promotion of the volunteer opportunities is a key to moving the volunteer towards a decision to become involved with the organization. The promotional strategy depends upon where the prospective volunteer is in terms of their readiness to volunteer.

There are four main kinds of promotion:

- advertising, which is paid promotion;
- direct mail, which can be targeted to a specific group;
- personal ask, which is often the best way to secure the commitment: and
- publicity, brought about by a conscious strategy to enhance the image of the volunteer service and increase volunteer participation.

Table 2: Pricing Issues

Price	Solution
• Reduced family time	Promote family volunteering; provide activities for the entire family
• Reduced time in general	Flexible assignments can be done on own time Specific short term commitment
• Scarce money	Reimbursement of out of pocket expenses Offer incentives - e.g., some agencies provide lunch or bus fare which can assist persons on fixed incomes significantly
• Reduced time at work	Structure activities at times when people can volunteer - lunch hour - after regular business hours Obtain the support of the employer
• Reduced leisure time	Make volunteering fun Add opportunities for socializing
• Reduced flexibility	Sharing responsibilities with others Short term project-oriented activities
• Language discomfort	Assign a "buddy" Simplify the task
• Cultural discomfort	Identify cultural difficulties Develop mutual understanding
• Physical difficulties	Make program accessible, removing physical barriers to the fullest extent of your ability

MARKETING GRID FOR VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT

Product / Motivation		Service	Altruism Making a Contribution	Achievement	Involvement / Participation	Social Contact	Power / Leadership	Career Exploration	Skills Development	Work Experience	Citizenship	Cause / Issue	Status / Perception
Public ↓	Target Markets ↓												
Youth	Agencies Organizations												
New Canadians	Agencies Organizations												
University Students	Agencies Organizations												
Adults	Agencies Organizations												
Seniors	Agencies Organizations												
Aboriginal Community	Agencies Organizations												
Corporate	Agencies Organizations												

An effective promotional campaign will be balanced with strategies appropriate to the target market involved. The approach will vary depending upon a variety of factors including the number of volunteers being recruited and how specialized their skills must be.

Advertising

Webster's dictionary defines "advertising" as the action of calling something to the attention of the public, especially by paid announcements. Advertising can include printed materials such as posters, brochures, flyers, as well as radio and television appeals.

The type and sophistication of promotional material developed will depend upon the size of the market one is hoping to reach, and the resources that are available. One option is for general material, intended to communicate the message to a broad audience, or more targeted material intended for a specific audience, or perhaps both.

There are many ways to obtain assistance with the development of recruitment materials. Community colleges and technical schools offer courses in creative communications and are often willing to work on a project as part of the course of studies. It is also possible to recruit a volunteer with skills in this area or to develop a partnership with a company who may share the expertise of their advertising department.

Once the materials are developed, they will need to be distributed as widely as possible. Establishing positive working relationships with local media, businesses, community groups, educational institutions, and a host of others to ensure the kind of distribution network needed to meet the target audience.

There are many ways to get the message out at little or no cost. Many newspapers as well as some radio and television stations provide free announcement of volunteer opportunities. The manager must be sure to take full advantage of free public service announcements.

If a paid advertisement is required, a business may be convinced to sponsor or to underwrite the cost. In order to do so, it will be necessary to demonstrate to them the benefit of being in partnership with the organization. The ideal partner has common interest in the target market.

Direct Mail

Many volunteer organizations do regular direct mail campaigns for volunteer recruitment. Often letters are written to existing volunteers, asking for continued participation in the department and for volunteer referrals. Letters can also be sent to organizations such as service clubs, educational institutions, training organizations describing the volunteer opportunities that are available, and enlisting their help in referring prospective volunteers.

The benefit of direct mail is that it can provide a focused and targeted recruitment at a reasonable cost. The letter itself can be written with the recipient in mind, describing the benefits to him or her of participating in the volunteer effort. The letter can be followed up with a personal call as a method of securing the commitment to volunteer.

The Personal Ask

The 1997 Statistics Canada Survey on Giving, Volunteering, and Participating indicates that a majority of volunteer activities began as a result of being approached by someone in the organization, the organization itself or a friend or relative outside the organization, as compared to less than 5% who responded to a public appeal. The value of a public appeal is to build awareness and conviction but often it takes a personal ask to secure the commitment to volunteer. Many organizations have been successful with recruitment campaigns that enlist the help of staff and volunteers in the organization in making the ask.

Publicity

Nearly one third of all volunteers approached the organization on their own, without being asked. In other words, they have a particular motivation for volunteering and they seek out an organization that they believe is capable of meeting their need. This points to the importance of creating awareness and enhancing your image in the community through publicity.

The manager of volunteers can utilize the tools developed for promotional purposes to increase awareness, but should also develop a strategy to get good publicity for the department from the media. Consideration should be given to the development of media kits that can be sent out when an opportunity arises. Included in the kit might be a fact sheet on the organization, brochures, posters, and other printed material, as well as a well-written media release.

Media releases should be sent out whenever there is something newsworthy to communicate. Newsworthy items might include such things as :

- the number of people served by volunteers,
- the initiation of a new program,
- a public service message about the agency's service,
- the opening of a new office,
- the recognition of the volunteers,
- awards bestowed upon individual volunteers,
- a large donation,
- a milestone in the agency's history,
- a human interest story involving volunteers,
- the election of new officers,
- a major event that is taking place, or
- an end of year report.

Releases should be short and concise. They should be written in the active voice rather than the passive and should include the information first, followed by the source. The initial paragraphs should contain the key information or should be intriguing enough to prompt the reader to continue.

There are two basic writing styles of release, hard news and soft news. With hard news, a synopsis of the facts is provided in the opening paragraphs of the release. With soft news involving a human-interest story, the same event might be described in terms of the impact it had on a particular person.

There are common elements to all releases. The first page should be on the organization's letterhead. The word "NEWS" should appear prominently across the top of the release, as well as the name of the organization. Then, there is the *release date and time*. Usually, the release will be "for immediate release" however, there may be circumstances where you wish the news to be released at a particular time, and that should be noted.

The *contact person* or persons can be listed at the top of the release or at the bottom. It is necessary to include a telephone number where the person can be reached. The *headline* should be catchy and summarize the major element of the story that makes it newsworthy. Several lines left between the headline and the rest to make it easy for the media to edit.

The *dateline* gives the date and location of the issuing of story – for example, Winnipeg, MB, Jan.5, 1999, abbreviating the province and month. Next is the body of the story. If the release is more than one page long, "More" should be typed at the bottom of the page. Quotes from the people involved in the story are always interesting to include.

At the end of the release, centered on the page, type "- 30 -" which indicates that the text is complete. It is a good idea to provide a brief description of the organization to ensure that consistent essential information is provided about the organization at all times.

The media release can be mailed or faxed to the media or both. Sometimes, it is useful make up a media kit, which includes additional information about the organization such as brochures and posters. It will be necessary to keep up-to-date media lists, which include the contact person, mailing address, and phone and fax numbers. After the release it is sometimes helpful to follow up with a telephone call.

If the information provided is factual and reliable and there is an appropriate follow-up, a relationship can develop with the media that will enhance the agency's ability to create and maintain public awareness of its programs and services.

Individual Recruitment

If the manager is recruiting a volunteer with highly specialized skills, the recruitment will be highly individual and personal. It may take the form of a personal phone call or meeting with the individual that is being recruited. During this meeting, the goal is to get the person interested in and willing to commit to making a contribution. The approach should be highly personal and specific, emphasizing how the individual is ideally suited to the challenge at hand. It should be forthright, with no surprises later. If the person raises objections look for ways to remove any barriers the individual may have to volunteering. Through creativity, one may be able to hear the magic "yes". If, however, the person continues to raise objections, it may be that it is not going to work out this time. The door can be left open to future possibilities and the individual might be asked if they have anyone they may wish to recommend for the position.

On the other hand, when are recruiting a large number of volunteers with more general skills, the approach can be one of group recruitment.

Group Recruitment

The group being recruited could be members of a club, family or friends. For example, the manager may arrange to do a presentation to service clubs on volunteering opportunities with an organization. While the approach will not be personalized to the individual, it can be tailored to the group being addressed. Finding out in advance what is important to the group will help the manager gear the presentation accordingly. It is best to offer opportunities whereby a group can own a project. It is easier to gain the commitment of a group than recruiting on a solely individual basis.

The Volunteer Centre

Many communities across Canada have Volunteer Centres that act as referral agents for prospective volunteers. It is important for the manager of volunteers to develop an effective working relationship with the local volunteer centre. They can be of great assistance in recruiting volunteers.

Conferences and Trade Shows

The manager might consider participating in a conference or trade show that is intended to attract people from a specific target market. A booth at such a show can provide the opportunity to meet many prospective volunteers and interest them in a program or service. Including an activity – such as a contest or a demonstration or free food—in the booth, will attract people and break the ice. People might be asked to sign up in order to receive additional information about opportunities. A follow up on all leads right after the trade show is essential.

Newsletters

An agency's newsletters can be a powerful tool in marketing volunteer opportunities. It is recommended to design the newsletter in such a way as to elicit a response. Asking current volunteers to bring in a friend, give an extra hour for a project, and tell their neighbours can solicit further volunteer commitment. Often, agencies will publish volunteer opportunities and information in field-related newsletters.[7]

Utilize Technology

As we approach the new millennium, technology will play an increasingly important part of our lives. We must be ready.

Good ways of using technology include
- the development of a web page or
- putting an interesting message on the office answering machine or voice mail.

Place

In today's world, flexibility is a key word. There are many volunteer contributions that can be done without coming into an office. The manager must consider "where" the volunteer contribution can be made. Some activities lend themselves to being carried out in a variety of locations. By offering choices where possible, it will increase the number of people who will be able to participate. Why not have a few "virtual volunteers"? Their contribution can be done in their home or office and e-mailed to the agency.

Implementation of the Recruitment Plan

In order to see how volunteer recruitment works in practice, let us take a particular volunteer role and work through it as an example.

Assignment: Recycling Volunteer

> *Volunteers are required to assist in the organization's recycling program. Responsibilities include collecting aluminium and glass material from a variety of collection bins, transporting these materials to a central location, and sorting them.*

What type of individual is likely to fit with the recycling project? There are a number of possibilities.
Public opinion polls suggest that the younger generation is keenly committed to environmental issues. Therefore, the person might be an individual between the ages of 12 and 30 who is physically fit and keenly concerned about the environment. The individual probably belongs to one or more environmental organizations, in their school and in their community.

Another possibility is an individual with limited skills who obtains satisfaction from completing routine tasks. There are many organizations involved in helping such people obtain training and work experience.

A third possibility is a person associated with a corporation that has an interest in the project.

Let us consider how approaches could vary according to target markets. Let us look first at youth. Using the grid in defining the "product", one may check off "service" "making a contribution" "involvement/participation", "social contact" and "cause/issue". Out of all of these, the manager needs to determine which motivation is the primary one and which are secondary. In this case, the primary motivation might be "cause/issue", followed by "social contact" and the others. The message needs to address these motivations with the correct emphasis being placed.

The recruitment might start by contacting community environmental groups and school science clubs. To meet the need of social contact, social interaction can be built into the volunteer contribution by including regularly scheduled social events for volunteers or by starting a club.

Next, let us consider adult work experience. In this case, the message will probably be addressed to an agency or program involved in finding meaningful placements for individuals with limited skills and experience. Looking at the grid, "achievement", "involvement and participation" "skills development", "work experience" and "status/perception" might be checked off. Of these, the primary motivation of the agency will probably be "work experience". If they are doing an effective job for their clients, they will also be concerned about "status/perception" and "achievement".

Now for the corporate sector. Corporations are very concerned about "status/perception", "power/leadership" and "altruism". Perhaps, "status/perception" could be considered the primary motivation in this case, followed by the others. A corporation or group of corporations who want to help keep their neighbourhood beautified by initiating a recycling project could be identified

Assess Results and Modify

Volunteer recruitment is a creative, dynamic process that needs constant evaluation. As the recruitment plan is implemented, successes and failures must be evaluated and the approach modified accordingly. What was thought might work, may not work at all or may have limited success. The key question is "why the approach is not working?". It is also important to know why other approaches are working well and why. This will build on successes and minimize failures.

In the recycling example, recruitment may result in a number of students who are environmentally minded coming forward to help with the project, but not enough to fulfil the workload requirement of the program. These volunteers may be enlisted to help with the organizational aspects of the program. On the other hand, if enquiries with the training organizations were fruitful, an agency may be willing to work to supply a stream of candidates interested in work experience and willing to take on the project. Finally, a corporation may not be able to supply workers, but may be willing to provide advice on the financial aspects of the project, and may be willing to donate equipment and supplies to make it happen. Because a multifaceted approach to recruitment has been taken, a multifaceted response has been received from the community, which will result in the success of project.

Most managers of volunteer resources will be recruiting for a number of different volunteer opportunities in a number of different target markets simultaneously. Developing methods for tracking the success of various recruitment initiatives is key. Including a section on the application form or a question during the interview process on how the person found out about volunteering may provide valuable insights. Keeping track of the results will assist with future recruitment planning.

Endnotes

[1] Smith, Buchlin, & Associates, *The Complete Guide to Non-profit Management,* John Wiley & Sons Inc., 1994, Page 94.

[2] Gelatt, James P., *Managing Non-profit Organizations in the 21st Century,* Oryx Press, 1992, Page 35.

[3] Parker, Martha, *Project Kaleidoscope - Cross Cultural Partnerships in Volunteerims,* Calgary, Alberta: The Volunteer Centre of Calgary, February 1992, page 12.

[4] Vineyard, Sue, *Marketing Magic for Volunteer Programs,* Downers Grove, Illinois: Heritage Arts Publishing, 1984, page 18.

[5] Vineyard, Sue, idid., page 19.

[6] National Survey on Giving, Volunteering and Participating, Ottawa, Ontario: Statistics Canada, 1997, page 40.

[7] Floyd, Elaine, *Marketing with Newsletters*, St. Louis MO: EF Communications, 1991, Page 145 – 148.

Chapter Review

Effective volunteer recruitment requires a comprehensive knowledge of trends affecting volunteer activity and of the community in which one works.

1. List three current trends you have observed and discuss how they affect volunteer recruitment.
2. What is the marketing approach to recruitment?
3. Contact Statistics Canada or your local Municipal Planning Department and report on the population demographics for your area. How does this affect your recruitment strategy?
4. In the context of an organization of your choice, identify a need that can be filled by volunteers. Develop a recruitment plan which includes a position description, the target group and why you chose it, a media plan and why you chose it and a sample recruitment message.
5. Identify the nearest volunteer centre to you and discover whether or not it provides service to your community.

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CHAPTER 9: SELECTION, SCREENING & PLACEMENT

Key Points

This chapter is an introduction to volunteer selection, screening and placement. It is based on two key constructs. First, in most settings, the work done by volunteers is sufficiently responsible and complex to warrant the deployment of screening mechanisms that identify and exclude inappropriate and/or dangerous candidates. Second, the specific set of volunteer screening devices to be deployed for any given volunteer position must be selected based on the nature and requirements of the work to be done.

This chapter addresses

✔ the need to balance the needs of the organization with the needs of the volunteer;
✔ recent changes in both volunteering and legal standards require volunteer screening to become more rigorous
✔ policies and procedures that define and guide the screening process are mandatory
✔ 14 screening tools available are reviewed here
✔ how to choose screening mechanisms based on the demands of the position

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Choosing the appropriate volunteer to serve in an organization and placing that volunteer in a position that will best meet the needs of the volunteer as well as the needs of the organization is a major factor in the success of volunteer departments. More than that, it is the lynch pin that will protect the volunteer and the organization from the many risks that are inherent in providing the service.

In selecting, screening an placing volunteers, mangers will remember that the challenge is to create an exchange of value for value. The match between the volunteer and the position must achieve a balance between what the volunteer hopes to gain from the experience and what the organization hopes to achieve.

> The relationship between an organization and or program and its volunteers should reflect an exchange of value for value. (Johnstone, 1991)

Selection, the first step in the process, addresses finding the right volunteer (see the chapter on recruitment). Screening means ensuring that the volunteer and organization are not subjected to undue risk. Placement addressing finding the right job for the selected volunteer.

This process will consider

- the qualifications of potential volunteers;
- the availability of potential volunteers;
- the motivations of potential volunteers; and
- the availability of suitable positions.

These factors are all considered in the context of effective screening.

> "Increasing community and legal standards combined with increasing demands for public accountability and changes in the nature of volunteer work itself now require not-for-profit organizations to develop more intensive volunteer screening protocols than at any time in the history of the volunteer movement."
> (Linda L. Graff, 1997)

There is perhaps no aspect in the entire field of volunteer program management that has changed as dramatically or as quickly as volunteer screening.

I remember talking about volunteer screening in a workshop for managers of volunteers in the mid-1980's in which a participant remarked, in public, with full comfort, "Screening! We don't screen. We're too desperate for volunteers!" She worked in a residential facility for people with severe physical disabilities.

It was only a short time ago that the typical answer from most managers of volunteers to the question "Do you screen your volunteers?" would be something like, "Yes, we interview them."

Volunteer screening has typically been conceptualized as a single-action task that helped the manager of volunteers place candidates in the proper positions.

However, with recent high profile cases of abuse by staff and volunteers in positions of trust[1], the field has quickly come to understand that volunteer screening is a much more serious and complex matter.

The potential consequences of inadequate screening protocol are all too obvious:

- abuse of clients by volunteers;
- theft, fraud of agency or client resources;
- violence, sexual harassment towards clients, staff, or other volunteer;
- negative public relations for the agency resulting in a loss of public trust;
- personal or organizational liability resulting in damaging and potentially ruinous law suits.

Ensuring that the best volunteer candidates have been recruited and placed has always been important. But over the last five years, screening has become as much a matter of doing everything reasonable to keep the bad apples out as about achieving a proper fit between the volunteer's skills/interests and the demands of the volunteer position. That is, screening has become as much about techniques to keep the inappropriate or dangerous candidates out as it is about locating and placing the best candidates for the position.

It is important to clarify two parameters about screening at the outset. First, there are no foolproof screening techniques that can guarantee that all 'bad apples' will be detected and excluded. There is no screening device in the world that comes with a guarantee. Prospective volunteers who are ill-suited or ill-intended can occasionally slip through even the most intensive screening protocol. Managers of volunteers and agency administrators are advised to recognize this critical point.

Second, there are no absolutes in screening. That is, even the most experienced, skilled, and knowledgeable manager of volunteers will still need to exercise his or her best judgement about the specific set of screening devices to be used for each volunteer position.

Nonetheless, it is equally important for managers of volunteers to recognize that there is a wide range of screening mechanisms available, and that when they are used in the appropriate combination, volunteer screening can be highly effective in lessening the likelihood of harm and decreasing organizational liability even if a 'bad apple' does slip through.

For volunteer screening to be as effective as possible, volunteer-based organizations and the managers of volunteers who work for them need, first of all, to acknowledge that things can go seriously wrong when volunteers are inappropriately placed or volunteers with criminal or sinister intent slip through the screening protocol. Only when the worst is faced can managers of volunteers be freed to construct reasonably thorough screening systems that will generate volunteer placements that are both safe and productive for all.

Volunteers and Paid Staff: Parallel Systems Advised

Unless otherwise stated, all that follows applies equally to paid and unpaid staff. It is now widely acknowledged that the work of volunteers in many, if not most, settings increasingly approximates that of paid staff. That is volunteer work has become more complex, responsible, and sophisticated. In many settings it is the 'real work' of the organization. Further, volunteers are typically placed in direct service activities. Volunteers are 'on the front lines' working directly with clients, consumers, participants, and the general public, often right alongside paid staff. Volunteers are no longer relegated to the menial, routine chores in back rooms.

Reflecting these changes in volunteering, precedent-setting cases have established that the legal system in Canada is beginning to consider volunteers as employees, making them subject to the same legislation and standards that apply to paid workers[2].
Therefore, volunteers need to be managed in almost all respects as if they were paid staff. Volunteers, too, require organizational systems and management practices. In this sense, the same principles of screening that apply to paid staff should be applied equally to volunteers.[3]

Conceptualizing Screening: Perception and Understanding Shape Behaviour

It seems obvious to say that how a situation is perceived will shape how one responds to it. One might see an object with four legs, a seat, and a back, understand it to be a chair, and therefore sit on it. One might see the very same object being wielded above a person's head in a menacing fashion, perceive it as a weapon, and run from it.

How screening is conceptualized shapes how screening is operationalized. That is, how screening is conceptualized shapes the kinds of information sought and the kinds of screening mechanisms deployed.

Because there is a tendency to think of volunteering in the context of nice people doing good deeds, an extra effort may be necessary to acknowledge that there are dangerous candidates out there.

> It is a sad truth that individuals who prey on the vulnerable often seek out opportunities in the voluntary and public sectors, as paid or unpaid staff, looking for positions which provide significant access to the person and property of such individuals. (L. Street, 1996: 1.4)

This is not to say that the volunteer world is populated by dangerous and nefarious characters intent on doing harm to the weak and defenceless. But it is equally inaccurate to think that are no dangerous characters targeting volunteer work as the perfect access point to particularly vulnerable people. Volunteer screening protocol must be fact-based, and grounded in an often-regrettable but nonetheless realistic view of the world. Denial has no place in volunteer screening system design.

Additionally, a failure to detect critical information in the screening, selection and placement process that results in the placement of an otherwise good person in the wrong job, can have equally disastrous consequences.

It is argued, therefore, that volunteer screening needs to be constructed to ever-higher standards. The reliability, trustworthiness, skills and qualifications of volunteer staff are so critical, and the work that volunteers now do is so important, that there can be no substitute for careful, effective, thorough, and at times, tough, screening procedures.

Limitations To Screening Intensiveness

The mission or other organizational variables may limit the extent to which some agencies want to, or are able to preclude certain individuals from volunteer involvement. For example:

> *An organization that works in the criminal justice system may deliberately set out to recruit volunteers who have come into conflict with the law. Ex-offenders may have the most appropriate background to work with youth who are at risk of 'delinquency'.*
>
> *Persons who have survived their own ordeal with the mental health system may be ideal candidates for facilitating self-help groups of other survivors.*
>
> *Persons who have lost their licences because of drunk driving may be the perfect public education officer, providing testimonials regarding the consequences of such behaviour.*

Some organizations will have screening limitations embedded in their constitution. For example:

> *Organizations that have municipal politicians or other delegates appointed to their boards by outside bodies find themselves in an awkward position if they decide to implement, for example, reference checks, credit*

bureau checks, and/or police records checks on all incoming board members. This is not to suggest that any appointed volunteer should be exempted from the screening protocol, but rather that organizations may find it awkward or strategically difficult to apply the same standards to all.

None of the above approaches is inherently right or wrong. But each circumstance like the examples noted above brings a unique context to the screening enterprise. Each organization needs to work within its own parameters, its own values system, and its own way of doing business. It is recommended, however, that barriers and limitations to otherwise reasonable and appropriate screening policies be carefully scrutinized for their implications for safety and effectiveness.

The key point here is that each organization needs to consider carefully its screening and placement processes in light of all existing risks, staying alert to the dangers it chooses to live with, and those that can be reduced either through screening and exclusion, or through any number of other techniques such as team work, increased supervision, and on-site delivery only.

Legal Principles In Screening

Screening appropriately and thoroughly will, in most cases mean finding a fine legal balance point between:

- screening adequately to protect the well-being of clients, other personnel, and the general public, and;
- respecting the legitimate legal rights of applicants

Screening too much or too little can result in real injury and loss, in addition to very expensive and time consuming legal action.

> The key question - the essential question at the heart of all screening system design is this:
>
> *How is a manager of volunteers to determine with any certainty just how to screen for any given position?*
>
> Should the screening protocol include a police records check or not? Should it include reference checks? If yes, how many, from whom? Is it sufficient to take notes from a reference check done by phone, or should the reference be asked to sign off on notes taken from the phone conversation with them? If a candidate says they have a certificate in early childhood education, is it enough to believe them, or should they be asked to show the original and permit a copy to be kept on file?

Unfortunately there are no definitive rules about how thorough is thorough enough without being too intrusive.

No one can say with any certainty or authority: With volunteers doing this kind of work, with this kind of consumer, in this kind of setting, with this kind of supervision and support, here are the five techniques that must be used in the screening protocol.

Much remains a matter of circumstance, judgement, and which lawyer is consulted for advice!

There are, however, two general sets of legal rules that should guide screening decisions. The first set of rules pertains to the rights of the individuals being screened; the second set of rules pertains to the organization's responsibility to screen thoroughly enough to protect volunteers, clients, staff, and the general public from harm and the organization and its personnel from liability.

The Legal Rights Of Candidates

For the most part, the legal rights of candidates that pertain to screening are those protected by Human Rights legislation.

While the legislation that influences volunteer screening is set provincially, and varies from province to province, human rights legislation essentially prohibits discrimination with respect to employment (among other things such as contracts, accommodation, services, etc.) on a number of specific grounds such as race, colour, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and so on.[4] It is recommended that all volunteer screening protocol comply with provincial human rights legislation, even in provinces where volunteer work is not explicitly covered by the legislation.

Human rights legislation instructs employers not to refuse to accept a candidate because of any characteristic not directly related to the work the he or she is applying to do.

Most managers of volunteers are familiar with this legislation, and understand that for both legal and ethical reasons, volunteer screening policies should comply with it. But many managers do not understand that the above prohibition is only one half of what the legislation says.

If we cannot use the variable of a candidate's age in the selection process, how do we avoid an accusation of discrimination from the 13 year old applicant not accepted as the new board chair? How might we avoid legal action for discrimination from the male candidate who is not accepted as a volunteer in the shelter for abused women even though he appears to meet the minimum requirements of the position?

The answer lies in the other half of the legislation, which reads:

- unless it's a bone fide (in good faith) occupational requirement.

That is, if gender, physical ability, age, *or any other characteristic* is a bona fide requirement of the position, it is a legitimate line for inquiry in the screening process and can be considered in the screening decision. Whatever is outside of the requirements of the position is out of bounds to the screening process.

To illustrate, when screening candidates for the volunteer gardener position at the local day care centre, asking about a candidate's expertise and experience handling money, or checking a candidate's credit bureau rating would not only be inappropriate, it could possibly be construed as an invasion of privacy. The reason is simple: there is no connection between that line of inquiry and the bona fide occupational requirements. In contrast, ensuring that gardener candidates have the physical strength and stamina to rake leaves, turn sod, and mow grass in 30 degree heat, would be entirely appropriate.

Asking about a candidate's experience handling other people's money, or indeed, uncovering a history of fraud, embezzlement, and/or even a credit bureau check, might be entirely appropriate as screening mechanisms for candidates applying to be the treasurer of a board of directors, or the bookkeeper for the local theatre troupe.

Hence, the *requirements of the position* establish what should and should not be investigated as part of the screening process. The requirements of the position dictate what questions can be included in the application form, what questions can be asked in the interview, what topics can be discussed with references, and on what basis the final hiring decisions are taken.

> Here is a key legal boundary around screening:
>
> *The screening protocol for any position must be directly connected to, and indeed is determined by, the bona fide occupational requirements.*

Screening Is Not A Euphemism For Discrimination

While screening is an admitted mechanism for exclusion, screening should never exclude anyone just because he or she does not fit someone's notion of the "ideal" volunteer.

Mere ideas or beliefs should not be used to screen applicants out, unless a particular approach, philosophy, or belief system is integral to the way the work is to be done and therefore constitutes a bona fide occupational requirement. Even then, one must be cautious to separate a candidate's personal beliefs from his or her ability to perform the job as described. One might be totally repelled by the practice of tobacco smoking but still be able to volunteer on the rehabilitation wing which requires helping patients get to the smoking room. <u>**Conduct**</u> should be the basis for exclusion.[5]

The underlying principle here is that "difference" or "diversity" should never be considered a disqualifier. Screening thoroughly is not a licence to discriminate, nor will it be found so by a court of law.

Screening Thoroughly Enough

While human rights legislation establishes certain boundaries of legal inquiry in screening, and in particular, which screening devices might not be appropriate, it does not clearly specify which types of screening should be deployed, or identify how thorough the screening system should be. That is, human rights legislation speaks to how much screening is too much, but it does not speak to how much is enough. In this regard, managers of volunteers must take into consideration not only what screening mechanisms they believe will elucidate the appropriateness of applicants, but also what the courts might consider to have been adequate if a volunteer ends up doing harm.

> Determining how thoroughly volunteers should be screened to satisfy the courts should something go wrong and a subsequent allegation of negligence be levelled is perhaps the most difficult assessment that any manager of volunteers will face on the job.
>
> There are no absolutes and very few guidelines. (Graff)

The manager of volunteers who does not screen adequately enough, who does not pursue all reasonably appropriate lines of inquiry, or who fails to detect indicators of unsuitability in volunteer applicants risks not only inappropriate or sub-standard performance from volunteers, but, indeed, may endanger the well-being of consumers, staff, and others connected to the organization, as well as expose the organization to liability.

The manager of volunteers must ask: How thoroughly should volunteers be screened? What screening mechanisms are available? Which screening mechanisms should be deployed for various volunteer positions?

How Thorough? The Duty Of Care

While there is no equivalent to the Highway Traffic Act in volunteer screening that defines precisely what each party is expected to do in every eventuality, there is a general principle in law called the *Duty of Care* which does bear on the question of legal responsibility in screening.

The duty of care, which an organization owes to its clients, staff, volunteers (including the board), and to some extent to members of the general public who come into contact with the organization's services, requires the organization to do everything it reasonably can to deliver its programs and conduct its affairs in a safe, adequate, and well-managed manner. Organizations must tend to the safety and well-being of persons in their care as well as to that of their staff, volunteers, and the community in general.

For volunteer screening, this means that organizations have a legal, as well as an ethical, responsibility to screen and place carefully all of the paid and unpaid staff it engages.

The legal rule is that an organization must take reasonable steps to protect others from harm. Where an organization's clients are vulnerable, there is a correspondingly greater burden to protect them from harm[6], and the growing trend is towards more sophisticated investigation of the applicant's background and qualifications[7].

Ignorance is neither morally nor legally defensible. The organization that fails to screen thoroughly enough, that fails to pursue information that was available, runs the dual risks of harm to clients allegation of negligence.

Create Proof

Of course one hopes it never happens, but if a legal action alleging negligent screening practice is brought against an organization, the organization will be faced with the task of proving that it was not negligent, that it acted with reasonable care in its screening practices. The lesson here is that it may not be sufficient to be thorough. The best practice model dictates that organizations must create proof that they have exercised reasonable diligence.

Ask these questions:

- Are records in place that define organizational protocol?
- Is there concrete evidence that those procedures are being followed?

The Sliding Scale Of Screening

So what should an organization's screening protocol look like? How does a manager of volunteers decide what specific screening devices should be used?

> Herein lies the fundamental principle of screening:
>
> *The policies and procedures of volunteer screening are determined by the nature of the work to be done.*

Perhaps the most important point about volunteer screening is that the specific set of screening devices to be deployed must be determined by the demands - the bona fide occupational requirements - of the position. Pursuing information not related to the position risks allegations of discrimination or invasion of privacy. Not pursuing information related to the position brings the risk of sub-standard performance, danger to clients, and the allegation of negligence if harm, loss or damage result.

So the only way to determine what screening devices should be used is to consider very carefully the nature and demands of the work that volunteers will be asked to perform.

This is what we call the *Sliding Scale of Screening*: the kind and extent of screening required should be determined by the characteristics and demands of the work to be done. The more demanding, complex, risky, responsible, dangerous, direct the work, the more thorough the screening protocol should be:

- If volunteers are to roll bandages, hand out programs, or stuff envelopes, the screening protocol can probably be minimal.

- If volunteers are to work with children or other vulnerable populations, perform physically or intellectually challenging functions, or engage in any otherwise risky or demanding work, screening must be correspondingly more thorough.

So, how does one determine the relevant nature and characteristics of the job?

The basic premise is that the key elements of each position need to be assessed.

John Patterson[8] suggests three broad categories of assessment:

1. the vulnerability of the client
2. the requirements of the position
3. the directness of the relationship between the volunteer and the client

Each is examined below.

1. The vulnerability of the client

Assess the vulnerability of the clients/participants/students/consumers/... with whom the volunteer will work directly or come into contact. Consider factors such as age, language and communication skills, maturity, disability, isolation, dependence, history of abuse, powerlessness, and so on.

The principle is that the more vulnerable the clients, the greater the obligation on the part of the organization to more carefully attend to their well-being.

In some positions, the 'client' with whom the volunteer works might be the organization. For example, members of boards of directors, administrative volunteers such as bookkeepers, fundraisers, and so on all serve the organization. In such instances, consider the vulnerability of the organization to exploitation, criminal action, or any other form of abuse.

2. The requirements of the position:

Consider the demands of the position, including dimensions such as:

- complexity;

- responsibility;
- degree of risk (to the volunteer, client, staff, agency reputation, property, and general public).

The premise is that the greater the demands of the position, the more rigorous the screening ought to be. John Patterson suggests consideration of six aspects of each position.

Degree of Supervision

Consider these questions:

- How well are volunteers supervised: regularly, thoroughly?
- Are volunteers continually or regularly observed while at work?
- Is feedback on volunteers' performance frequently sought by the supervisor from co-workers or clients?

Degree of Isolation

Consider these questions:

- Do volunteers work off-site? Are they located in a different office from the supervisor? in a remote setting?
- Do volunteers have unsupervised contact with a vulnerable client?
- Do clients ever visit volunteers' homes?
- Do volunteers ever visit the clients' homes?

Degree of Physical Contact

Consider these questions:

- Does the position, by definition involve physical contact between the volunteer and the client/participant?
- Is this a coaching position where the coach needs to physically demonstrate or position a student or program participant?
- Is there a rehabilitation component to this position in which volunteers are required to mobilize limbs or physically support the movements of patients?
- Does the position involve working with young children in a setting where touching, hugging, lifting, toileting, etc. are not only inevitable but intrinsic aspects of the position?
- Is this a residential setting for clients that presents greater opportunity or likelihood for physical proximity?
- Does the position help clients change clothes, bathe, or accomplish other personal activities?

Degree of Physical Demands

Consider these questions:

- Does the position require extreme physical exertion, significant physical strength, or endurance?
- Is a specialized physical ability or skill required to successfully fill this position, such as helping a consumer transfer from wheelchair; athletics; coaching; carrying and operating a chain saw;
- Might the position subject the volunteer to extremes of heat or cold?
- Is this a position in which the volunteer will experience stress, emotional strain, burnout?

Degree of Trust/Degree of Temptation

Consider these questions:

- Will the volunteer have access to confidential client or organizational information?
- Will the volunteer be expected to handle or manage the organization's or the client's funds?
- Will the volunteer come into regular contact with other financial instruments or resources such as a cheque book or donations in the mail?
- Are volunteers working at a fundraising event (e.g., bingo, charity casino, carnival, garage sale) at which cash transactions are commonplace?

Degree of Risk Inherent in the Task

Consider these questions:

- Does the position involve transportation of clients, and in particular, vulnerable clients?
- Is there potential for the volunteer to come in contact with bodily fluids, infectious diseases?
- Does the position require the volunteer to assume personal safety or liability risks such as in fighting fires, working on a construction site, or being on the board of an organization faced with a funding shortfall?

3. The directness of the relationship between the volunteer and the client

How direct is the relationship between volunteers and the people with whom they work? What is the nature of the contact? Patterson[9] advises managers of volunteers to consider the relationship along the following dimensions:

- Will the volunteer spend solitary time with client when there is a likelihood that no one else is nearby?
- How much dependence does the relationship involve between the volunteer and the client? Is this, for example a friendly visiting or companionship kind of position in which the relationship might grow intense and somewhat exclusive?
- What is the frequency of contact between the client and the volunteer and how much time do they spend in each other's company when they are together? A server with a meal delivery program might see a client four times each week, but only for three or four minutes each time. Contrast that with a volunteer assistant who spends 24 hours a day with children on a week-long canoe trip in a wilderness environment;
- How long is the relationship expected to last? in some positions, the ideal volunteer/client match could last a decade or more.

All of the above considerations should influence screening tool choices. Remember the underlying premise is this:

THE SLIDING SCALE RULE

The thoroughness of the screening process should increase with the demands of the position, including the vulnerability of the client, the nature and requirements of the tasks to be assigned, and the intensiveness of the relationship between the volunteer and the client.

Screening Tools

Screening should not be considered a single task activity. In fact, a full range of screening tools are available to managers of volunteers.

Every screening mechanism brings advantages and limitations. Each tool allows the manager of volunteers a limited window on a specific aspect of a candidate's qualifications and character. No single screening mechanism, alone, can reveal complete or sufficient information on which to base the selection decision.

> Regardless of the intensiveness and thoroughness of the screening process, a leap of judgement will still be required regarding whether a volunteer is qualified and appropriate for the position. In this sense, there are no foolproof devices, and no device comes with a guarantee. The challenge is to do as much as is possible, reasonable, ethical, appropriate, and legal, to achieve an organizational comfort level with information gathered and decisions taken. (Linda L. Graff, 1997)

The challenge is to put together the appropriate set of screening devices that, together, provide enough information to make the final selection and placement decision.

The requirements of the position will, for the most part, dictate, which constellation of screening tools should be used.

Different sets of tools should be used for different positions.

There is a large set of screening devices available to managers of volunteers. Fourteen of the most widely used, practical, and readily available have been selected for review here. They are as follows:

1. Job Description
2. Pre-Application
3. Application
4. Interview
5. Reference Checks
6. Qualification Checks
7. Police Records Checks (Criminal Records Checks)
8. Driver's Record Checks
9. Credit Bureau Check
10. Performance Assessment
11. Home Visit
12. Medical/(Psychological) Tests
13. Orientation and Training
14. Probation

In the next section we will briefly explore each of these 14 screening mechanisms, and some of the considerations in their application.

Job Descriptions

Written job descriptions - for paid and unpaid staff - are powerful risk management tools, as well as being the personnel management tool they are usually understood to be. A written job description defines what the volunteer person is supposed to do and not supposed to do.

> The expectations of the position form the basis upon which qualifications for the position are determined and therefore, they also form both the legal and ethical foundation for the screening process. (Graff)

The duties specified in the job description guide both the nature and extent of screening required.

Here is how we define "bona fide" in human rights terms.

If the position calls for the candidate to work directly with clients, the areas to screen on may include:

- how well the person relates to others;
- indications of abusive behaviour - at least in similar settings, if not anywhere;
- the candidate's ability to relate to persons of diverse cultural or racial background.

Remember that if a position calls for these kinds of skills and background, then the requirements should be clearly and thoroughly outlined in the job description.

The nature of the work also has implications for the extensiveness of the screening process to be applied. For example, if the volunteer is to have contact with clients only in group settings under direct supervision, the screening may need to be less exhaustive than if the position requires the volunteer to visit isolated clients in their own homes. If the gardener's assistant will never be expected to operate a chain saw, a power take off, or a backhoe, <u>and</u> if he or she will never be in a position to spend time alone with clients in an isolated area of the grounds, then screening may need to go no further than assessing relevant knowledge (does the candidate know the difference between a canna lily and a dandelion?) and physical ability (does the candidate have the physical strength and stamina to use tools such as shovels and rakes for two to three hours at a time?)

It is critical that the specifics of the task and the qualifications are outlined in the job description. If the position on the board requires good decision-making abilities, the job description should ask for more than Tuesday night availability.

Because the job description provides the legal basis for screening inquiries there must be clear and defensible continuity between what the job description specifies and the types of screening techniques applied in the selection and placement process. Screening more or less intensively that the job description call for can be dangerous and illegal.[10]

Pre-Application Devices

Helping prospective volunteers to screen themselves out is the most effective and humane screening device available. Whatever can be done early on to help volunteers understand the nature of the work, its demands and its requirements will go a long way to reducing the number of inappropriate applications in the first place, and the number of times the manager will have to decline candidates' offers of assistance.

Here are three examples of pre-application screening devices.

a) Recruitment Publicity

It is important to recognize that screening begins before candidates even make contact with an organization. How the work of volunteers is portrayed, how the position is advertised, how detailed the information provided about minimum qualifications, all of these help volunteers to determine whether a position sounds attractive, interesting, and appropriate.

If volunteers are to perform important, demanding, or risky work, then position requirements must be portrayed accurately in recruitment publicity. This is not intended to discourage good candidates from applying, but rather to help inappropriate candidates to self-identify.

b) First Contact

When a candidate has made the effort to make contact about volunteering, the very first message she or he receives can be a powerful screening mechanism.

Consider these two messages from the organization's receptionist:

> "Hello, Acme Home Support Agency.
>
> Oh, gee thanks for calling. Yes we are looking for new friendly visiting volunteers. In fact, we're running our volunteer orientation session this week and I know it isn't full yet. Are you available to join us at 7:00 Thursday evening? I'm sure the Volunteer Coordinator would be delighted to have you involved in the program."

and

> "Hello, Acme Home Support Agency.
>
> Thank you so much for your interest in our friendly visiting program. Our volunteers do such important work for seniors in our community. Have you ever had contact with our organization before? No? Well let me give you a bit of information about the position. That will give you a better idea of how we do things around here, and what the position entails... before you go through the trouble of starting the application process since we are not always able to accept the offer of volunteer time from all of our applicants.
>
> The reason we carefully consider every volunteer application is to make sure that Acme provides the very best service possible to every senior we work with. I am sure that you would want to make sure that we did the same if one of your family members was receiving service from us, wouldn't you?..."

The message about how the organization values volunteers and their work starts here. It is important to be clear about what the agency's needs are, whether applications are being accepted (and if not, other agencies the volunteer may contact including the local Volunteer Centre), what the application process is, and what the next step is.

The requirements of the job should never be minimized or undersold. It is tempting to do so so as not to scare away prospective volunteers, but full disclosure is always the best practice for three reasons:

- clarifying the importance of the work and the significant responsibilities placed on the volunteer simply reveals the truth;

- to mask or diminish the seriousness of the volunteer contract is to do a disservice to all;
- if expectations are not articulated, how can volunteers be expected to meet them?

Provide as much information as possible and appropriate at the outset. Many volunteers who would be 'unsuccessful applicants' to the program will screen themselves out if given sufficient information.

c) Applicant Response Letter

Follow up on all first contacts with a response in writing. Send to all who express interest a brochure of the service and a description of the position that includes minimum requirements. Be sure to indicate that acceptance as a volunteer with the program is not automatic, and that the screening process is an occasion for mutual assessment.

Provide full information about which screening procedures will be followed for each position. The general rule here is one of *No Surprises*. All volunteers should know from the outset precisely what the screening protocol will involve, before they begin any part of it.

Application

All prospective employees should complete a written application form which forms the basis of their 'personnel file' with the organization.

There is a wide range of information that can be obtained through the application form, including:

- demographics: name, address, phone number, etc;
- qualifications: skills, education, training, licence, driving/accident record;
- equipment/vehicle specifications: computer, operating system, IBM/ Apple, etc;
  - car: year, make, model, ease of entry, carrying capacity; insurance information such as type and limits of coverage, company name, broker;
- medical conditions that may affect ability to perform position requirements;
- availability: day of week, time of day, frequency, length of shift;
- preferred working conditions or limits (e.g., likes working with children; does not want to work with children; likes working outside; prefers inside work; likes to work alone; is pursuing volunteer work to meet and socialize; feels comfortable driving on highway/ country/city roads in bad/ only good weather; will/not drive at night);
- reason/motivation for volunteering;
- how the applicant heard of the position;
- relevant paid and unpaid work history; other skills (e.g., C.P.R., first aid, driver education, defensive driving, etc.): include dates of service, description of duties, name of employer and immediate supervisor with addresses and telephone numbers to facilitate verification of the information;
- background: any other relevant experience that relates to the position in question;
- references: best practice suggests wherever the names of references are requested, one must also require the candidate to provide explicit (signed) permission for the organization to

actually contact those references in connection with the current application;

- authenticity: a statement indicating that the applicant certifies that the information provided is true and accurate;
- authorization to verify: a statement indicating that the applicant grants permission to the organization to verify the information included on the application form;
- signature and date.

Please note that not all agencies will seek all of these types of information; not all of it will be relevant to all positions; some information gathering may wait until the personal interview, or be obtained on separate forms (insurance, medical, references, etc.).

It is recommended that the draft application form be reviewed by legal counsel (and the Human Rights Commission, where they are willing to provide such a service) to ensure compliance with all relevant legislation.

Interview(s)

The personal interview has traditionally been the cornerstone of most screening processes. While a personal interview may not be possible or practical in the selection of volunteers for some of the shorter term and/or special events positions, most volunteer departments will include personal interviews in the screening protocol for most volunteer positions.

The personal interview allows a face to face interaction, often the first opportunity for the candidate and the manager of volunteers (or other selection personnel) to meet. The interview allows the interviewer to pick up on all sorts of verbal and non-verbal cues, assess manner of personal presentation, style of relating, verbal communication skills, and non-verbal communication characteristics.

The interview permits in depth exploration of position-related attitudes, perspectives, and issues. Here is a chance for truly mutual exchange, an important point in the screening process since, to this point, the agency has typically been doing all the asking. Here, too, is the opportunity for candidates to check out the site, the organization, its setting and culture, and ask for all of the information they need to make their own decisions.[11]

While details about how to conduct a proper interview are beyond the scope of the present chapter, three key thoughts about the personal interview are offered below to round out this discussion of this key screening device.

First, keep the importance of the personal interview in perspective. Certainly this is an opportunity to obtain more information, and different kinds of information, than will have been gathered to date, but remember that the interview is just *one* element in a much lengthier and more complex screening process. Resist the temptation to put too much emphasis on the interview results. Do not use it as the sole basis for applicant selection. As Patterson[12] cautions:

> *Keep in mind the interview represents one brief exposure to an applicant who may not have developed good interview skills or may just be having a bad day.*

Second a good personal interview is a two-way process. It is the primary opportunity for mutual exchange and mutual screening. Do not become so focused on the organization's need for information that the needs and rights of the candidate are ignored.

Third, every screening mechanism has its limitations, and the personal interview is no exception. Do not further limit its potential by thinking of the interview only in terms of a one-to-one encounter. There are different interview models available:

- first interview (the interviewer and candidate only);
- first interview (the interviewer and a colleague and the candidate);
- first interview (the interviewer and a colleague and a group of candidates);
- second and subsequent interviews with any of the above variations;
- second and subsequent interviews with different organization representatives than the in the first interview.

Each of the above options brings its own opportunities and limitations. Each allows a different angle on candidates' qualities. Consider designing an interview protocol that mixes these models at various stages of the screening process. Do not limit your options!

Reference Checks

Reference checks are a fundamental feature of most screening protocols.

Of course there is no way to guarantee that references will provide complete or fully candid details. But several references, particularly when the different types that are reviewed below are used in combination, can often reveal extremely useful, and often surprisingly candid information.

Be certain that the candidate's <u>written permission</u> to contact referees is obtained in advance. Best practice indicates that the mere inclusion of the name of the referee on an application form or resume does not constitute permission to contact.

There are three different types of references to consider in the screening protocol:

Professional References

These references are provided by referees who have known the candidate in a work (paid or unpaid) capacity. Typically these references are provided by a supervisor or manager of volunteers from a candidate's previous employment or volunteer placement. They are most useful when provided by someone who directly supervised the candidate, rather than by someone from the personnel department whose only contact has been through reading a file.

Personal/Character References

These references can add another piece of useful information to the decision regarding candidate suitability. In this form the referee is typically someone who has known the candidate for some time and is in a position to speak to the volunteer's character, other (although always job-related) personal characteristics, and general appropriateness for the position. Potential sources of character references would include teachers, ministers/ rabbis/priests, and physicians.

Family References

References from members of the candidate's family have traditionally been considered inappropriate and worthless. Current wisdom suggests reconsideration of this form as a potential screening device. The thinking goes this way: family members are in a position to know things about a candidate that no one else has an opportunity to experience. (Remember it was the Unibomber's brother who was in a position of identify the culprit when years of intensive investigation by multiple law enforcement agencies came up empty handed.) When such knowledge pertains to job-related characteristics, it can prove invaluable.

In addition, current wisdom suggests that family members, more than anyone else, may have a personal interest in the success of the candidate. They, more than a previous employer for example, do not want the candidate to be placed inappropriately or in a position from which they can do harm. This factor may, in fact, compel family members to be more candid (rather than less candid and truthful) than other references. Further, in the end, family members will likely be the least concerned about an allegation of slander or defamation by the candidate.

Choose the number and type of reference checks according to the requirements of the position and the kinds of characteristics of candidates that need investigation.

Document all reference notes thoroughly, and keep them on file.[13]

It is advisable that any negative information received from a referee be checked out with the candidate. There may be legitimate reasons for discrepancies that are not immediately apparent or that may be legitimately beyond the control of the candidate.[14] Discuss the findings with the candidate and give him or her a chance to explain

On Confidentiality

Wherever possible, do not promise confidentiality to the reference. If an organization promises to safeguard the source of reference information (and this is particularly pertinent to negative information about a candidate which influences the decision not to accept the application), it may be forced at some time in the future to either break that pledge of confidentiality, or justify a not-to-hire decision without apparent grounds. Either way can mean trouble.

Qualification Checks

Here is a screening tool that is very often overlooked but which, in fact, should be considered an essential component of most screening tool sets.

A qualifications check simply involves obtaining proof of a qualification(s) claimed by the candidate. Many human resource professionals - whether hiring paid or unpaid staff - simply accept as truth, candidate claims regarding all kinds of qualifications. Candidates are simply believed when they claim to have:

- a valid driver's licence - of the class required by the vehicle they would drive as a volunteer;
- a paid-up insurance auto premium with the minimum amount of protection specified by organization policy;
- a professional licence, certificate or academic degree (degree in computer programming, a C.A., first aid certificate, up to date CPR certification, bronze medallion, coaching certification, ...);
- up to date immunization.

Best practice dictates that when a specific qualification is essential to the position, and the candidate claims to have the qualification, ask for proof. Ask for a transcript of marks; ask to view the original degree or certificate and request a photocopy of same for the volunteer's personnel file.

This is a simple, unintrusive, and probably too often overlooked screening tool.

Police Records Checks

Increasing numbers of agencies are using police records checks as one measure of candidate acceptability. These checks provide information on the individual's previous contacts with the criminal justice system.

Police records checks were relatively rare as little as a decade ago. For a few years now, many organizations have been grasping onto on to the police records check as "the solution" to volunteer screening, assuming that a clear police records check guaranteed suitability, or at least, harmlessness. Many organizations have been requiring police records checks on all candidates for all positions, often regardless of the nature of the work and the relevance of previous criminal activity to candidates' suitability.

Latterly the severe limitations of the police records check have been acknowledged, and more widely publicized.[15] Yes there are dangerous individuals in the world, and it is acknowledged that some of them actually target volunteer work as an easy access point to vulnerable populations. But, many have not yet been caught and therefore have no criminal record, and many others know only too well how to avoid detection through a criminal records check. No organization should expect to turn up dozens of pedophiles, gerontophiles and convicted felons in its police records check procedures of volunteer candidates.

Having said that, police records checks are still an important element in the screening protocols of many organizations, and it is true that the very fact that an organization does police records checks serves as a deterrent to some inappropriate or dangerous candidates.

But, in fact, the best reason to conduct police records checks as part of the screening protocol lies not so much in the fact that they provide good information about the acceptability or suitability of candidates, but rather, because if a police records check is not conducted on a volunteer who ends up causing harm, the organization's degree of exposure to an allegation of negligence is enormous.

Conducting a police records check, particularly in combination with several other screening devices, will go a long way to demonstrate that an agency has not been negligent in its screening practices, even if a volunteer does cause harm, injury or loss at some point in the future.

Hence, the police records check is at least equally useful, if not more useful, as a risk management and liability reduction tool than it as a hiring and screening device.

To be clear about the message being delivered here: current wisdom strongly recommends the use of police records checks whenever volunteers work directly with (particularly vulnerable) clients, or whenever volunteers are placed in positions of trust. But the results of a police records check should not be relied on. In particular, beware false negatives. Use police records checks only in combination with other screening techniques.

Finally, because the actual data set searched, the specific protocol required, and the kind of information revealed through police records checks vary from community to community and from by police department to police department, managers of volunteers are advised to contact their own local police department to determine the process in operation in their vicinity.

Driver's Record Checks

Managers sometimes mistakenly assume that a police records check includes a driver's record check. Not so.

If driving a vehicle is part of what volunteers will be expected to do in their position (whether the volunteer drives an agency vehicle or their own is usually immaterial), it is advisable to investigate candidates' driving history for significant and relevant offences.

Most of the laws that govern driving are a matter of provincial legislation and driver's records checks are launched through the appropriate provincial transportation ministry.

Keep in mind that these checks cover a limited period of the driver's history, and like police records checks, a) are accurate only up to the date they are conducted and b) are not necessarily proof that past history is an accurate indicator of future behaviour.

Like all screening devices, the driver's record check has limitations, but it nonetheless constitutes one more piece of information to be considered in the overall selection process.

Credit Bureau Checks

Credit bureaux are private companies that collect enormous quantities of data on citizens. They collect info from sources such as:

- major department stores;
- major credit card companies;
- banks regarding loans and mortgages;
- court records of law suits, charges, convictions, bankruptcies, and liens on cars and other property;
- collection company files.

They know just about everything about what most people owe, how much, what the monthly payments are; they know one's precise financial position regarding debt and credit, and one's legal position in relation to finances.

Credit bureaux retain information on employment history, so they are helpful in confirming the accuracy of the employment history that candidates provide in the application process.

For a fee, and with the candidate's written permission, a credit bureau check can be supplied almost immediately.

The credit bureau check is of most utility when screening for positions that involve financial trust - bookkeepers, treasurers, fundraisers, collections personnel, and special events volunteers who come into contact with significant quantities of hard to track cash.

As with other screening devices, it may be wise to share with the volunteer himself or herself any negative information gathered through a credit bureau check. This not only provides candidates with the opportunity to explain their situation, but allows the manager the opportunity to ensure that the credit bureau has run a check on the right person.

Performance Assessments

There are some positions that require very specific skills, abilities, or specialized knowledge e.g., typing speed and accuracy, computer skills, ability to lift a certain weight, driving, working with young children or persons with specific kinds of disabilities. In these cases it is entirely appropriate for the employer to ask the candidate to demonstrate his or her ability.

There are two different kinds of performance assessments. The test run and the observation period.

The typing test is a classic example of the test run form of the performance test. Here are some others:

- Have the candidate demonstrate (to someone who knows enough about the job to be an accurate assessor) that they can turn on a computer, find their way through the main menu, get to the specified program application, and do some actual work;
- Have the person demonstrate (on a well/able person) their knowledge of how to transfer patients from a wheel chair to a car ;
- Take the grounds keeper applicants out to the garden and ask them to identify the plants, shrubs, trees, insects, ...;
- Ask the volunteer driver to take you for a test drive in the vehicle (or type of vehicle) to be used on the job, in the city or highway conditions volunteers typically encounter on the job.

Including a performance assessment in the screening protocol is not meant to suggest that skills can not be learned in training, but if a candidate claims a certain knowledge or skill, the performance test allows measurement of both the skill level and the degree of truth of the claim.

The second kind of performance test is the observation period. If the position requires working with specific populations (e.g., youth, seniors, young children, persons with learning disabilities, persons with physical disabilities) an observation period can be a useful element of the screening process.

During an observation period the applicant is asked to work with and interact with clients while being observed. Patterson[16] suggests that one look for factors in candidates such as these:

- has realistic expectations of the capabilities of the clientele;
- demonstrates comfort/familiarity with clients and/or the setting;
- demonstrates sense of humour;
- exhibits interest, warmth, enthusiasm, patience;
- uses positive techniques to guide behaviour;
- shows willingness to participate in all kinds of activities including unpleasant, messy, silly;
- comforts individuals who are distressed;
- interacts appropriately with, and supports other staff.

Home Visits

This screening technique is a special kind of interview that might be used in instances such as the following:

- where the employee is to engage in a close, long-term relationship with the client;
- where it can be anticipated that the client might be taken home by the employee (Big Sisters, Leisure Buddies, mentoring programs, etc.);
- where it can be anticipated that the client might come in contact with

members of the employee's household and they in turn need to be interviewed and screened.

Home visits provide a sense of the living conditions of the prospective candidate and the setting into which the client may be taken, as well as an opportunity to meet and, to some extent assess, other characters that the client may come in contact with in the volunteer's home.

Patterson[17], in speaking about home visits offers an important caution. Screening, by necessity, always involves some measure of judgement, but in perhaps no other screening device is the temptation to [18] be judgemental as great as in the performance of a home visit.

Patterson appropriately warns:

- a checklist should be designed in advance, and assessments made strictly on the objective criteria, again, always very clearly related to the requirements of the position;
- interviewers must be particularly sensitive to the privacy rights of the candidate and his or her household members;
- the person doing the home visit must be carefully selected and trained to conduct this measure in an objective and sensitive manner.

Medical/Psychological/Drug Testing

There are several types of medical tests that organizations have at their disposal, as always, to be deployed only when legitimated by the bona fide requirements of the position.

Agencies may require any number of the following medical tests:

- immunization or proofs thereof;
- medical certification of physical fitness to drive an automobile or other specified vehicle;
- medical certification of hand-eye coordination, or fine motor coordination;
- medical certification of fitness to operate other kinds of machinery or perform particularly arduous physical chores.

In certain, albeit rare, circumstances, organizations might even consider personality inventories, psychological testing, or certification of candidates' mental health as a prerequisite to acceptance.

Many of latter screening techniques are, of course, at the far end of the continuum with regard to intrusiveness, and their use should only be considered in the most special of circumstances. An exception to this rule is immunization, or proof thereof, which, in the case of T.B. testing, is a pre-requisite for all workers in settings such as hospitals and day care centres. Since a positive T.B. test would be an immediate disqualifier from service, it is a screening device that ought to be applied sooner rather than later. Why waste time on more intensive, costly screening procedures such as interviews and reference checks if the T.B. test, when done early, provides advance notice of unacceptability.

There are others in the arsenal of screening tools such as drug testing and even various forms of electro-mechanical devices such as lie detectors and psychological stress evaluators. One could also add hand writing analysis to the list although it would seem that all of these latter devices would rarely, if ever, be deployed with volunteers.

Orientation And Training

Volunteer acceptance can be delayed if more time or information is needed before the final hiring decision is made. This is particularly applicable in the volunteer situation, where provisional acceptance is granted while the volunteer completes orientation and training program(s). This pseudo-trial period offers the organization an opportunity to spend more time with the volunteer and determine what skills exist and can be acquired, and an opportunity to observe other characteristics such as interpersonal style, communication capabilities, attitudes, and so on. In return, the volunteer has an opportunity to spend some time on site, meet other staff and volunteers, gain a sense of the organizational culture and, in particular, a sense of what the organization's treatment of volunteers actually feels like.

This technique presents an excellent opportunity for more meaningful investigation and more mutuality in the screening process than many of the other techniques discussed so far.

To maximize the potential of orientation and training sessions as screening devices, include in them some of the following:

- role plays;
- exercises;
- values activities;
- relating/relationship experience.

Pay particular attention to beliefs, values, biases, attitudes, and judgement as well as specific skills exhibited by the volunteer.

If acceptance is delayed while both the agency and the volunteer check each other out, be certain that the volunteer knows that the final acceptance has not yet been granted.

Probation

As with paid staff, conditional acceptance can be granted through a probationary period for volunteers. This practice gives both the candidate and the agency an opportunity to test each other out in the real life setting. It allows either one to change their minds within a certain, set period, without penalty, and with limited explanation.

As with training as a screening device, build in to the probation period certain mechanisms to check performance, such as:

- a buddy system through which an experienced volunteer trains and monitors and provides feedback about the new recruit;
- more frequent and thorough supervision and monitoring during the probation period;
- using this time to deliver on-going or additional training if that might make the difference between a volunteer's suitability or non-acceptance.

The Balancing Act: Putting The Pieces Together

When the demands and requirements of each volunteer position have been fully assessed, the manager of volunteers is in a position to consider which constellation of screening tools will supply the necessary information to make his or her selection and placement decisions.

This task requires a careful balancing of a number of considerations.

Different positions have different requirements, producing the need for different types of information about candidates. Remember the assistant gardener and child care example. A volunteer assistant gardener at a day care centre would be screened in a very different manner than the child care volunteer who works directly with the children inside the day care centre.

Given that the application of each screening device will take time, effort, and in some cases money, the challenge is to carefully choose the right number and type of screening devices that will supply the appropriate kind of information needed, and no more.

The right type of information versus the time and expense of screening.

Information sought must be related to bona fide occupational requirements. The balance here is between what the organization legitimately needs to know to make the selection decision, and candidates' right of privacy.

Enough information versus candidates' right of privacy.

The third consideration in the choice of screening tools involves balancing the organization's need for sufficient detail to satisfy its duty of care (e.g., rule out dangerous or inappropriate candidates), against making the application process so complex and intrusive that prospective candidates simply decide not to bother.

Sufficient detail versus making the application process too complex.

Unfortunately, there are no absolutes, and very few guideline to assist managers of volunteers in this complex decision-making process. At this point in time when standards are shifting constantly, it is impossible to say with any certainty which set of screening tools is the right set for any given position. However, points are true.

First, standards are generally increasing. At the present time, and in particular in light of recent high profile cases of abuses by volunteers in positions of trust, the expectation is that organizations will be much more thorough in their volunteer screening practices than might even have been imagined as little as five years ago.

Second, the more complex and demanding the work required of volunteers, and the more vulnerable the clients and others with whom the volunteer will make contact while volunteering, the more thorough and intensive the screening protocol must be.

In the absence of definitive advice, managers are advised to regularly consult with their colleagues who work in similar organizations or who manage volunteers in similar positions because the standard of care (how thorough is thorough enough) is largely a community standard, established by current practice throughout the field. That is, what is generally practiced and considered reasonably appropriate and sufficient in the field will to a great extent influence legal decisions about whether particular actions or inactions were suitably diligent, or on the other hand, negligent.

Also be advised that because standards in volunteer screening are continually changing and, in general, increasing, it is critical that managers of volunteers keep talking with their colleagues about their screening practices, and keep current with the literature in the field of volunteer management. Only in this way is it possible to stay current with best practice models.

In addition, it is advisable to seek a legal opinion from time to time on what the standard of care might be as it develops in case law across the country. Ask someone with expertise in not-for-profit law, someone who is keeping watch for cases that might bear on the work of related organizations or set new standards of care that apply across the field.

Remember to document all screening efforts. Leave a paper trail of all screening activities, and ensure that appropriate documentation is retained in volunteers' personnel files.

Following are sample checklists that might assist with the documentation process. When the decision has been made regarding which screening tools to use for a specific volunteer position, create a custom checklist like illustration below. Two key benefits are generated. First, a checklist like this provides clear documentation of the full set of screening tools that need to be used in each position, and having a custom set of screening practices for each position demonstrates diligence in planning and management. Second, the checklist serves as a prompt to both complete all screening tasks and acquire all the necessary documentation for each task in the set.
Here are two illustrations of volunteer screening checklists. They are illustrations only. When your organization has decided which screening tools to use for any given position, create your own custom checklist.

VOLUNTEER SCREENING CHECKLIST: Sample #1

POSITION: VOLUNTEER DRIVER			
SCREENING DEVICE	**WHAT DOCUMENTATION ON FILE?**	**DATE COMPLETED**	**INITIAL**
application form			
personal interview			
reference checks - personal - work			
valid drivers licence			
drivers record check			
auto insurance verification			
physician's verification of fitness to drive			

VOLUNTEER SCREENING CHECKLIST: Sample #2

POSITION: CAMP COUNSELOR			
SCREENING DEVICE	**WHAT DOCUMENTATION ON FILE?**	**DATE COMPLETED**	**INITIAL**
application form			
personal interview - individual - group			
T.B. test			
reference checks - personal - work - family member			
valid drivers licence			
drivers record check			
police records check			
probation			

Screening As Ongoing

While largely beyond the scope of the present article, screening does not, in fact, end with the initial screening protocol. Once a volunteer has been accepted and placed, the organization continues to have a duty to ensure that the volunteer performs satisfactorily in his or her assigned position. Hence mechanisms such as performance reviews, evaluations, spot checks, and discipline and dismissal policies and procedures are, in effect, on-going screening mechanisms that allow the organization to be certain that the volunteer continues to be the right person for the position.

Organizations are also advised to consider, for their various positions, the need to repeat any of the initial screening mechanisms. For example, it may be advisable to periodically repeat a police records check, a driver's record check, or any other screening mechanism deemed appropriate to the position.

Remember, too, that when volunteers change positions within an organization, particularly if the new positions have substantially different responsibilities, volunteers may need to be subjected to a different set of screening mechanisms for the new position than they were when they applied for their initial/ previous position.

Consider these questions:

- Is a long standing employee (paid or unpaid) in a less-responsible position applying for a transfer to an area for which they were not previously screened?
- Is it necessary to re-interview and reassess an employee's skills, attitudes, judgement because the nature of his or her work has changed? he or she is working with different clients? the values/principles of the agency have changed?
- Is the employee engaged in very sensitive work? if yes, repeated police records checks, or credit bureau checks might be in order on a regularly scheduled basis to be sure that nothing has been reported since they were the last screening was done.

Remember that the organization always has the power to alter the job description, or place an individual in another job where the risks are less:

- the volunteer can be more closely supervised if suspicions are aroused;
- the volunteer can be placed in a different position with less vulnerable clients, or in a setting where people are always nearby;
- the volunteer can become part of a team so she or he is never alone with a client, the cash, the confidential records ....
- poor drivers can be reassigned to the premises; spendthrifts can be transferred away from access to cash or accounts.

Summary

Volunteering and volunteer work have changed dramatically in just the last few years. With the increasing responsibilities that have been assigned to volunteers has come increasing responsibilities on organizations to manage well the human resources they have mobilized.

As volunteers perform more sophisticated duties, and as they work more directly with increasingly vulnerable populations, there is a concomitant and direct increase in the dual burdens of responsibility and liability on the organizations that deploy volunteers.

As a result, volunteer screening needs to be ever more thorough to protect clients from harm, to ensure the safest and most productive volunteer experience for volunteers, and to fulfil legal and ethical responsibilities that require each organization to do everything reasonable for the safety and well being of all those to whom it owes a duty of care.

Until very recently, screening was viewed as a single task activity that is done and, in essence, forgotten. Best practice now dictates that screening be a multi-task effort that balances the sometimes competing factors of duty of care with candidates' rights. There is a wide range of screening devices available and fourteen of them have been briefly reviewed here. The challenge is to construct the right constellation of devices, based on the bona fide requirements of each position, that in combination, generate reasonably sound and defensible screening and placement decisions.

As yet there are no definitive rules about which specific tools are appropriate and sufficient for each type of volunteer position. We are able to offer only general guidance here on what we have called the sliding scale of screening which dictates that the nature and extent of the screening protocol must be determined by the work that the volunteer will be doing. As a general rule, the more demanding the position and the greater the vulnerability of the client, the more intensive and thorough the volunteer screening needs to be.

It is no longer sufficient to be appropriately diligent. One must also create proof that one has been so. Full documentation must be gathered and carefully stored in comprehensive personnel files for all volunteers.

Endnotes

[1] Street, Lorraine, *The Screening Handbook,* Ottawa, Ontario: Volunteer Canada, 1996, 1.4.

[2] Ibid., 15.1 - 15.7.

[3] The reverse also applies. In some settings the administrator of volunteers begins to apply more rigorous screening techniques with volunteers than the personnel department uses when hiring paid staff and soon they find their counterparts borrowing volunteer department policy and protocol to upgrade the paid staff hiring practices.

[4] Organizations are advised to consult the legislation in their own province for the specific grounds that apply to them. National organizations that deliver programs in more than one provincial or territorial jurisdiction will need to ensure that their policies are adjusted to comply with all relevant legislation. For an overview of human rights and other types of legislation in Canada that pertain to screening, see The Screening Handbook (Street, 1996).

[5] Patterson, John, *The Staff Screening Tool Kit,* Washington, D.C.: Nonprofit Risk Management Centre, 1994, page 14.

[6] Street, 1.5.

[7] Patterson.

[8] Ibid., page 8.

[9] Ibid., page 9.

[10] For more on how to develop job descriptions, see Chapter 7. Preparing For Volunteers.

[11] For more information on the specifics of volunteer interviewing, see Patterson (1994), Street (1996), and Crowe (1994).

[12] Patterson, page 12.

[13] For information on how to conduct reference checks and the kinds of questions one can legally ask, see Patterson (1994) and Community Social Services Employers' Association (1997).

[14] This advice has been reinforced by several participants in my workshops who have disclosed that they had been sexually harassed by previous employers or supervisors. Because they launched complaints, they fully expected references from harassers to be less than glowing. However, since the position was an important element of their employment history, and/or since not listing the position for a reference would have left an obvious hole in their employment record, they felt compelled to list the position and the referee in their application efforts. It is only when the prospective employer gives them an opportunity to explain the less-than-glowing reference that they feel released to speak of the incident.

[15] See, for example, Street (1996), and Patterson (1994).

[16] Patterson, page 16.

[17] Patterson, page 17.

[18] Patterson, page 18.

Chapter Review

1. What does this statement mean: "No screening technique in the world comes with a guarantee."?
2. Fill in the blanks: Only when ______________ can managers of volunteers be freed to construct reasonably thorough screening systems that will generate volunteer placements that ______________________.
3. What are the two sets of legal principles that must be considered in the creation of a volunteer screening protocol? Explain how the manager of volunteers must find a balance between these two sets of legal principles.
4. Define "The Sliding Scale of Screening" and discuss how this concept alters the traditional conception of screening as a single task activity.
5. Why should we not base volunteer screening decisions on the results of police records checks?
6. At what point can you consider volunteer screening to be done?

References

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Crowe, Roy. *Resource Kit For Interviewing Volunteers.* Vancouver: Volunteer Vancouver, 1994.

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CHAPTER 10: ORIENTATION AND TRAINING

Key Points

Providing volunteers with the information and skills they require to do an effective job is a very important part of managing volunteer services.

This chapter addresses

- ✔ the benefits of orientation and training
- ✔ learning styles
- ✔ an orientation process
- ✔ planning and designing training
- ✔ the adult learner

This chapter was written by Barb Gemmell of the Volunteer Centre of Winnipeg.

Organizations have a responsibility to provide volunteers with the necessary orientation and training so they can satisfactorily perform their volunteer assignments. There can be many benefits for both the organization and the volunteer as a result of well-planned orientation and training.

Benefits of Orientation and Training

Benefits to the organization include:

- recognition of the value of volunteers to the organization;
- consistency in the quality of service;
- the ability to transfer skills and knowledge to other positions within the organization; and
- a risk assessment tool.

Benefits to the volunteer include:

- recognition of the value and worth as an individual;
- personal growth and skill development which increase confidence and competence;
  confidence and competence; and
- an ability to transfer experience to other positions either within the organization or outside, either paid or unpaid.

Orientation begins with an organization's first contact with a volunteer, and continues through the application and interview process. Often a formal orientation is also held. Information is provided about the organization and the volunteer is initiated into the organization's culture and work environment.

Training includes both formal workshops as well as informal learning opportunities available to the volunteer.

New volunteers make decisions about where they will volunteer during the critical first hours of contact with an organization. It is important that they begin to identify with the organization and understand how they can make a difference as soon as possible. We must strive to make the orientation memorable in a positive way.

Ensuring Successful Training and Orientation

Learning Styles

Andragogy – the art and science of helping adults learn – needs to be considered when designing and delivering orientation and training. It is important to understand the different learning styles and ways in which information is processed.

There are several different instruments that have been designed to assess an individual's learning style. Kolb's Learning Style Inventory (LSI) is the most widely used device and it identifies four different styles. Most people operate with a combination of styles but generally have a preferred style. As a manager involved in training, it is important to understand one's own style preference. The reality is that a trainer will present to one's own learning strength if this isn't taken into consideration when designing the session.

The four different learning styles are:

- Accommodator – Full involvement in new experiences is the strength of this style. Participants will take risks and approach problems in an intuitive trial-and-error manner. Dislike routine and authority. Ask "What if?" Active and multi-sensory presentations are needed to hold attention.

- Assimilator – Persons who rate high on this style are critical thinkers. Enjoy learning abstract concepts and theories but consider it important that the theory be logically sound. Ask "What?" Have a preference for learning from reading and lectures and may see play as wasteful.

- Converger – Persons with this as a preferred style do best in activities that require practical application of ideas. A step-by-step problem solver that dislikes improvising. Ask "How?" Work well independently but require clear instructions and good documentation.

- Diverger – Persons with this strength are insightful, imaginative and interested in people. Need a sense of social unity and look for personal attention and feedback. Ask "Why?" Perform well in brainstorming sessions and prefer activities that allow for participation and collaboration.

Generally, participants will not be completing an extensive learning style inventory prior to orientation and training. However, a condensed version could be used as a warmup activity or as part of a needs assessment if one is done prior to the session. A rating of the type of learning activities preferred (e.g. lecture, group discussion, individual exercise, etc.) will provide an idea of the group's dominant learning style. If this is not possible, assume an "average group will be representative of all learning styles. A mix of instructional techniques and activities need to be included in the training design to allow for 'style shifting'.

The Orientation Process

Initially, it is important to determine what information a volunteer needs. Table 8.1 provides a Volunteers "Welcome Aboard" Checklist which can be adapted to an organization's needs.

Key Considerations when Planning Orientations

Regularly scheduled? Or as needed?

If volunteers are recruited on an on-going basis or a program only accepts new volunteers at certain times of the year, orientation dates can be preset and advertised to interested individuals. An information package could be sent out at the time of enquiry or some volunteers may have already completed the application process prior to the orientation. The manager may decide to schedule orientation only when a group of volunteers is ready. This may mean that some volunteers have to wait a considerable length of time until there are enough new volunteers to attend. It can also take additional time to coordinate as everyone will have to be contacted.

Mandatory requirement for all volunteers? Or optional?

A decision needs to be made and a policy developed specific to whether every volunteer must attend an orientation to the organization. If it is mandatory and a volunteer cannot make the scheduled time, the manager will have to determine the options available which can include one-to-one, video presentation followed by discussion, or a condensed version that will enable the volunteer to begin their placement prior to the next scheduled orientation. If attending an orientation is optional, a process needs to be in place to ensure volunteers receive the necessary information in order to do their job effectively if they choose not to attend.

Offered at different times, locations? Or one-to-one?

It can be a challenge to find a suitable time for all volunteers. The manager may offer regularly-scheduled orientations on different days of the week and at different times to accommodate volunteers' time constraints. She might "go to the volunteers" and hold the orientation in a location easily accessed by them. One-to-one orientations may be necessary, but these are very time consuming. The manager may be able to recruit experienced volunteers and other staff to assist if one-to-one orientations are provided.

How long? How many sessions?

Once the content of the orientation has been determined, decide on the time frame. A two-hour session is probably the maximum time to be considered as there will be a lot of new information for volunteers. The manager may offer it in two one-hour sessions, but this may be difficult to schedule. If more than two hours are required for the orientation, a portion of the orientation could be incorporated with the pre-job training.

What format and activities?

When providing information we often rely on a lecture format. It is essential that the orientation stimulates the new volunteer to want to get involved. Initially, volunteers must be made to feel comfortable so that they

Table 8.1 **Volunteer "Welcome Aboard" Checklist**

This checklist should be used as a guide when planning volunteer orientation. Some of the information may be covered at various times during the first few weeks a volunteer is involved. In these situations, the manager of volunteers, supervisor or volunteer could check to ensure all applicable information has been provided.

Section I - Welcome to the Organization

- ❑ Welcome and introduction to other volunteers and staff
- ❑ Mission and vision statements
- ❑ Historical overview and noteworthy accomplishments
- ❑ Philosophy and values
- ❑ Current programs and services, future, plans
- ❑ Clients - an overview of who they are, numbers, etc.
- ❑ Resource allocation - funding, staff and volunteers
- ❑ Interaction with other organizations

Section II - Operational Information

- ❑ Organizational flowchart
- ❑ Role of Board, Committees and relationships with volunteers and staff
- ❑ Rules, policies and procedures pertinent to job
- ❑ Fire, safety and emergency procedures
- ❑ System of accountability - probation period, performance management process, discipline procedure
- ❑ Expectations re: conduct and responsibility
- ❑ Outline of volunteer benefits - reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses, child care, memberships, training schedule

Section III - Practical Details

- ❑ Tour of facility
- ❑ Map of floor plan detailing different departments as well as highlighting volunteer's work site and rooms they will access
- ❑ Location of washrooms, lunch and break rooms
- ❑ Check in/out process, secure location for personal belongings, coat racks
- ❑ Parking and transportation details
- ❑ Unwritten rules re: telephone use, kitchen use and cleanup, personal use of equipment and facilities
- ❑ Calendar of special events, holidays, and meetings
- ❑ Phone numbers of manager of volunteers, supervisor, general reception

Section IV - Resource Materials

- ❑ Letter of welcome
- ❑ Job description - personally review specific job duties and record keeping requirements
- ❑ Acknowledgment that one is familiar with and agrees to job description
- ❑ Volunteer handbook/training manual
- ❑ Code of Confidentiality
- ❑ Code of Ethics
- ❑ Acknowledgment that one has read and understands policies and procedures
- ❑ Miscellaneous items - name tag, uniforms, parking pass

will ask questions if unsure. Visual presentations, persuasive and credible presenters and interactive discussions will stimulate interest. For example, pairs or teams answer a 'trivia' or 'myths' quiz about the organization where they provide their best guesses. When providing the right answers, relevant background information can be included. It is important to use a variety of instructional techniques when planning the orientation. Slides or a videotape of volunteers "in action", attending a training or recognition event could be incorporated into the orientation. These same resources could be used at a recruitment display.

Should others be involved?

Typically orientation is the responsibility of the manager of volunteers. However, this doesn't preclude involvement of others. By getting others involved there can be a reduction in preparation time, different areas of expertise can be used and a variety of delivery styles and techniques can be provided.

- Experienced volunteers
  This increases the credibility of the information, provides "hands-on" experience and offers a "promotion" for experienced volunteers.

- Other staff
  If there are human resource staff, get them involved. Staff who will be supervising volunteers will have a chance to play a major role in the preparation of new volunteers if they become part of the orientation. Potentially this can enhance volunteer-staff relations.

- Administrators/management
  This provides the organization's perspective, conveys the value the organization places on volunteer involvement, and can familiarize management with today's volunteer.

- Client/recipient
  Can offer personal stories of the impact volunteers in the organization have made. Persuasive stories encourage a volunteer to get involved and can increase commitment.

Collaboration with other organizations can also be beneficial. Can facilities, equipment, and resources required for orientation be shared with another organization? Would volunteers in another organization benefit from an orientation to your organization and vice versa?

You may even recruit an ad hoc committee to assist with the research, design, development and delivery of the orientation. It would be beneficial to target individuals with training and/or experience planning or facilitating workshops such as human resource and adult education professionals.

What about Orientation for Volunteers Who Are Unable to Attend a Scheduled Session?

Technology offers us many options for those who cannot attend a scheduled session. Videotape an orientation session so that it can be sent out to volunteers to view in their own home or workplace. An audio cassette of a panel presentation, guest speaker or key points to be shared with the volunteer can easily be prepared and distributed. Volunteers can listen at their convenience. One disadvantage is the lack of interaction with the volunteers, so it would be important to build time for direct communication to discuss the information shared in the video or cassette and to answer any questions.

What About Orientation For Episodic or One-time Only Special Event Volunteers?

It is still important that an orientation be held, but 15 to 30 minutes prior to the volunteer's scheduled shift may be more reasonable. A manager needs to remember to make the volunteers feel as comfortable as possible and confident that they can do the job. It is important to provide a "condensed" version of the key policies and procedures which will have an impact on them. Any operating procedures or practical details they require must be outlined clearly and concisely. Providing a completed example of a form they need to complete, a list of the most asked questions and answers they may have to respond to, or teaming up with an experienced volunteer can also be helpful in preparing the volunteer.

Each organization must analyze its own needs and unique characteristics when developing the orientation process. New staff orientation should be used as a guide when planning volunteer orientation. Orientation needs to be in place for new volunteers as well as for volunteers taking on new positions in the organization or in leadership roles on the Board and committees. It is important to ensure all volunteers are welcomed to the organization, and understand their role and its significance in contributing to the mission.

Training - Formal and Informal

Formal training should be scheduled and part of the organizational plan. It emphasizes what a volunteer needs to know for a particular assignment. Three types of formal training should be offered.

1. Pre-job Training: Even with a thorough interview process, volunteers will have varying levels of skills and knowledge. It is unwise to assume that volunteers "know" what to do because of personal experiences elsewhere. Based on the specific position description, training must be offered to ensure all volunteers have the same base of skills, knowledge, attitudes and values prior to beginning the assignment with your organization.

2. On-the-job Training: This step in the training process is often missed but is very critical. With a potential time lapse between pre-job training and the first scheduled shift, it is important that the supervisor schedule on-the-job training. Each volunteer will need enough time to assimilate new information in a way that is meaningful to them. On-the-job training could include an overview of materials covered in pre-job training, a short period of observation by the volunteer, an opportunity to ask questions, constructive feedback from the supervisor and provision of any additional training or resources required by the volunteer. Often the initial orientation and the pre-job training try to provide too much information to the volunteer. On-the-job training may extend over a number of weeks until both volunteer and supervisor are confident the job can be done satisfactorily. The manager's role at this stage is to ensure the supervisor is prepared to do the training and has the necessary resources to facilitate the training.

3. Continuing Education: On-going training opportunities for volunteers also need to be planned. Particular situations requiring training could include upgrading of job-specific skills, changes in clients, setting, relationships, policies or programs having an impact on volunteers, opportunities for personal growth or in preparation for increased responsibilities in the organization. If staff training is offered, volunteers should be included if the topic is applicable and logistically it can be arranged. In some

situations an educational event is very appropriate as volunteer recognition.

Learning can also take place through informal processes and methods. Consideration should be given to current trends in staff training and development and the feasibility of using these practices in volunteer training.

Mentoring, coaching, job shadowing or peer teaching may work well in your organization. Specifically, job shadowing could provide a volunteer with the flexibility to select the "perfect placement". A new volunteer would be provided with the opportunity to follow an experienced volunteer or staff member and watch closely as they carry out two or three different jobs. The volunteer can experience first-hand what each job is like and then select a placement based on personal preference.

A manager may be able to use a combination of these methods as well. Take for example the position of interviewer. Initially the new interviewer would observe the experienced interviewer. The second phase would have both volunteers working together with the experienced interviewer coaching the new volunteer. In the final phase the new interviewer would work alone, but the experienced interviewer would be available as a mentor to support and assist with problem solving. This type of training can be adjusted to meet the needs of the individual, allowing each volunteer as much time on each phase as is necessary. This process would work well for tutors, speakers, facilitators, and many other volunteer assignments.

Shift-change discussions provide for informal learning as well. This is a useful method to use with episodic or one-time special event volunteers, where scheduled shifts can overlap for 15 to 20 minutes. During this period, volunteers completing a shift can update new volunteers on key issues to be aware of or can discuss problems that have occurred. During such discussions, important information a volunteer needs to remember will be reviewed.

Support groups can also provide informal training opportunities. These can be held monthly, quarterly or as often as necessary. They can be initiated and directed by the manager of volunteers or organized by the volunteers themselves. In a group setting volunteers are provided with a chance to share experiences, raise concerns and issues impacting their work, and problem solve together. An effective facilitator is key to ensuring these meetings are effective and worthwhile.

Planning for Orientation and Training

Role of the Trainer

A trainer can take on five different roles throughout the training experience depending on the group, content and activities selected.

1. Designer/Developer

A key responsibility is to plan and design training based on the needs assessment of the learner; skills, knowledge and/or attitude required to do the job; and the different learning styles.

2. Advocate/Expert

As a trainer, you will offer expertise and the proper methods to use. It is also important to offer examples and resources from other experts. Experienced volunteers and staff can be of great assistance by sharing success stories or examples of how others have handled the same situation. In this particular role, the trainer must believe in what they are presenting and be persuasive. It's important to remember that as trainer who does not have an answer should say they do not. You can turn the question back to the group for their input or offer to find an answer.

3. Consultant

In this role the trainer must concentrate on encouraging participants to express their needs, experiences, concerns and if necessary, uncover negative feelings. Good listening skills are essential. Participants must feel at ease and comfortable in sharing. The trainer will be there to provide ongoing support.

4. Facilitator

It's important to act as a catalyst, not an authority. Emphasis is on getting participation from everyone and generating energy in the group. A trainer needs to be comfortable with silence and use the "30-second" rule - ask the group a question and give them 30 seconds to respond. This is a very long time when the room is silent, but if the question is clear someone will respond. Open-ended questions to encourage discussion.

5. Coach

Background material or theory may be provided, followed by the demonstration of a particular skill or task. The participant practices and the trainer observes, provides feedback, suggest improvements and validates competence. It's important to encourage experimentation through practical application of new skills.

Designing the Training Session

A checklist has been provided in Table 8.2 which covers key organizational tasks and suggested timelines when planning an orientation or training event. Attention to detail is key when finalizing logistics for a session.

When beginning to design the content, it is initially important to determine whether the training is required to increase knowledge, to develop new or enhance current skills, or to reinforce attitudes and values. Measurable learning objectives need to be developed from the participant's perspective by asking "what should the participants be able to KNOW, DO or FEEL differently about after the training?" Use verbs like list, explain, perform and demonstrate.

There are three domains of learning objectives:

- Cognitive Objectives: These objectives refer to the knowledge that participants will gain (e.g. participants will be able to identify the three most important steps when interviewing new volunteers).

- Psychomotor/Kinesthetic Objectives: These objectives refer to the practical skills participants will gain (e.g. participants will be able to use the photocopier to prepare two-sided handout packages as well as overheads).

- Affective Objectives: These objectives refer to outcomes related to beliefs, values or attitudes (e.g. for a youth program - participants will be able to explain an appropriate response to a client who may be experiencing peer pressure from other students).

Table 8.2

PLANNING YOUR ORIENTATION AND TRAINING CHECKLIST

Title of session: ____________________
Dates and Times: ____________________
Location: ____________________
Name of Trainer and/ or Guests: ____________________

Items	Timeline	Comments
Preparation		
Set Date	Min. 8 weeks	
Book Facility	Min 8 weeks	
Invitations/notice	Min 6 weeks	
Ensure room set-up	One week prior; day of	
→ parking/bus		
→ layout		
→ registration desk		
→ accessible washrooms		
→ coat check		
→ phone accessibility		
Equipment		
→ flip charts		
→ TV/VCR		
→ overhead projector & screen		
→ markers		
→ tape		
→ extension cord		
→ welcome sign		
→ stationary		
→ microphone		

Items	Timeline	Comments
Materials		
→ handouts	min one week	
→ evaluation forms	min one week	
→ resources	min one week	
The Session		
Introduction		
→ welcome		
→ warm-up & expectations		
→ housekeeping		
→ agenda		
→ objectives		
Content		
→ presentation		
→ exercises		
→ scheduled breaks		
→ energizers		
Wrap-up		
→ summarize		
→ re-visit expectations		
→ next steps		
→ evaluation		
Follow-up		
Evaluation summary	within two weeks	
Records updated	within two weeks	
Additional Tasks		

Adapted from Canadian Volunteer Centre Training Network Guidebook, 1998.
The original checklist was written by Barb Gemmell and Karine Levasseur.

Once the learning objectives have been articulated, it is easier to select and organize the material for the training session. The tendency is to "overload" orientation and training sessions, leaving the participant overwhelmed. Here is a suggested process for selecting your content:

- Brainstorm: Start by brainstorming all the ideas and activities to be included in the presentation. Do not worry about what order they are in, or if any are repeated. Just write down everything and anything that comes to mind. Allow plenty of time to roam, to go off on tangents, coming back to the topic only when all avenues have been exhausted. Thoughts can be recorded on a flip chart, a sheet of paper or on the computer.

- Categorize: Once you have completed brainstorming, review the list. See what fits into groups or categories.

- Eliminate: Decide what items or categories can be excluded, either because it is less important or if time would not allow. Use the learning objectives to help with this decision.

- Review: What will be left is the presentation content. Review it carefully to make sure that everything is included. Provide other resources or reading materials for the information which can't fit into the time frame allowed.

The next step is to decide the order for presentation. There are a number of ways to sequence the material that will help the audience follow the facilitator's train of thought.

Here are some ways to sequence the material:

- in order of importance (note: people remember best what they hear first and what they hear last);
- from the simple to the complex;
- from the general to the specific;
- from the known to the unknown; or
- chronologically.

A written outline should then be developed incorporating the most appropriate techniques and activities. Table 8.3 is a reference chart of a variety of instructional techniques which can be used. There are many excellent resources for warmup exercises and energizers, some of which are referenced at the end of this chapter. A review of learning styles and the principles of adult learning will assist with the selection of the most appropriate methods for delivery.

The Adult Learner

Adults have a wealth of personal and work related experience upon which to draw and share with others.

> *Show respect and draw on their experience. Remember to build in group discussion, buzz groups and case scenarios where personal expertise can be shared. Encourage sharing of success stories. Allow time for participants to meet and talk informally. Organize the room with clustered seating to facilitate collaboration.*

Adults have many other things going on in their lives: family, jobs, community and social responsibilities.

Table 8.3: Instructional Techniques

Technique	Group Size	When to Use	Tips
Lecture	45 plus	➪ you have a large group ➪ you are limited by time ➪ your purpose is to impart a lot of information in a short time ➪ your learning objectives are mostly cognitive	➪ only use if you have an "engaging" voice and presentation ➪ keep it as short as possible ➪ if over a long time, break up with coffee breaks or buzz groups
Reading	8 to 45	➪ you want to present factual material in a quick, easy fashion ➪ your learning objectives are mostly cognitive ➪ when you do not have time to deal with the material in an interactive fashion	➪ very important that it be debriefed and that questions arising from it be answered ➪ should not be more that a few pages ➪ use only with audiences you are sure are literate ➪ can get boring if used too much
Brainstorming	up to 35	➪ to promote creative thinking ➪ to identify alternative solutions or approaches	➪ follow rules: anything goes, no criticism, repetition okay, record everything ➪ in large groups, can have several small groups brainstorming on different topics

Technique	Group Size	When to Use	Tips
Group discussion	8 to 45	➪ you want the group to think about something and discuss options ➪ for problem-solving ➪ can be used to allow participants to articulate views and/or vent ➪ learning objectives are affective and cognitive	➪ use structured questions ➪ monitor to ensure groups keep on topic
Buzz groups	45 plus	➪ to break up a lecture ➪ to solicit audience input ➪ to check on comprehension	➪ keep them short ➪ keep them relevant to topic
Group exercises	45 or less	➪ to solicit knowledge and opinions from participants ➪ to give participants more opportunity for participation ➪ to ensure everyone has a chance to express themselves	➪ ensure that instructions are clear ➪ keep them simple ➪ always debrief
Panel	15 or more	➪ to take advantage of others' expertise ➪ to demonstrate different viewpoints on one topic ➪ to stimulate discussion on an issue	➪ give panel members questions and time limits in advance ➪ have firm time lines and stick to them ➪ build in opportunity for audience interaction
Case studies	45 or less	➪ when you wish to apply theory to practice ➪ kinesthetic learning objectives	➪ ensure that instructions are clear ➪ ensure that situation is relevant

Technique	Group Size	When to Use	Tips
Demonstrations	15 or less	➪ to show a technique, process or skill ➪ for kinesthetic learning objectives	➪ detail each step carefully ➪ check in frequently for the group's understanding ➪ repeat for retention
Simulations	25 or less	➪ for participants to practice a new process	➪ provide a structured scenario ➪ ensure that situation is relevant
Coaching	less than 8	➪ with small group which requires one-on-one attention ➪ when the learner needs to practice a skill and receive direct feedback ➪ when your learning objectives are mostly kinesthetic	➪ give a little theory, then demonstrate the skill, then give opportunity to practice ➪ reinforce successes ➪ observe and validate competence; suggest improvements
Field trip	varies	➪ to provide firsthand experience and/or exposure ➪ to relate theory to practice	➪ make sure it is relevant to learning ➪ make the connection between the classroom and the field ➪ make relationship to learning objectives clear
Papers and Essays	any	➪ to encourage individual research and study ➪ to meet participants' individual interests ➪ to assess level of learning	

Flexibility is extremely important. Short time commitments are often more realistic when planning training sessions. If you offer a series of training sessions, participants may prefer to attend a full day rather than three evenings.

Adults tend to be cautious and extremely sensitive to failure in learning situations; they are not always willing to take risks.

Foster a climate in which participants can succeed. Create a comfortable environment and allow participants time to meet one another. If there is a reluctance to participate or answer a question participants could be asked to "write down two ways you can ...", then compare with a neighbour and develop a "collective" response. Give participants credit for responding to your questions even if they haven't given a complete response. Establish a safe environment where there are no mistakes - only learning opportunities.

Adults want information to be relevant and easily applied to their present situation.

Provide opportunities to discuss how information being shared can be used immediately. At the conclusion of training have participants write down or share with someone else what they're going to try, do differently or follow up on as a result of the session.

Adults expect high quality experience and effective use of their time.

The learning climate should be one of mutual respect between learner and trainer. It's important to clarify and articulate expectations of both learner and trainer before getting into content. Any variance should be acknowledged and appropriate resolution determined. Be prepared. Know your materials and complete all preparatory and set-up procedures well in advance. Allow participants to share in setting the pace of activities, but do not waste their time.

Adults respond better when information is presented in a fun and varied way with different sensory experiences.

Design and deliver learning experiences that are creative and fun. Diversify your instructional methods and activities. The learning environment must be physically and psychologically comfortable. Background music has a relaxing and calming effect and can reduce stress. Add color to the room. Posters, displays, objects and table top items depicting course content can set the stage for learning. The best feedback a trainer can receive is "that was hard work, but I learned a lot and had fun".

Use Job Aids to Supplement Training

Job aids are "memory supplements" that can be used during and after the training. Job aids are written instructions and examples that are used as a reference when a volunteer has a question about something. They can shorten the training time and speed the acquisition of knowledge and skills required for the job. It takes time to develop the job aids initially, but once developed they can be used with each new volunteer. They can easily be revised as improvements and changes occur.

What are the steps in developing a job aid? First one must identify a procedure, process or task volunteers need to perform. Tasks must be organized into logical steps or components of information and the information documented either electronically or on paper. The job aid can also include a list of tools or resources required, a description of the outcome and indicator so the volunteer knows the task has been performed correctly.

Examples of job aids include troubleshooting guides for the fax, copier or computer, steps to take when handling a complaint, a list of most asked questions and appropriate answers, and an illustration of a completed report form. A flowchart that graphically demonstrates the chain of activities in executing a special event or a written guide outlining an organization's filing system are also job aid examples.

Experienced volunteers will be able to identify potential job aids which could assist them. The supervisory staff should also be able to determine where volunteers most often need assistance.

How can job aids be made accessible? They can be kept in a binder. They can be laminated and remain on the desk or fastened to the side of desk or other equipment. If using electronic job aids they should be clearly labelled for ease of access.

The job aid is very useful initially for the pre job or on-the-job training. Using the example of a completed report form, it would be important to explain why the report is necessary and how the information is used by the organization rather than just handing the tool to the volunteer. In the case of a volunteer time sheet, the information may be used in the annual report, for funding proposals, during strategic planning, when preparing reference letters and for recognition awards. Secondly, a demonstration of how the information needs to be recorded is necessary. Here the manager could use the job aid and go through each item of information. It could be put on an overhead or computer. The volunteer should then have an opportunity to practice in the safety of the training environment. Any additional practice can be done on-the-job or at home ... and the job aid is always there for reference!

Monitoring and Evaluating the Training

When developing any training, one must build in a process for monitoring and evaluating the results. It is important to think carefully about evaluation ahead of time and be prepared with forms and follow up strategies that will give the trainer the information needed to improve the next training session.

There are different stages of evaluation.

- Initial Reaction:

Did participants like the training? The end of session "smile sheets" simply give you a quick response by the participant at the time of the training. This type of evaluation should be done on all orientation and training sessions. The trainer will want to know if the expectations of the session were met. One can also find out if they still feel they need more information. It's important to ask questions that relate to areas where one can actually make changes in future training sessions. A questionnaire that asks for only yes or no answers yields little useful information. Asking open-ended questions such as "The most useful idea or information I got from this session was..." allows participants to reflect on the information and select a relevant component for them.

- Learning

Did participants learn the information? Do they feel they have all the information and training they need to do the job? This type of evaluation should be done when participants need to retain a particular body of knowledge or apply a specific skill to do their job satisfactorily. When evaluating pre-job training, this could be part of a one-month feedback done with all new volunteers. It could also be a phone call or conversation scheduled after their first two shifts. It's important to base the questions on the initial learning objectives.

- Results

Do they use the learning on the job? Has the organization benefited because of the training? Post-training evaluation is extremely important when reporting "outcomes". Devising quantitative measures is critical for this type of evaluation. A system for collecting and reporting qualitative information also needs to be in place. This type of evaluation would include feedback from the supervisor and the client for example, which can be time consuming. The results of this type of evaluation can show the impact and the importance of investing time and resources in orientation and training.

Some Final Thoughts When Training...

- Prepare, prepare, prepare. Ensure you know your material well and that the resources are organized. Get there early and test all equipment before the session starts. Take a few moments to catch your breath before you begin.

- Learn who is in the audience. Review the participant list ahead of time. Meet and greet each person as they enter the session. Use name tags or name tents. Try to address people by name in the session if possible.

- Establish rapport by telling a personal story. Appropriate humour can relax the participants and yourself.

- Instructions are the most important part of any exercise. Be clear and concise. If possible give them in written form, on a flipchart, or overhead. Always check to confirm understanding.

- Don't be afraid to say "I don't know." Open response to other participants or offer to do the research and provide an answer later.

- Acknowledge the contribution of a participant that dominates discussion, but then suggest it is time to get other participants' thoughts on the topic.

- Include a balance between trainer-lead activities and those where the learner is actively involved. Take time to connect individually and listen to the opinions of the participants. Focus on two or three key concepts and explore these thoroughly, ensuring participants will then be able to apply their learning to the volunteer situation.

- Watch everything going on around you for examples, stories and ideas you can use in training.

- Stay flexible. Don't take yourself too seriously. Remember you can't please everyone.

The trainer is in charge. If things go wrong it's their responsibility. They should not make excuses, do not blame others –the participants don't care and often won't even be aware of any problems. Coping with disaster can be both fun and part of the learning experience!

Chapter Review

This chapter examined the very important function of orientation and training.

1. Define orientation; define training.
2. List the benefits of orientation and training to the volunteer and to the organization.
3. Describe the orientation process you use (or would use) and explain why you would do it that way.
4. Describe three ways to ensure effective training.
5. What do you believe your learning style to be and why?

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CHAPTER 11: MOTIVATION AND RECOGNITION

Key Points

There is a magical moment that occurs when one can successfully link theories of motivation into application and then see the positive results. This chapter will examine relevant motivation theories and walk the manager through practical applications that work in motivating volunteers.

The link between motivating volunteers and recognizing volunteers connects clearly, as we examine tried and true and all that's new in volunteer recognition strategies.

This chapter addresses

- ✔ relevant motivation theories
- ✔ practical application of the theories
- ✔ setting the motivational climate
- ✔ recognition: formal and informal strategies
- ✔ what's new in recognition

This chapter was written by Mary MacKillop of Holy Family Hospital in Vancouver.

> "Securing a high level of motivation in a volunteer work setting may be much more difficult because of the absence of any monetary incentive." Larry F. Moore

The Nature of Motivation

In an examination of popular theories by Maslow and Herzberg and references to authors Marlene Wilson and Larry Moore, we can see how recognition and motivation are intrinsically connected.

The research strengthens the philosophy that volunteering must be a reciprocal relationship, that volunteer effort both meets the needs of the service or programme being enhance by volunteers and that the volunteer is having their unique needs also met.

Understanding what constitutes a motivational environment or what motivates both volunteers individually and as a groups helps to develop volunteer services that will retain volunteers successfully.

With the building process of determining motivation, designing a motivating work environment and connecting motivation to a recognition strategy, one must begin to identify any barriers to retention within the service and start knocking these down.

Barriers may include :

- inaccessibility,
- an exclusive service,
- financial barriers,
- an unsafe working environment, or
- inappropriate volunteer activity

to mention a few. It could be noted that having potential de-motivators could make setting a motivational environment impossible. Through identification of what motivates people to volunteer and how to run with that knowledge is explored through the "Application" component of this chapter.

As we review theory summations, see supporting graphs and theorists' definitions, we will have the above premises supported and, in addition, a clearer picture of the link between recognition and motivation.

Theories of Motivation

Abraham Maslow

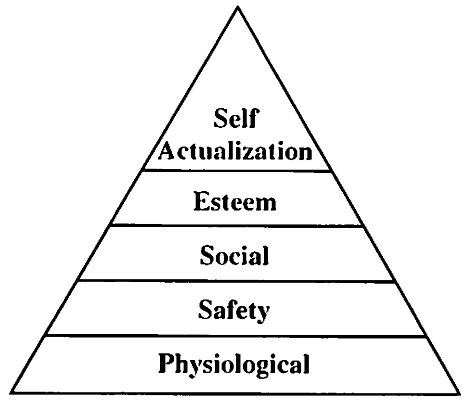
Abraham H. Maslow, known for his perceptive studies on motivation, opened doors of thinking with his established hierarchy of needs that must be met from the bottom up.

The two primary observations of Maslow are:

1) man is a "wanting creature" and as soon as one level of need is satisfied, we move on to the next (or if a basic need is suddenly not met, such as not having food or safety, all other needs become unimportant, and we regress on the hierarchy); and

2) a met need is no longer a motivator.

As we reflect on these observations, we can surmise that volunteers continue to develop and grow in their contributions as volunteers as in other segments of their lives. The wiser manager can anticipate what motivates a volunteer and once they have met that goal or



Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

achieved that need, can assume there will be another level of need to be met.

Maslow wrote in "Motivation and Personality",

> *"Current conceptions of motivation proceed on the assumption that a motivational state is a special, a peculiar state, sharply marked off from the other happenings in the organism. Sound motivational theory should, on the contrary, assume that motivation is constant, never ending, fluctuating and complex."*[1]

The practical manager would no doubt be concerned that an expected management practice would include being able to anticipate each volunteer's present need of motivation and try to determine which volunteer is on which level at any given time. Not so.

There are realistic routes to take with the application of theories. The expectation is for managers to offer a motivating environment and recognition plans and to understand motivation. If volunteers are satisfied, the service will thrive.

Herzberg

Frederick Herzberg's "Motivation-Hygiene Theory" separated factors into two categories:

1. hygiene factors and
2. motivators.

Herzberg categorized factors in the individual's work environment as hygiene factors:

- policies
- administration
- supervision
- working conditions
- interpersonal relations
- status
- security
- money

Herzberg concedes that these factors, in themselves do not motivate people, but the absence of hygiene factors causes dissatisfaction while their presence is neutral.

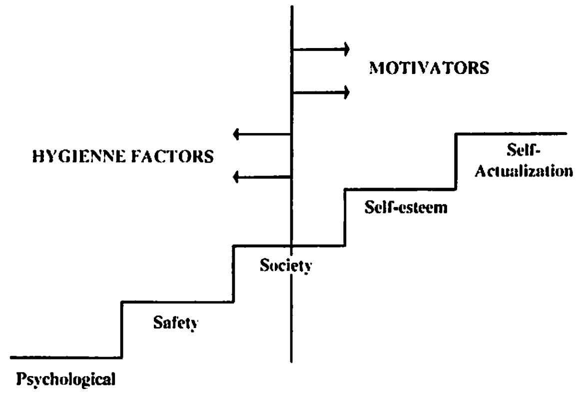
Motivating factors that induce feelings of achievement, professional growth and recognition, in a job that offers challenge and scope, Herzberg refers to as motivators. Each relates to the job itself and includes:

- achievement,
- recognition for accomplishment,
- challenging work,
- increased responsibility growth, and development.[2]

Such motivators can act as guiding principals in developing a volunteer service that is focused on meeting the volunteer's needs as well as the needs of the clients being served.

Wilson

Marlene Wilson, a pioneer in management of volunteers, describes where motivational theories overlap, weaving a common thread. This is portrayed in Wilson's chart:[3]



The relationship between Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene theory and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.

Marlene Wilson also refers to the work of researchers David C. McClelland and John W. Atkinson in their book *"Motivation and Organizational Climate."*[4] They identified three distinct motives which affect people's work-related behaviour:

- the need for achievement;
- the need for power; and
- the need for affiliation.

> "Motives start in the head as our thoughts determine how we talk and act. Our motives can be strong or weak as we open the valves in our motivation reservoir and the energy of achievement, power and affiliation flow through." Marlene Wilson

A recommended tool to review is McClelland and Atkinson's *Thematic Apperception Methods (TAM)*. It can be found in their book. This tool involves the presentation of pictures depicting a variety of social or work scenes and the viewer is asked to write a creative story about what they see in these pictures. The results should be a projection of the viewer's thoughts, attitudes and perceptions into their stories.

The outcomes could assist managers to determine the philosophy and needs of volunteers and, in turn, create jobs and climates that better meet those needs.[5]

Moore

Larry Moore, who edited *"Motivating Volunteers"* says

> *"Motives are products of the human mind and thus are not directly visible or measurable."*

He goes on to say, in his *"Goal Setting Theory"*:

> *"...goals that are set have a primary influence on human behaviour. Incentives of various types, such as rewards, advancements, formal recognition, reassignments to more challenging or interesting work, education/training etc., have an impact on future behaviours depending on how they affect the person's goals."*

All research summarized is worth an extensive critique and the recommended applications will present an opportunity to test these popular theorists' and authors' conjecture.

Application

By definition from the Gage Canadian Dictionary, *motive* means

> *"the thought or feeling that makes one act."*

According to the 1997 *"National Survey on Giving, Volunteering and Participating"*,

> *"people donate their time for less than altruistic reasons."*

Most survey participants identified that they volunteer to find employment, gain new skills or to access entry into programmes that may lead to desired careers.

There is no longer the expectation to hear applicants who wish to volunteer to state their goal as "to simply help others." A manager must expect applicants to have realistic, tangible goals he or she hopes to achieve through volunteering. This may include experience, references or skill development.

Wiser yet is not to be affronted by the self-focused goals, but to promote the reality from which it stems. Better to have honest, clear goals to motivate a volunteer with, than to deal with lofty, unattainable goals that set both the manager and the volunteer up for failure.

Goal Setting Application

It is clear how motivation and what motivates people to volunteer can factor into each step in the management of volunteers.

By putting research and theories of motivation into an application, one can utilize an easy formula that can be applied to any volunteer.

- Define the original motivating factor or goals that brought the individual to volunteer, i.e., to gain skills.

This can be done during the application interview process. The goal(s) should be achievable and documented in the volunteer file. At the bottom of the application can be a portion that gives opportunity for applicants to note goals they hope to achieve while volunteering.

In return, the volunteer needs to be clear what their end of the bargain is, through a clear position description and orientation and training. This is the reciprocal relationship forming, with each party knowing what their needs are and how those needs will be met. (See Chapter 7 for more details on position descriptions.)

Volunteers are expected to come at designated times, fulfill their assigned and accepted responsibilities. The organization, or more specifically the Volunteer Department, can strive to meet the realistic goals set out by the volunteer and accepted by the receiving organization.

- Following placement, provide opportunity to examine those motivations and see if the needs or goals have been met (following a set period of time, i.e., 3 months) through an evaluation.

The evaluation will give the opportunity for the volunteer's role to be reviewed, ensuring they are meeting the expectations of both the manager and the volunteer. The position description and the application form used to identify goals can be the tools in this process.

It is important to document the results of the evaluation and set new goals if initial motivating factors have been met or to discuss future steps to meet original goals.

Not meeting a volunteer's goals and the sense that those goals may not be achieved is a good indicator of a mismatch and discussions will need to ensue to see if another opportunity exists or if referrals to other volunteer services are required.

- Create opportunities to meet identified goals through education or training or other volunteer positions.

If educational sessions or in-service sessions are free to staff, volunteers should also be welcomed to attend. In addition, other volunteer opportunities may provide the environment needed to fill the organization's needs as well as the volunteer's. Posting internal opportunities for volunteers reflects your willingness for movement or transfers and recruits within an already screened and willing population.

- Build on goals to continue motivation through to the next level, i.e., if the skills the volunteer wanted to develop have been developed, talk about new goals for future personal growth and utilize those needs for continued motivation.

As individuals grow and develop, goals and motivators will change. The expression of flexibility in those changes and the desire to assist in meeting new goals is a recipe for long time committed volunteers.

- Recognize the gift of time and the achievement of those goals through promotion to another role or at informal/formal recognition opportunities.

A perfect example of how recognition and motivation are so connected is recognizing an individual's personal growth (meeting a tangible goal) through a celebration of that achievement.

Volunteers fueled by the feelings of accomplishing their identified goals and being recognized for that feat are more likely to continue to give and continue to be motivated.

In reference to basic needs, Maslow sees those needs as falling into the categories in this hierarchy.

> Maslow reminds us "that filling basic needs first is an absolute necessity before any growth can take place. Every individual has physical needs that must be met before they can focus on others."

Through interviews, screening and the identification of volunteer goals, it can be determined if the volunteer is suitable to be a giver.

Consumers of services are often the first to be in line to contribute time to the organization who served them. However, a good policy, often followed by departments, is that one must no longer be a consumer for a least one year before contributing time.

If someone just lost their father, they may not be in a strong enough position to be a palliative care volunteer for the team that helped their father die in comfort.

On the flip side of this is the need to attempt to meet even the basic needs of volunteers that are contributing time, but the basics may be missed in the planning of volunteer services.

Such basics may include having bathroom facilities available for volunteers, bus fare or parking allocation, coffee or beverages. These needs are indeed basic and often mistaken for recognition.

Planning

The involvement of existing volunteers in planning validates the worth of their input and ideas and set up an immediate "buy-in"for volunteers, knowing that their fellow volunteers participated in the planning stages.

Volunteer advisory groups are a common component of more and more volunteer services. Advisory teams can support programme development, provide objective new insights, and reflect conducive and inclusive volunteer-driven programmes.

Empowering volunteers to be leaders and to mentor other volunteers, to take on meaningful and credible roles often stems from the challenge of one manager supporting large numbers of volunteers effectively.

Samples of subjects volunteers may advise managers about are:

- volunteers recognition events or activities;
- potential application form changes; and
- position description revisions.

Roles volunteers may take on as an enhancement to the manager's responsibilities may include:

- calling references with a pre-defined script or format;
- conducting phone surveys;
- conducting peer evaluations; and
- coordinating tours and orientation reviews for new volunteers.

These are all an expansion of the "buddy system."

Changes, opportunities or communications strategies can all be tabled with advisory teams - interested individuals who are new or long time volunteers. The team should reflect the diversity and demographics of the entire volunteer services. The manager will be there offering guidance and details.

Planning, being part of decision-making and having input into significant changes and growth are some of the purest methods of motivating volunteers and recognizing their extensive contributions.

Setting a motivational scene:

An environment conducive to on-going motivation is a manager of volunteers' insurance for retaining volunteers.

An environment that is both accessible and safe with an emphasis placed on volunteers as partners and crucial team members, leads to successful retention and satisfied volunteers. Other factors are trust, respect, listening, inclusion and a place that promotes volunteer education and skill development.

There are a number of factors that should be considered when setting a motivational scene for volunteer activity:

- volunteer space;
- communication;
- clear position descriptions;
- confidentiality;
- accessibility;
- flexibility;
- support; and
- recognition.

Volunteer Space

Not all organizations or departments can offer luxury volunteer lounges but all can find a corner for a cupboard or lockers to store bags and purses, a spot for signing in and out, and a closet or rack to hang coats.

More importantly, it is critical to have a confidential space to interview or evaluate volunteers. In the event of a private conversation with an applicant or registered volunteer, respect must be expressed for their privacy and a secure room with a door that closes must be available.

Communication

Loss of connection with volunteers once placed in an organization can easily happen and be the primary reason for a low retention rate. Developing both formal and informal ways to keep a two way system of communication flowing can assist in on-going motivation and support.

Suggestions include:

- newsletters that encourage and welcome volunteer submissions;
- bulletin boards for notices and updates;
- social events;
- informal chats;
- open houses; and
- drop in sessions and open door times.

Enlist volunteers who can conduct "touch base" calls to see how volunteers are doing.

Position Descriptions

Without a clear position description, volunteers can lose the momentum of their enthusiasm when parameters are not in place, when expectations are not defined and the specifics of their role are unclear.

The role description for any volunteer can be the tool utilized for recruitment, interviews, evaluations and exit interviews. It should be in place for every volunteer and kept current. Volunteers and staff who support volunteers who have input in description design are the best users of this invaluable component of your service. (See Chapter 7 for more details.)

Confidentiality

All applicants and active volunteers need to be assured that their personnel files are housed confidentially and that discussions between them and the manager are held in the strictest of confidence.

Any volunteer who feels respected and knows there is an appreciation for their need for privacy will be the volunteer who follows the organization's confidentiality policies to the letter.

Accessibility

Is your facility wheelchair accessible? Do you offer opportunities at home and on site? Do you feel you could offer meaningful volunteer opportunities to individuals with special needs?

Being accessible to a point of reason, within the means of the organization may mean the difference between a qualified applicant accepting a position or seeking a volunteer placement elsewhere.

A review of where these issues may have had an impact on a volunteer placement may help in planning for development in the area of accessibility.

Accessibility may mean inclusivity. It means extending opportunities to applicants who may need assistance with bus costs, being accepting of other cultures or individuals with English as a second language. There is an increase in the number of creative volunteer placements that include family volunteering or even ones where it is necessary to buy or borrow special equipment to assist a volunteer with unique needs.

Flexibility

Managers are more frequently stepping out of the 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. box and being more flexible in hours of service and when a volunteer activity can take place.

Flexibility may be very important to the shift worker who is very committed, but who can only volunteer every two weeks or once a month. Or it may be needed by the university student who is only in their home community every other weekend. Short-term or episodic volunteering is also the way of the future as we, as managers, need to be able to accommodate others to take the positions of the long term volunteers who are far fewer than they used to be. Flexible programmes may be the main motivator for many of today's workers.

For example, a volunteer who may have an immune deficiency health condition and who must work from home need not be precluded from volunteering. Look at roles that need to be filled, not how they have been traditionally filled, focusing on the qualifications of the applicant and what is needed to get the job done. Logistics are a reality but not all roles need to be conducted on site.

The end result is inclusion, an excellent example of truly reflecting the diverse community in volunteer services and moving away from inflexible thought processes.

Support

In considering a supportive and motivational environment we all hope to set for volunteers, one thinks immediately of the staff who work with the volunteers. As partners in fulfilling services and programmes to clients, a mutually supportive relationship between staff and volunteers carries a great weight.

Modeling for other staff, in-services or information packages help staff understand their role and responsibility with volunteers. Having staff be part of volunteer job design, recognition opportunities and sending along positive reinforcement when the feedback has been good all help in defining this relationship.

Recognition

> *Recognition is "an acknowledgment; a favourable notice; acceptance. To recognize is 'to show appreciation.'"* [6]

There is a fundamental difference between daily courtesy and informal and formal recognition strategies that can offer new managers a foundations for a recognition bag of tricks.

Formal Recognition

There are many examples of long time recognition methods such as recognizing hours given, offering service pins and the albeit corny but tried and true methods such as mints labelled "thanks a mint for all you do", to new and innovative recognition ideas.

A noted increase in new ideas for recognition are emerging and offer a creative flavour to recognizing volunteers and drawing clearer parallels between unpaid and paid resources.

Samples of some of these new methods also reflect fiscal responsibility and the inability to always host the expensive dinner or banquet.

There is an increase of sponsorships being sought from companies that may already have a connection for event costs or gifts in kind. This helps reduce the amounts needed for recognition or helps with door prizes and other extra expenditures.

Alternatives to items that have costs affixed to them when thinking about recognition may include:

- special, close-by parking spaces;
- opportunity to benefit from education offered to staff;
- coupons or gift certificates;
- discounts at related business or shops (i.e., the facility's gift shop);
- sponsored theatre event, perhaps a matinee with popcorn;
- use of company vehicles as appropriate and/or available;
- reimbursement of expenses (such as transportation, parking, meals, child care, perks such as free coffee);
- letters of recommendation;
- printed testimonials from clients served;
- profiles in newsletters or local papers;
- awards, both internally or externally;
- pictorials identifying volunteers and their roles in a central location;
- income tax deductions or tax services;
- identification of hours or years of service;
- additional responsibilities;

- giving leadership roles and lending opportunities for volunteers to benefit from perks offered to staff (i.e., employee assistance programmes, access to gyms or staff room);
- school credits or coop placements;
- letters of acceptance to new volunteers;
- evaluation process for volunteers to evaluate the programmes in which they participate.

Informal recognition

Most important is day to day, personal appreciation both implied or expressed by patients, staff, volunteer services and community. Catch them doing their job well. Managers need to be regularly "on the job" to keep in touch with the volunteers and what is actually happening in the field. It is implied recognition if the manager visits a programme and makes positive comments. It is good for staff and clients as well as volunteers.

Some suggestions for informal recognition are:

- daily thank you;
- name tags;
- the physical space mentioned above;
- a dedicated bulletin board.

The idea is not whether you have weeks of both formal and informal activities that recognize volunteer contributions but that volunteers feel recognized and valued each time they come and donate their talents and their gift of time.

The only flag to wave regarding recognition is with the pros and cons of letters of reference and how and when to deploy these as a form of thanks.

It is important to note the difference between confirming a volunteer's contribution and offering a letter of reference. It is acceptable at any time to have a volunteer state that they volunteered for an organization, an to have a name and number to offer for placement confirmation. However, the manager should always be asked to stand as a referee prior to being listed.

A letter of reference should only occur when the placement is worthy of that commitment to being a referee. As a referee, the manager must be careful to only recommend volunteers to other organizations if appropriate.

Many companies are avoiding this altogether for fear of legal backlash in the event the applicant is not appropriate for that work environment.

As a rule, facility names and numbers could be listed only for the purpose of placement confirmation. Letters of reference should be subject to a policy and procedure. Common parameters include a minimum of 30 hours of consistent, compliant and appreciated volunteer activity. The manager's gut instincts will often direct determining who is and who is not appropriate to receive this form of recognition.

Endnotes

[1] Maslow, Abraham H., *Motivation and Personality,* New York, New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1970.

[2] Wilson, Marlene, *The Effective Management of Volunteer Programs,* Boulder, Colorado: Volunteer Management Associates, 1976, page 44.

[3] Ibid., page 45.

[4] McClelland, David C. and Atkinson, John, W. from Marlene Wilson's "Motivation and Organizational Climate".

[5] Thornburg, Linda, "The All Encompassing Task of Motivating Volunteers", *Voluntary Action Leadership,* Spring 1992, pages 23, 24.

[6] Gage Canadian Dictionary.

Chapter Review

Effective motivation and recognition will keep volunteers contributing happily to the organization.

1. What is the difference between motivation and recognition? How are they related?
2. What has motivated you to volunteer, presently or in the past?
3. What do you see as the main motivators for people to volunteer in your agency/organization?
4. What recognition techniques have worked for you? Why? How can you expand on them?
5. Who else does the environment you create motivate besides volunteers. Why? How?

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<u>Audio Tapes:</u>

Personal Dynamics Personal Dynamics of Canada

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CHAPTER 12: SUPERVISION AND RECORD KEEPING

KEY POINTS:

Supervision is the continual task of keeping informed about the performance of staff and volunteers. Because of its routine nature, it can easily be neglected when other priorities intrude.

This chapter will address
- ✔ what supervision is
- ✔ supervision techniques
- ✔ coaching, mentoring and delegation
- ✔ scheduling
- ✔ record keeping

This chapter was written by Ginette Johnstone of Johnstone Training and Consultation (JTC) Inc.

Effective supervision is the continuing task of informing staff and volunteers about work expectations and monitoring the work to ensure that it is performed to established standards. It involves maintaining a balance between monitoring performance and providing staff and volunteers with the freedom to work independently.

In order for supervision to yield positive results for all concerned, it requires that the supervisor build an open and supportive relationship with each person being supervised.

> "The supervisor's role, within that relationship is to empower each worker - whether employees or volunteers - to be successful in his or her work." (Lee and Catagnus)

It is the responsibility of the manager of volunteer services to ensure work is being monitored in order to:

- support the volunteer or staff in their work;
- avoid potential mistakes;
- correct any errors before they become too big;
- provide immediate feedback to workers, both positive and constructive;
- enhance competence and skills development;
- recognize the contributions of staff and volunteers;
- ensure quality and consistency of service; and
- reduce risk and potential liability.

Supervision too often gets neglected because managers get caught up in administrative functions and crisis management. Managers of volunteer services must make time to "walk the floor" and see first hand what is happening on the "front line."

When setting up supervision procedures, the manager of volunteers must always remember that staff and volunteers are individuals who will require differing amounts of monitoring, support and coaching. It will not work to treat everyone the same. Rather, it is useful to adapt supervision to the specific needs of the individual.

Setting Standards

Assessing performance is impossible without some criteria against which to measure the level of competence. The first task in establishing a supervision process then, is to determine the standards of performance that will be expected for each job in the department.

Standards of performance come out of the policies and procedures[1] and are linked to the established position descriptions.[2] Some standards will be general in scope, such as the requirement to sign in when arriving to volunteer, while other standards will be specific to individual volunteer positions.

A standard defines the minimum level of performance acceptable for a particular task or objective. The OAVA Standards of Practice, quoted in Chapter 2, establish minimum competencies for the profession. They tell us the minimum requirements in terms of knowledge and abilities for an entry level manager of volunteers. Thus, the supervisor of a manager of volunteers has a base line on which to determine the performance of the manager and establish performance goals. Similarly, volunteers will appreciate clear standards on which to base their performance and need for improvement.

Take for example the position of volunteer usher for a community theatre. It might call for the volunteer to "politely greet patrons as they arrive"; the standard for that greeting might be to make eye contact and smile. By clarifying that, the supervisor has a specific behaviour to observe and on which to base an assessment of the volunteer's work. If performance proves unsatisfactory, the supervisor can be specific about what needs to change and can coach the volunteer on how to accomplish that change.

By establishing standards, the manager of volunteer services clarifies expectations and minimizes the chances of error. Standards also establish expected and acceptable behaviour on which to base quality of performance.[3] They must be observable and measurable.

> "Keep in mind that if you have high expectations of volunteers you are likely to get good results. If your expectations are low - implying that you don't believe volunteers are capable of doing a good job or cannot be trusted to do a good job - you are likely to get low results." (Lee and Catagnus)

Training Supervisors

With all the other expectations on their time, managers of volunteer services must find creative ways to supervise their volunteer workers. Particularly in organizations where large numbers of volunteers contribute time, it may be necessary for managers to share their supervisory responsibilities. Colleagues, paid or volunteer, could be supervising volunteers working with them. If this is so, that expectation must be made clear during staff and volunteer orientation or as part of the assignment of a volunteer.

It would be a mistake to assume that staff or volunteers who will be supervising volunteers will have acquired the supervisory skills they need. The manager must be prepared to provide information and training sessions that will clarify expectations and build the skills. The manager will also need to be available to coach the supervisors on a need basis.

Experienced volunteers are an excellent resource for the managers looking to share supervisory duties. These individuals may even act as team leaders who will be able to support other volunteers. It allows these knowledgeable volunteers an opportunity to try a new challenge and be recognized for their past contributions to the organization. They too will require supervisory training and on-going supervision and coaching.

Supervision Techniques

There are many ways that performance can be monitored.

The first thing to consider is the level of experience the volunteer has with your organization. The new recruit, regardless of his or her experience elsewhere, will require closer monitoring at first. Once the volunteer has demonstrated some mastery over the position, supervision can be less intense. Although volunteers will require decreasing amounts of supervision, monitoring should never be completely abandoned. Skills get rusty and attention wanes when the same job has been performed repeatedly.

If volunteers work on-site, managers will have many opportunities to observe their work. Off-site supervision provides more of a challenge. When a volunteer is not nearby, it is more difficult to keep track of performance and to provide appropriate supervision. Whether volunteers are working on-site, or their contribution is made in a location far removed, they still have the right to adequate and appropriate supervision.

"It's important to remember that communication is your primary supervision tool when volunteers work in the field, physically separate from you and often from any other volunteer." (Lee and Catagnus)
Regardless of location, it is advisable to put in place structured supervision techniques. Here are a few to consider.

Check-ins

A formal process for volunteers to check-in when coming to work will prove an important record. A sign-in book, located in a convenient spot, will be invaluable in documenting attendance, hours worked and reliability. Not only is the record of hours necessary for volunteer recognition, but also for reporting departmental statistics and even for justifying the budget for the service.

This will also provide the manager with factual information should it become necessary to establish someone's whereabouts or in emergency situations.

The check-in book(s) should be readily accessible at the volunteer's work site. Should the volunteer work on an independent or individual basis, such as a friendly visitor might, he or she might be required to maintain a log and submit it on a regular basis.

In any case, it is vital for the manager to keep track of volunteer contribution in this quantifiable manner.

Observation

Regular time set aside to directly observe the work of staff and volunteers will provide insights into the level of performance and alert the manager to potential concerns.

Much can be learned by watching someone work that can never be discovered any other way. A volunteer's level of comfort or sensitivity to client needs is best determined in this manner. It is through direct observation that the manager will get to know an individual's particular talents and get clues as to areas where the volunteer or staff requires coaching. In this way, the supervisor is able to act immediately to provide feedback, recognition, coaching or other necessary supports.

Observation should be such a habit that it does not seem intrusive to the workers. If a manager makes a point of 'being on the floor' or 'dropping in' on a regular basis, volunteers and staff will not see this habit as being spied on, but as a regular part of the manager's work. They will consequently be far more natural and relaxed and the observation will yield more accurate results.

Feedback

Giving feedback is a critical supervisory skill. Because of the immediacy of feedback, it is the most effective way to recognizing good work and encourage improvement.

There are two basic types of feedback: positive and constructive. Positive feedback will help staff and volunteers develop a self-confidence and gain satisfaction from their work. It will not lead to improved performance.

Constructive feedback will, if given in a supportive fashion, help volunteers become aware of ineffective performance and learn the skills to improve it.

Feedback should

- be immediate - given as soon after the incident as possible;
- be specific - so that the individual knows exactly what the expectation is;
- address only behaviours, not personality traits; and
- have follow-up to re-inforce changes.

Many supervisors are reluctant to give constructive feedback for fear of creating a situation where the individual might become defensive or get upset. However, most people want to know how well they are doing. It can be just as discouraging to be left in the dark about the quality of one's performance. As people want to do a good job, particularly volunteers who choose to give freely of their time, feedback, both positive and constructive is evidence of the importance of their contribution.

Examination of work

Particularly in cases where specific and technical skills are required, a formal examination of the work is recommended. This will ensure continued adherence to standards and avoid slippage in diligence, a common outcome of familiarity with or constant repetition of a task.

For instance, volunteers required to assemble or collate departmental newsletters might be subject to a periodic check for errors such as missing pages.

Before the work is examined however, the standards and criteria for acceptable performance must be established. Of course, errors will occur and standards may be based on percentages if "perfection" is not reasonable to expect. These standards will have been shared with the workers and everyone will be assessed on the same basis.
Results of the examination are best shared as soon as possible, highlighting the areas of excellence and providing supportive suggestions for improvement where needed.

If work is consistently not up to standard, the supervisor may want to explore further to see what underlying causes exist. It may be some external factor over which the worker has no control.

Spot checks - in person

Closely related to observation, this supervision technique is particularly appropriate for off-site volunteers. Supervisors must make time, on a regular basis, to visit volunteers working and to observe, first hand, their work.

It is only fair for the manager to notify the volunteer or staff that spot checks will occur. Spot checks are usually done on an irregular basis so that the manager can observe performance under a variety of circumstances.

Telephone check-ins

Though not quite as effective, telephone check-ins with off-site volunteers may provide the supervisor with valuable information about the work being done. It also sends out a clear message about the importance of the task and the interest of the manager.

One advantage of telephone check-ins comes from the fact that some individuals are more comfortable speaking on the phone than face to face, particularly if there are sensitive issues to discuss. It may be helpful for the supervisor to take the time for such conversations which can then be followed-up with a personal visit if required.

Telephones check-ins can easily be delegated to more experienced volunteers or team leaders.

Client feedback

What a client or customer has to say about the work of staff or volunteers is critical in supervision and performance review. The information gathered will be useful in helping the individual improve performance and in recognizing their accomplishments.

Some managers are reluctant to ask clients about the performance of volunteers, fearing that it will regarded as "going behind their back." However, if volunteers and staff are informed that seeking client feedback is a regular practice and if they are given the rationale for the process, they will accept it as a natural part of the supervision.

For the manager, besides highlighting areas for improvement, client feedback is the means by which the best examples of an individual's work will be gathered—gems for recognition time. It can also provide the manager additional information about the effectiveness of that particular service.

Volunteer reports

In many circumstances, it is appropriate to ask staff and volunteers to provide a written report of their work. Their feedback and input is as necessary and valuable as that of clients.

Workers should be asked questions about their work, what is going well and what is not. More importantly, volunteers must be asked what the supervisor and/or department can do to facilitate their work.

Staff and volunteers will provide very important information about the effectiveness of certain procedures and even of the programme or service itself. Their intimate association with it will means that they have special insights and if asked, will surely have great suggestions on how to improve them. They can also provide critical information about client progress.

In their book *"Supervising Volunteers"*, Lee and Catagnus suggest two more means of supervision.

Support Sessions

Giving staff and volunteers a time to come together to discuss how their volunteer experience is affecting them will be of great value. The opportunity to problem-solve with colleagues will help develop new strategies and build the self-confidence of each worker.
Furthermore, support sessions will provide the supervisor with important information about how each worker is doing, thereby allowing the supervisor to put the most needed and effective supports in place.

Group meetings

Group meetings are somewhat similar but may include a more structure agenda and topics for discussion. They may even allow for a guest speaker or some testimonial from an experienced volunteer or client.

The supervisor will need to consider whether or not to make these meetings mandatory. In highly intense volunteer situations, it may be the best way to ensure that volunteers get the support that they need.

Supervision is a responsibility that must be taken seriously. Managers want to be trusting of their volunteers and that often becomes an excuse for not monitoring the work closely enough. No one gains from such a lack of supervision.

There are also things a supervisor must never do. In *The Fifty Minute Supervisor*, Elwood Chapman shares "Six Unforgivable Mistakes"[4]

1. Treating individuals inequitably. Each employee should receive the same consideration as any other.

2. Not keeping trust with someone.

3. Being inconsistent.

4. Failure to follow basic policy and procedure.

5. Losing your cool in front of others.

6. Engaging in a personal relationship with someone you supervise.

Coaching

Supervision is not only about monitoring performance, it is also about helping people perform better.

Coaching is recognized as an effective technique for one-on-one assistance for improving performance.

Though coaching has been brandied about as 'the' method of supervision, the term is most often used to describe the type assistance that a manager gives when helping someone master specific skills.

Good coaching offers a balance of confidence-building and skill-building. Therefore, to be effective, coaching must occur over time. The individual must not only master a skill by practice and repetition, he or she must also build confidence in the ability to perform well. Progress is made one step at a time and each step must be mastered before moving onto the next one. Complete mastery only happens over time.

The coaching process can follow these steps:

1. Determine the skill required and the standard of performance.
2. Determine the different components of the skill that must be learned.
3. Assess the individual's current level of skills.
4. Assess the individual's current level of confidence in his or her skill.
5. Clarify with the individual, the expected outcome of the coaching.
6. Schedule regular coaching sessions.
7. Beginning with the first component, demonstrate how to do it.
8. Encourage the individual to try, giving guidance and correcting when necessary.
9. Have the individual practice the skill.
10. Recognize improvements and encourage further effort.
11. Repeat steps 9 and 10 until that component is mastered.
12. Repeat steps 7 through 11 until the skill is completely mastered.

The astute coach knows that in many cases, the difficulty lies in the individual's lack of confidence in his or her ability as much as that ability itself. Thus, the confidence-building, or the motivational aspect of coaching becomes critical to success.

Though it appears technical, coaching can be applied to a wide variety of skill development. For instance, coaching can be as effective in teaching someone to master word processing as it can helping someone become an effective meeting chair. The key is to understand the different components of the task and to be prepared to take the necessary time.

Mentoring

Mentoring occurs when an experienced person informally guides a newer person through the challenges of work. The mentor acts as a guide, coach and role model who leads the protégé through the organizational challenges that face him or her. The mentor will advocate on behalf of the protégé and do whatever possible to open doors and facilitate the progress through the organization. It will require wisdom and patience from the mentor; trust and openness from the protégé.

Though traditionally, mentorship situations have developed more informally, it is more recently that voluntary organizations have turned to it as a means of facilitating the success of new staff and volunteers. Consequently, many have developing mentoring programmes where experienced workers are deliberately matched with less experienced workers, much as a buddy system would. It is very important that the relationship be a comfortable one for both the mentor and the protégé.

This practice of establishing mentorship programs can be quite effective but there are also pitfalls. Doctor W.A. Belanger of the University of Ottawa states:

There are two disadvantages to appointing a mentor. First, a mentoring relationship depends on a unique match which can be accomplished only by the mentor and the protégé. Often this relationship is recognized as "mentoring" only after it has existed for a time. Second, appointing an official "mentor" may limit the protégé. The protégé may feel that it is inappropriate to seek help from others or to establish a quality relationship with another.[5]

Thus, mentorship matches must be carefully planned if they are to be successful. Rey Carr, in "Mentoring, a 4,000 Year Old Tradition", offers the following advice:[6]

- deliberate and systematic planning and delivery of a mentoring programme increases the chances of success;
- both the mentor and the protégé must perceive that their needs are being met;
- the mentor and the partner must be willing to work on the relationship-building aspect of their connection;
- a helping-oriented culture value will help the match succeed.

Needless to say, a manager of volunteer services who decides to put a mentorship programme in place will ensure that:

- clear outcomes and expectations are communicated;
- participation is completely voluntary;
- potential mentors are informed about what their role entails;
- that the relationship is monitored; and
- that the relationship is supported.

Thus, mentoring programmes will require some careful planning and implementation. Since the rewarding nature of the relationship, for both mentor and protégé is the key factor, matches will necessitate common interest and mutual commitment. The more natural the formation of the relationship, the truer the mentoring will be.

Delegation

Supervision also involves delegation.

Delegation is the art of handing over to another individual the responsibility (not the accountability) for getting something done.

This is very difficult to do successfully. First, the manager must be prepared to let go of that "something" and trust that the 'delegatee' will do the job well.

Harold Taylor, in *Delegate: the Key to Successful Management*[7] suggests the following benefits of delegation:

- it releases time for managing;
- it relieves work pressures;
- it develops people;
- it provides a motivational climate;
- it provides performance standards;
- it increases results; and
- it develops the organization.

In order to delegate effectively however, the supervisor must be able to trust that the staff or volunteer will end up with an acceptable result, that may or may not be as good as if the supervisor had done it him or herself. It also means that the manager must allow the worker to do it his or her own way and in so doing, possibly make some mistakes.

To be effective at delegation, the manager might follow these guidelines:

- carefully match the difficulty of the task to be delegated with the level of ability of the worker;
- choose a task that is "self-contained", that has a beginning and an end, at least at first;
- articulate clear outcomes and time lines and communicate them clearly;
- check in regularly to support but not to interfere;
- ask for regular progress reports, perhaps attached to benchmarks along the way;
- allow your staff and volunteers to make their mistakes and help them learn from them;
- don't succumb to the temptation to tell the person how to do it;
- if the person asks for assistance, lead them in the right direction but avoid solving the problem for them; and
- have faith!

In his 1988 article *Delegation: The Art of Creative Empowerment*[8], Professor David Banner suggests the following:

1. Train your subordinates for more responsibility by giving them the skills and resources they need to successfully complete the task.
2. Make sure your expectations are adequately communicated.
3. Stress the results you expect.
4. Set "accountability meetings" to measure progress and offer assistance.

Managers simply do not have the time to do it all themselves. That makes delegation an ideal tool as it lessens the load on the manager and helps the worker develop and improve.

Supervision and Teamwork

It is increasingly popular for organizations to create teams to get certain jobs done. This is also a good idea for volunteer services, where volunteers in a team may be able to support each other and create a sense of accomplishment and belonging they would not otherwise get.

> "If a leader does not place a high value on teamwork it will not occur. Teamwork takes conscious effort to develop and conscious effort to maintain, but the rewards can be great." (Robert Maddux)

When establishing a team, pay special attention to its composition. Ideally, the team will number between 6 and 10 individuals. Less than that will not allow sufficient diversity of talents, skills and perspective to make the team truly creative. More than that will make it difficult for each team member to be heard and to play an active role in the work of the team. Diversity is a very important factor in team effectiveness. Natural tendencies are to select people to think alike and have a common basis for the task to be done. However, this limits the outcome to the 'one' way of thinking. Having a diversity of individuals on a team, though it may make the work a bit more frustrating as team members strive to understand where other team members are coming from, will invariably produce a more creative outcome.

Supervision of teamwork, like supervision of the individual, requires that standards of performance be in place. In the case of a team, that may take the form of:

- terms of reference that define the team, its purpose, the duration of its mandate and clear expected outcomes; and
- team goals which the team can develop itself and which will outline the steps that will be taken to achieve the stated outcomes.

As a supervisor of the team, it is the performance of the team as a whole that is of concern. Individual performance within the team, unless disruptive to the point of jeopardizing the work of the whole team, should be left for the team to work out.

The wise supervisor may find it useful to provide volunteers and staff who are expected to work in a team setting with some training in teamwork. Since there are differences between teamwork and individual work, it is only fair that these be understood and that the interpersonal skills needed for effective participation in a team be identified and developed.

Scheduling

Scheduling is the perennial headache of the manager of volunteers. The larger the department, the more numerous the volunteer positions, the more complex the task is.

The challenge of scheduling is of course to match the volunteer's availability with the needs of the organization. When organizations offer daytime, evening and weekend services, this task can be very complicated.

The ideal solution of course is to automate the function and there are several good computer software packages that can help with that. Barring that, it requires highly developed organizational skills.

The most straightforward way to schedule is to maintain a daily calendar with shifts and position slots. When volunteers come in, they can "sign up" for open slots.

Another way is to list available opportunities by day match those with times when the volunteers are able to work.

In smaller organizations, a master schedule, listing all open slots will make it easy for volunteers to sign up and will facilitate easier movement and variety for volunteers who wish it.

In larger organizations, departmental schedules may be more appropriate. Schedules by position description, by department or by job category (e.g. fund raising) might also prove useful.

Whatever the case, it is important to build in flexibility. Rigid schedules easily fall apart if a volunteer is unable to attend or experiences a change in their schedule. Furthermore, flexibility will allow the manager to accommodate the volunteer who has one hour to give as well as the one who has four hours to give or the volunteer who works on shift and may have an ever changing schedule.

- It is a good idea to keep a list of the volunteers who have flexible personal schedules as a backup for instances when a person is prevented from filling his or her commitment. There might even be a position description developed for an "on-call" volunteer.

Schedules are best made up as long in advance as possible. When they are ready, various ways of communicating them to the volunteers will ensure that everyone will be reminded of their commitments. There are several ways to communicate the work schedules:

- publish them in the departmental newsletter;
- post them on a bulletin board in the volunteer lounge;
- provide copies in binders at each work site;
- distribute personal copies to each volunteer of the schedule for their particular category or department; and/or
- recruit team leaders to call volunteers to notify them of the schedule.

Whatever method is chosen, it will be more effective if used consistently so that volunteers come to expect and rely on that way to confirm their commitment.

Record Keeping

A critical and necessary part of supervision involves record keeping. The manager must ensure that appropriate documentation is kept to support performance reviews, disciplinary actions and legal requirements.

The manager might want to consider asking an experienced volunteers who likes taking charge of specific projects to maintain some of these records.

There are many different records that will be kept by the manager of volunteer services. Some important records are described below.

The personnel file

Volunteers, like paid personnel, deserve that documentation about their contribution be kept in an organized and appropriate fashion.
The personnel file will include only information that is necessary and related to the volunteer's (or staff's) work. A volunteer personnel file might include:

- personal data such as full name, address, telephone number etc., which is gathered by and may be stored as the application form;
- emergency contact;
- pertinent medical or health information, if appropriate;
- references;
- start date, end date, dates of leaves of absence;
- record of orientation and training;
- record of assignments;
- record of hours;
- record of performance reviews and other performance related notes;
- record of awards etc.

It is not appropriate, it is even legally questionable to keep information that is speculative (not factual) or impressions that can not be substantiated by proof. For instance, you cannot note in a volunteer's personnel file that he or she is unreliable unless you can substantiate that with instances where the volunteer did not meet his or her commitment.

The manager must be aware of human rights legislation. It is a safe practice to apply to volunteers any human rights requirement applicable to staff.

The time log

For reasons already mentioned above, keeping an accurate record of volunteers hours is a must.

The manager of volunteer services will need to know how many hours each volunteer has contributed to the organization. It will also be useful to know the number of hours contributed in each position and/or by department or category.

These statistics will be critical for the manager to demonstrate the value of the volunteer contribution and to negotiate the resources necessary to adequately support the volunteers. This information will also come in handy when the manager is planning for future volunteer involvement and/or recruitment for current volunteer positions.

The activity log

Not only is it important to keep track of how much time volunteers put in, it is also important to know what they were doing.

For certain positions, the recording of what a volunteer did will be necessary for the next volunteer to follow-up on. A simple example is that of a volunteer taking a cart to hospital wards with items for patients to purchase. It will be necessary to record what sold if the cart is to be appropriately replenished. The volunteer may also want to note if a certain item is particularly popular or if a certain patient has a particular request.

The communications book

Many departments of volunteer services maintain a communications book in which staff and volunteers can record information of particular interest that they want to share. This is really useful if there are several individuals working at the same site who rarely get to see each other because of the way the shifts are scheduled.

The information kept in a communications book can vary a great deal. It can be as simple as "We ran out of milk, please remember to buy an extra litre" to "Mrs. Smith's sister died yesterday; she is very upset."

There is one organization in southern Ontario which has several homes for developmentally handicapped adults. They have gone as far as connecting their homes by e-mail so that they can readily share information about the whole organization with staff and volunteers who seldom come to the main office. It has been a great success.

Tracking Forms

There are many ways to track volunteers and their activities in the department.

The manager may wish to keep track of potential candidates calling to enquire about volunteer opportunities. See chapter 7 for a good example of such a form.

Supervision is one of the manager of volunteer services' main responsibilities and a considerable amount of the manager's time must be set aside for this activity. If the manager cannot, at any given time, report on the activities in his or her department, or find current, accurate information about the performance of each staff and volunteer in the department, supervision is being neglected. The manager must make supervision a priority.

Endnotes

[1] See Chapter 4, *Policies and Procedures.*

[2] See Chapter 7, *Preparing for Volunteers.*

[3] See Chapter 14, *Assessment and Re-direction* for more information on standards.

[4] Chapman, Elwood, *The Fifty Minute Supervisor*, 2nd edition, Los Altos, California: Crisp Publications, Inc., 1988, page 37.

[5] Belanger, W.A., Ph.D., "An Alternative to Training in Volunteer Organizations", *The Journal of Volunteer Resources Management,* Winter 1995, Volume 4.1, pages 2 to 4.

[6] Carr, Rey, "Mentoring, a 4,000 Year Old Tradition", *The Journal of Volunteer Resources Management,* Winter 1995, Volume 4.1, pages 5 to 7.

[7] Taylor, Harold, *Delegate: the Key to Successful Management*, Toronto, Ontario: Stoddard Publishing Co. Ltd., 1989, pages 18 to 22.

[8] Banner, David, "The Art of Creative Empowerment", *Business Dynamics,* April/May 1988, Issue #29, page 4.

Review Questions

Supervision is critical to effective service delivery and motivated volunteers.

1. Define supervision.
2. Describe five methods of supervision.
3. What is coaching? What is an important principle to remember about coaching?
4. List three things to remember to do when delegating.
5. List and describe the contents of three important records managers of volunteers should keep.

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CHAPTER 13: LEADERSHIP

KEY POINTS

This chapter will examine the issue of leadership. It will look at leadership from both an organizational and individual perspectives. The chapter will also examine the relationship of the leader to the team. Issues such as team building, group participation and conflict resolution will be discussed. Effective leadership is critical to the success of not-for-profit organizations and the manager of volunteer services can play an integral role in leading and developing staff and volunteers.

This chapter addresses
- ✔ personal leadership styles
- ✔ organizations which develop leadership
- ✔ building successful teams,
- ✔ group participation
- ✔ code of team behaviour
- ✔ conflict resolution

This chapter was written by Liz Weaver of the Volunteer Centre of Hamilton & District.

Basic Principles of Leadership

Our lives revolve around the building and supporting of relationships, whether it's parent/child, teacher/student, supervisor/employee or manager/volunteer. For relationships to be effective there must be a balance or sharing of responsibilities between the individuals involved. Each participants in a relationship need to both give and receive for it to be effective. Successful relationships reflect the contributions made by each individual as well as reflect the benefits that each person will receive.

A good leader knows that meeting the needs of their partners can make the partner more willing to assist the leader. There must be a match between contributions made and benefits received. A leader can only have so much influence over another individual. Leaders involve others by inspiring them and motivating them to service.

The leadership skills and style of the manager of volunteer services are critical to the success of the organization. The manager must effectively lead both volunteers and other staff within the organization. At times volunteers and stakeholders may identify goals which are in conflict or oppose those of others within the the organization. The manager of volunteer services requires leadership skills to effectively manage conflicting goals while still meeting the mission of the agency.

Successful leaders recognize that leadership is situational. Different situations may require different approaches in leadership. As a leader you may be required one day to be a decision-maker and, on other days, a coach, negotiator or delegator. Leadership is the art of inspiring people to do something... but the focus is on the people. Effective leaders integrate the needs of the followers with the goals of the organization.

Leaders who focus on the individual do so by first identifying the skills and strengths of each person. They design activities which will build on these strengths in a way that is meaningful to the organization and to the individual. Leaders maximize the opportunities to develop individuals on their team. They provide opportunities for growth but also learn to accept refusals from the individual to participate. Leaders provide clearly defined expectations and are aware of the capabilities and depend on the abilities of members of the group. They follow-up when this is needed.

The manager of volunteer services has a unique position within an agency to identify, design and develop positions which will build on the strengths each individual may possess. Successful volunteer positions encourage both personal and professional growth. A manager of volunteer services can support the development of individual volunteers and assist with the growth of leadership for the agency.

Leadership and Influence

Rick Lynch, in his book *Developing your Leadership Potential*[1] , identifies that there are essentially two ways of becoming a leader. The first is related to status or position held within the organization or group. People who hold positions of authority or influence generally have status-related power. They are looked to as leaders because they have the ability to provide rewards or to discipline mistakes. In some cases the position itself, regardless of who is performing the task, is considered a leadership position because of the influence the position might have in decision-making. Examples of status-related power include elected positions, presidents chief executive officers of corporations or church ministers.

The position of manager of volunteer services has status-related power. He or she has the ability to influence decision-making and can, through volunteer recognition, evaluation and/or discipline, positively or negatively influence the activities of the volunteer.

However, the status-related power of the manager of volunteer services is vulnerable. Since a volunteer provides service of free will, the volunteer chooses each time whether they will return to the agency. If the volunteer is not positively influenced by the leadership shown by the manager of volunteer services, it is unlikely the volunteer will continue his or her association with the agency.

The test of successful leadership for the manager of volunteer services is the degree to which the status-related power of the position is combined with the personal power of the individual.

This second type of leadership relates to the development of personal power. This is the ability that each person has to inspire and gain the respect of others. Personal power involves setting and following personal values and goals. Others will come to respect the leader if they can understand and draw meaning from his/her values and goals. They look to leaders to provide consistent direction which fits their own values.

Personal power leadership requires that the leader continually work on his or her leadership values and skills. This type of leadership can be more transient as the values of the followers and organization may change. The test of leadership is keeping true to your values while motivating others.

The two types of leadership influence are not mutually exclusive. Individuals with status related power may not necessarily draw supporters to them if they have limited personal power. However, there are many examples of individuals who have strong personal power leadership qualities. These individuals gain status through their ability to influence others.

Lynch believes that leadership power can be maintained by the following actions:

- the creation of a sense of purpose from which people draw meaning;
- the creation of values to guide individual behaviour;
- the creation of a system that produces movement toward the purpose; and
- the creation of motivation.

These actions are dependent on each other and when appropriately used can be instrumental to leadership effectiveness.[2]

Organizations Which Develop Leaders

Successful organizations and individuals recognize their responsibility to develop and nurture leadership potential. These organizations place a high priority on continuous learning. They recognize that individuals need the tools to adapt to a changing work environment and ongoing training and education provides these tools.

These organizations focus on process and people as well as the task. They recognize that the process and the people involved need to be nurtured. They encourage staff and volunteers to take on leadership roles within the organization, knowing that this will grow the success of the organization. This builds a sense of responsibility and ownership for service delivery. Leaders also know that it is important to keep others accountable for the responsibilities they have taken on.

Successful organizations have regular, interactive meetings where participation is encouraged. Leaders keep others informed about decisions made within the organization. They also encourage frequent progress reports from staff. Staff and volunteers are expected to bring solutions, not problems to meetings. Mistakes are resolved promptly and the focus or solution is on the problem not the personality.

Finally, successful leaders and organizations conduct both entrance and exit interviews for effective placement of staff. They use the recommendations from exit interviews to further develop positions and the leadership potential of others.[3]

Characteristics of successful organizations

- There is a sense of purpose.
- There is an alignment of people around the purpose.
- There is concern for personal performance and growth.
- There is a commitment to creating a positive environment.
- There is an effective structure.
- There is a clear line of authority and a strong sensitive leader.
- There is a good level of communication.

Successful organizations are lead by individuals who:
- are willing to make trade offs (realize they cannot please everyone);
- will work from set goals;
- are effective communicators;
- are perceptive and sensitive to the group;
- are good at integrating interests and priorities;
- are creative and adaptable;
- will provide positive role models; and
- acknowledge the efforts of others and encourage them.[4]

Developing Principles for Personal Leadership

To be a successful leader is to infect the spirit of your leadership on others. This can be achieved by modeling a set of behaviours and nurturing others to model these behaviours as well. The principles of personal leadership revolve around defining a vision of leadership, staying true to this vision and finally, respecting and honouring others who support the leader in achieving that vision. Providing support to colleagues will help them develop the leadership principles so they can become leaders in their own right.

- Lead by example.
- Uphold the self-esteem of others at all times.
- Demonstrate helpfulness.
- Treat relationships like investments.
- Accept responsibility pro-actively.
- Never give up your vision.
- Remains a professional at all times. (Adapted from VIP Strategy, Leaders).

Organizational Tools for Leadership

Much of this text identifies or develops tools which assist a manager of volunteer services to be effective in an organization. There are several tools which can be used by leaders to make them effective. These tools are common to all organizations but can become the framework for your leadership style.

1. Mission Statements
   The mission statement of the organization or a clear statement of purpose for the group is an effective tool for getting or keeping the group on track. Every member of the group should be familiar with the mission statement and understand its relevance to the activities the team or group is undertaking. The mission or purpose statement will also help establish the boundaries for the group. Many leaders develop a personal mission statement which they follow. This should be consistent with the organizational mission.

2. Programme/Organizational Plans
   The programme/organizational plan sets the context for team work. The leader should be aware of the programme plan and try to keep the team on track in identifying team activities and moving toward the achievement of team goals.

3. Team Activities
   Team activities should be based on the mission or goal statement and the programme or an organizational plan. The team can identify how they are consistent with the goal.

4. Programme Involvement
   Empowerment of team members in

goal setting and programme development benefits the leader because team members show a greater commitment to programme success.

5. Evaluation
   A leader recognizes the importance of building in an evaluation component for the group. The evaluation tool will help the team assess its successes and failures and identify opportunities where success can be celebrated.

Team Building

A successful leader recognizes that his or her strength is directly related to the strength and commitment of team members. It is important to recruit appropriate team members, provide them with the tools needed to undertake the tasks, and nurture team members along the way. An essential nurturing tool is team building.

Team building can be activity undertaken to motivate team members to working toward the same cause or value. The group leader usually has the lead responsibility in ensuring that team building happens. Opportunities for team building can occur at all stages of group development but are most successful when the group or team is formed.

Team building involves all team members in decision-making. The leader may act as facilitator. The challenge to the leader in building a strong team, is that power and decision-making will then be distributed among team members. While this may seem to be a threat, it develops team commitment and helps the team achieve its goals.

A team building exercise which could set a framework for team members is developing a "Code of Team Behaviour." The Code is based on values team members feel are important and identifies working protocols. The Code of Team Behaviour can also assist in situations of conflict by setting the framework for resolving the conflicts. By involving team members in the development of the code, they are more likely to subscribe to its values. Attached to this chapter is an example of a "Code of Team Behaviours" adopted by a Volunteer Centre of Hamilton & District staff team and is reproduced here with permission.

Stages of Team Development

Most teams go through five stages of team development. While the stages may occur consecutively, a team at a certain stage can regress or move forward if the team composition changes or the tasks given to the team change significantly.

STAGE ONE: FORMING
This is the stage where team members learn about one another. The team is brought together to do a task and they need to know the strengths and weaknesses each member brings to the team. This would be a good stage for a team building exercise which identifies the strengths, weaknesses, likes and dislikes of each member. The team could also engage in a networking exercise to identify the associated resources team members might bring to the successful completion of the task.

STAGE TWO: STORMING
The focus of the second stage is the development of the team and the setting of rules. Team members realize that to advance toward the goal, rules and frameworks will enhance accountability of team members. It is at this stage where disagreements around rules and work relationships may occur.

STAGE THREE: NORMING

This is a pivotal stage for team development. It is during this stage that team members agree to the task and the rules. They 'buy in' and agree to the goals and timelines set. There can be turbulence in the team if not all members are in agreement with the direction set or are not willing to work toward the goal proposed by the team. It is critical at this stage to ensure that goals are well articulated. It is also important that all team members know and understand the goals and their role in achieving the goal.

STAGE FOUR: PERFORMING

It is during this stage that the team begins to experience successful results. Team members are contributing at a high level and there are tangible activities and outputs. It is important, during this stage, to build in recognition for successful goals and achievements.

STAGE FIVE: ADJOURNING

All teams have a beginning and an end point. It is important, once a goal has been met to allow team members to adjourn. Some team members will go gracefully while others may need a nudge to move on. A very successful team builds into the adjourning stage an evaluation component so that lessons learned through the team experience can be shared with other teams.

Team stages are cyclical. While a team may be working in an advanced stage of development, a new member or new task can make the team revert to an earlier stage and storm new rules to make it work effectively. At each stage of team development, communication is critical for the team to grow and succeed. If you include team building activities in each stage, team members will grow and commit to the success of the team.

Acid Test for Successful Teams

There are five common characteristics of successful teams. These characteristics must be shared by all team members for the team to work toward a common goal:

1. a common, recognized purpose.;
2. interdependency among team members;
3. recognized benefit in sharing information, knowledge and learning;
4. linkage with a definable customer; and
5. definable output produced as a result of the team.

Team members must have a good understanding of their mission or purpose. Each team member should be able to identify easily their contributions as they relate to the task of the team.

A well, team members must be committed to the team. There must be an understanding that the team will only succeed if all team members support one another and share knowledge and information.

Finally, the team must have a goal or output. This goal should be measurable so that the team knows when success has been achieved. It is important for closure that success is celebrated.

Needs of Team Members

An effective leader knows that to be successful, he or she has to be supported by a great team. To develop a great team, there must be an understanding of the needs of the individuals who make up the group. A manager of volunteer services may have conflicting needs identified by group members. Staff and volunteers on the team might not hold the same values. Identifying the needs of individual team members can be the first step to team success.

Individuals join teams because they need a sense of belonging to the group. To belong, team members need to share in the planning of goals. The goals should be attainable and success should be celebrated when a goal is achieved. Team members need to feel that what they are doing is adding to society. They need to be able to share in making the rules for the group.

Clarity of roles and expectations is also important for successful teams. The expectations should challenge the group. Team members should know how to communicate and be informed about issues or changes which will impact on their team goals.
Team members need to have confidence in their leaders. They also need to have rewards for work completed or undertaken.

Understanding the needs of team members is critical for the manager of the volunteer services department. Often, the team in the volunteer services department may be comprised of both paid staff and volunteers. Staff of the organization may bring different motivations and information to the team. Volunteers might be less informed about the mission or purpose of the team and withdraw from contributing to their fullest potential. As well, their involvement may be less frequent due to time commitments and meeting schedules.

Developing a strong staff/volunteer team requires a sharing of interests and motivations. As well, there needs to be a shared commitment to the goal of the team. Strong communication strategies are critical to ensure that both staff and volunteers are informed in changes and developments.

The manager of volunteer services is instrumental in encouraging staff within the agency to include volunteers on staff teams. An important role to play is that of troubleshooter to ensure that conflicts are minimized between team players and that volunteer involvement is maximized.

Responsibilities of the Leader to the Team

- Listen
- Contribute
- Show enthusiasm
- Put the team at ease
- Promote team work
- Discourage criticism
- Focus on the problem not the personality
- Be fair
- Provide appropriate recognition [5]

Conflict Resolution

Conflicts often occur within a group or team. Conflict resolution is a difficult task because it isn't always clear what the conflict is or why it has occurred. Successful conflict resolution results in a win-win situation for all parties involved. The manager of volunteer services should aim to have all parties satisfied with and participating in the resolution outcome.

Conflicts occur for a variety of reasons. To identify and understand the nature of the conflict is the first step to conflict resolution.

<u>Assumption and Perceptions</u>: Individual group members may view the same situation differently based on their culture, past experiences, values or beliefs. A check with the team around assumptions and perceptions might clarify these issues.

Individual Values, Needs and Goals: The values, needs and goals of team members may be in conflict with those of another individual or the team. Again, clear statements about expectations and team values can alleviate this conflict.

Emotions: Human beings are fraught with powerful emotions. It is difficult to predict how team members might react to a situation and their emotion could cloud decision-making. Keep the team to the task and identify and deal with emotions that are in conflict with team goals.

Competition: Conflict occurs when there is negative competition amongst team members. Positive competition motivates the team to achieve goals while negative competition is often based on individual success. Keep to the team goals.

Lack of Information or Clarity: Sharing and understanding information is critical to the success of a team. Conflicts can occur when team members interpret wrongly or feel they don't have enough information to carry out their task. Since people have individual ways of learning, check back with team members to ensure you are interpreting information in the same way.

Individual Communication and Influence Styles: Be sensitive to communication styles amongst team members. Communication must be respectful and encouraging to the team. Again, the Code of Team Behaviour could assist in establishing appropriate communication tools.

Conflict resolution is one of the biggest challenges a leader will face. By developing team rapport, setting group ground rules and developing strong communication techniques, many potential conflicts can be avoided.[6]

Three Steps to Resolving Conflicts:

1. Define facts, current situation, aim and outcome.
2. Search for alternatives and their implications.
3. Decide on the solution and action steps for implementation.[7]

Conflicts should be resolved in a timely manner, although in some cases, a cooling off period may be appropriate. Issues which are not resolved appropriately will hinder the team and the ability of the team to achieve its goal. Often it will be the manager of volunteer services who will act as an intermediary to resolve a conflict.

Following the three steps above, the manager of volunteer services should be prepared to discuss the conflict with all parties concerned. Remember to focus on the issue, situation or task in conflict and not on the personalities involved. Ask those involved in the conflict to identify alternative solutions or means to the successful achievement of the goals. Once the solution is determined to be acceptable to all parties, develop action steps and monitor results.

The involvement of all parties in the resolution of the conflict will have them buying into the solution. Conflict resolution, while it may seem to be a negative process, can build and strengthen the team, as members have actively participated in a decision-making process.

There may be occasions where conflict resolution will lead to discipline and/or dismissal of a volunteer. This issue is dealt in other chapters of this text. However, in keeping with supporting the team and with leadership values, the individuals in the conflict must always be respected. Organizational policies and procedures should be developed and followed to deal with conflict resolution, discipline and dismissal.

Functions of a Leader

There are two main leadership functions performed by team leaders. The first can be defined as task functions: ensuring that team members keep to a project or task. The team leader continually checks back with the team to ensure that all members are involved in problem definition and solutions.

The second type of function is maintenance: these ensure that team members feel they can openly communicate with each other.

Task Functions:

1. initiating/defining a problem/ problem solving,
2. seeking information/opinions,
3. giving information/opinions,
4. clarifying/elaborating,
5. summarizing,
6. testing agreements,

Maintenance Functions:

1. encouraging,
2. expressing group feelings,
3. harmonizing the group,
4. compromising,
5. gate keeping,
6. setting standards.

Effective leadership is knowing the functions of the leadership role and then empowering others. (Morrison, 1994: 63)

In both the task and maintenance functions, there may be opportunities for the leader to share the leadership with team members. Shared leadership can grow team members and involve them in a higher level of decision making. While not all team members will want to share the leadership task, there will be many team members who will grow and contribute more in a shared leadership experience.

Knowing and understanding the motivations of individual team members will help the manager of volunteer services identify leadership potential. Growing new leadership can be an enriching experience but requires flexibility and follow-up. Not all decisions will be made the way you would make them. However, the team will be enriched when leadership is shared.

Leadership Styles

There are five leadership styles.

Leader Centred:

- Authoritative (telling)
  The leader decides and announces all decisions.
- Political (selling)
  The leader decides and sells the decision to the group.
- Evaluative (testing)
  The leader presents ideas and invites questions but does not allow input for decisions.

Group Centred:

- Participative (consulting)
  The leader presents alternatives and the group chooses from among them.
- Laissez-Faire (joining)
  The group defines the boundaries and makes decisions together.

To be a successful leader, it is better to be bottom up and group centred although there are situations where a leader centred style may work effectively.[8]

Conclusions

Developing one's own leadership style is not a destination but a journey. As the manager encounters new situations and individuals, he or she will develop strategies which help address these. Each situation is unique and the approach will vary, but if others are treated with respect and openness, then the leadership will be appreciated by the team members.

There are many quality books and articles written about leadership; they are well worth reading.

A manager of volunteer services will be called upon to lead volunteers, staff and the community. In so doing, he or she will be reflecting the organization. Leadership is an important responsibility.

Sample Code of Team Behaviour[9]

POLICY STATEMENT:

To assist the Organization in achieving its mission, the staff have adopted the following code of team behaviour and shared values and staff members will conduct themselves according to the code.

PROCEDURES:

Integrity: We believe a team has integrity if each member's actions reflect honesty and integrity. We will:

a. Deal with confrontational issues face to face.
b. Let others know the impact of the issue on the working relationship.
c. Work collaboratively toward an amicable solution.
d. If a solution is reached, we will not let the solution cloud future working relationships.
e. Monitor our words and actions at all times in the workplace and in the community in order to honour our teammates.

Honesty: We believe that a team should confront situations which might impact the centre and each other openly and freely while respecting others. We will:

a. Acknowledge and state the anticipated reaction the situation might create.
b. Approach the situation with honesty.
c. Go prepared with alternatives and solutions.
d. Recognize differences among all people.
e. Take time to reflect on how each person might behave in conflict and learn from this.
f. Honour people with direct, positive feedback and positive insights.

Empathy/Compassion: We believe in showing care and consideration for people's circumstances. We will:

a. Take the time to get to know the person.
b. Accept people around you equally.
c. Look, Listen and Hear - to recognize verbal and nonverbal clues.
d. Understand that not all people feel the same about all things and respect everyone's uniqueness.

Cooperation: We believe in practising and encouraging support for the individual and the team. We will:

a. Understand and recognize the opportunity to seek or request support with our tasks and responsibilities.
b. Provide ideas, suggestions, support when others request it of us.
c. Respect others even if they cannot provide the support you request and accept their personal schedules and deadlines.
d. Work towards solutions which facilitate cooperation.
e. Offer to help others when you see that they are really swamped but you can spare some time.

Flexibility: We believe in being open to change and the alternatives presented for an outcome or solution. We will:

a. Practice being open minded regarding changes and solutions that occur at the Centre.
b. Offer suggestions.
c. Accept alternative ways of reaching the same outcome.
d. Be adaptable to uncertainty and ambiguity, and accept the outcomes that arise from this environment.
e. Remain collected and calm when presented with unique and new challenging work situations.

Freedom of Expression: We believe in creating a safe environment where differences are shared. We will:

a. Encourage people to share unique or different ideas or thoughts.
b. Draw on the values, flexibility, creativity, cooperation to ensure that everyone's words are heard.
c. If freedom of expression results in a conflict, we will resolve the conflict in the most appropriate and timely manner.

Trust: We believe in depending on each other to be truthful and trustworthy. We will:

a. Live up to commitments and responsibilities to others and the team.
b. Acknowledge the commitments of others and respecting their ability to contribute is important.
c. Always treat others as you want to be treated.

Accountability: We believe that everyone must live up to their commitments. We will:

a. Identify our commitments within the team and Volunteer Centre framework.
b. Let people know what we are doing.
c. Share with others when a commitment has achieved success or met with obstacles to success.
d. Make sure things are finished that we start and if we can't finish them ourselves or are having trouble finishing them on time, we will ask for help. We will take ownership from start to finish for our tasks.

Growth: We believe in fostering an environment that enables and encourages learning both informally and formally. We will:

a. Encourage a positive environment where staff identify what knowledge they need and what they want.
b. Identify our own personal learning goals.
c. Identify potential group learning goals.
d. Share with team items or information which might facilitate learning of the group or individuals within the group.

Respect: We believe in recognizing and valuing all people. We will:

a. Be sensitive to people's values and how they are translated in the work environment.
b. Accept people around us equally.
c. Treat others as we would like to be treated.
d. Ask questions if we don't understand.
e. Respect the individuals need for privacy.

Endnotes

[1] Lynch, R., *Developing your Leadership Potential*, (Volunteer Management Series) Downers Grove, Illinois: VMSystems, Heritage Arts Publishing, 1988.

[2] Ibid., page 5.

[3], Morrison, E. K. *Leadership Skills: Developing Volunteers for Organizational Success*, Arizona: Fisher Books, 1994. page 71.

[4] Ibid., page 71.

[5] Ibid., page 68.

[6] Kent, J., *Effective Organizations: A Consultant's Resource*, Skills Program for Management Volunteers, 1992, page 205.

[7] Ibid, page 205.

[8] Morrison, page 63.

[9] Reproduced with permission from the Volunteer Centre of Hamilton & District.

Chapter Review

This chapter examined the concepts of leadership as they relate to management of volunteer services.

1. Discuss two basic principles of leadership.
2. Select two characteristics of successful organizations and discuss what evidence demonstrates that they exist.
3. Review the responsibilities of team leaders; in which are you skilled and which must you improve?

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CHAPTER 14: ASSESSMENT AND RE-DIRECTION

KEY POINTS

This chapter is about helping people improve their performance as volunteers.

This chapter addresses

- ✔ what assessment is
- ✔ why assessment is not done
- ✔ shy assessment should be part of an effective volunteer service
- ✔ how to establish performance standards
- ✔ starting a performance review process
- ✔ the steps involved in dealing with poor performance
- ✔ firing a volunteer

This chapter was written by Marilyn MacKenzie of The Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto.

Introduction

Of all the elements of good management of volunteer systems, assessment is the least practiced and the most misunderstood. Many volunteers will confidently tell you that they have never been assessed and frankly, they are glad of it. When mentioned at conferences or meetings where directors of volunteer services gather, the mood becomes sombre and the voices drop low. What is it about assessment that frightens and freezes people?

There are a number of reasons for this:

- There is a lingering discomfort with any form of evaluation because it implies criticism, or finding fault. Almost every individual has a personal story of being found wanting by a teacher, coach, boss or mentor. Just as many people feel the assessment was unfair and inaccurate.

- There is a belief that because volunteers give their time without financial reward we haven't the right to expect them to be held accountable for their actions. We should be grateful that they show up at all! (This of the "I'm so desperate for a volunteer, I really can't be choosy" school.)

- There is a belief that assessment is a once a year, take your medicine and get it over with concept, that you may not like it but it will be good for you. Staff often complain that they would do it if they had the time but it takes time away from the really important work of doing the job that directors of volunteers are so actively engaged in day by day. This is particularly true in departments of over twenty volunteers! " My volunteer base is just too big to do assessments."

• Finally, directors of volunteers report that frankly it doesn't make much of a difference in people anyway. Volunteers just keep on behaving as they always did. Sustained change doesn't often happen.

Perhaps you've heard these sentiments expressed or maybe you've felt they were true. Nothing could be further from the truth. Let's look at each notion in turn and explore how you can change these immobilizing concepts into sources of inspiration for action:

• Assessment is more about finding people doing something right than wrong. A good manager of volunteers is looking for opportunities to identify positive, successful behaviours and to reinforce these so that they will happen again. Seen in this light, assessment is a fertile field for anyone who really enjoys working with people, and is a thoroughly pleasurable activity. When you comment appreciatively about work well done, you feel great, the volunteer is elated, and the quality of effort increases. This is a genuine win-win situation. Try this out. The next time you are supervising volunteers, limit your comments to praising—not finding fault. Be as specific as possible—not just "Good job, Hester!", although that certainly has its place. Rather concentrate on what made it a good job "Boy, it was a pleasure to watch you talk to that parent. You were listening so intently, you were relaxed; fully engaged. You made a friend today." Now that's assessment! And you can bet that behaviour will be repeated over and over again.

So the purpose of assessment is not to punish, to find fault or to dismiss. It is to program volunteers for success, to ensure that they will demonstrate the skills, attitudes and behaviours that will allow them to carry out the work with ease, confidence and competence. Every element of management of volunteers has been put in place to deliver this objective.

- We identify the required skills in the job description.
- We recruit for them when we go to the community for help.
- We polish and refine them in orientation and training.
- In assessment, we acknowledge that what we hoped for is occurring **in practice**. It's as simple as that.

Assessment is integral to good supervision. It does mean that occasionally you will see behaviours that don't please you—things you are sure you explained were inappropriate. Remembering that your purpose is to program volunteers for success, look for a constructive, effective way to help this volunteer do it right. When you are able to internalize this approach, even correction becomes a gentle, supportive re-focusing of effort, not a demand to cease, desist and depart.

• Can we hold volunteers accountable? We must. Gone are the days when doing good works poorly, dangerously and without planning was acceptable. The Department of Volunteer Services should be held to the same standard of accountability as any other.

We need to be sure that service is delivered to the intended target, in an acceptable manner, with the expected results (and perhaps, some delightful added enhancements as well.) There is still lots of room for individual creativity and unique approaches as long as volunteers are clear regarding what is expected of them, the limits of their actions, and the desired outputs. If managers of volunteers want to be seen as full members of the management team they must be able to establish standards of acceptable behaviour and ensure both administration and the public that those standards are rigorously applied. Failure to do so, failure to align your departmental goals to those of your agency or institution, may mean at budget time that your department is eliminated.

There's another reason for evaluating volunteer performance as well. The volunteer demographics are changing. More people are motivated by achievement than ever before. These volunteers come from the business and professional world where personal assessment is a way of life. They want to know how they are doing and how they can improve. If you want to retain these volunteers you must constantly challenge them to stretch, learn new skills and explore the undeveloped sides of themselves. They will expect your guidance and your feedback to become even better!

- As already suggested, assessment is not a once a year event, whether you need it or not but an organic, daily event. There is a place for an annual performance review where you settle down together to discuss what has been learned over the last year, what goals you have for the next year. But the performance appraisal is not the time to bring up unacceptable performance. There should be no surprises but rather a climate of concerned, committed enquiry. How can I be more helpful to you? What do you want to try next?

The concern of the simple logistics of having a face to face chat with a small army of volunteers is daunting but do-able. Remember, management is getting work done through others. That means you may not be chatting with the entire army, only the generals. In other words, develop leadership within the volunteer ranks, share with them your philosophy of enlightened assessment, train them to complete performance appraisals in a soul nurturing way and invite them to work with the volunteers of their team. It provides a career ladder for more seasoned volunteers, it builds a sense of community, and it gets the job done.

- Do assessments make a difference? They can if you remember to follow-up. Particularly when considering poor performance, we may rehearse the face to face meeting with the precision of a drill sergeant, but we often fail to develop a plan of action with the volunteer. A mutually (and this mutuality is essential if you want long term change) agreed upon course with dates for review and analysis will go a long way to ensuring compliance. People respect what you inspect—especially when they understand the purpose—the why in asking them to do it this way.

Let's review together. Assessment is designed to help the volunteer be successful in whatever volunteer work she has agreed to do. It attempts to recognize good behaviour and to encourage it so that poor behaviour or even sloppy habits do not develop. When poor performance is seen, it is quickly, politely and firmly redirected so that the volunteer can once again be successful. Increasingly, volunteers are asking for feedback about their contribution to their agency of choice and finally, employers and the public are wanting reassurance that institutional goals are met in an efficient, cost effective and timely manner. Now that we have discussed some of the reasons managers of volunteers have for not doing assessments, let us explore further how to do them well.

Establishing Performance Standards

A favourite cartoon that I often use at workshops shows a young man sitting uncomfortably at his desk, a perplexed look on his face. Two others are commenting at the side, "He tries very hard, but is unable to overcome the disadvantage of really having no idea of what he is supposed to be doing." Once you establish a performance standard, this problem should disappear.

A performance standard is a guideline for both what you should be accomplishing and how it will be measured. It is developed considering three factors: the organizational need, the policies that govern the work done by volunteers, and the volunteer herself.

Far and away the most popular method of developing performance standards is outlining the tasks to be done and describing exactly how each step is undertaken. In very routine jobs, a prepared list of duties with clearly defined expectations may be adequate to determine performance standards. In this case, uniformity is encouraged. For example,

Performance Standards for Coat Checker:

- All coats will be neatly placed on the coat rack.
- All patrons will be given a numbered stub to retrieve their coat.
- All coats will also be labelled by the same number.
- All patrons will be courteously, and warmly welcomed to the theatre.

Embedded inside every job description should have the factors that will be used to determine satisfactory performance. These statements are called **Success Measures.** They are rather like objective statements in that they are specific, measurable and achievable, and they must be essential to the performance of the task. In working with novice managers of volunteers I have sometimes found that they are more anxious to find indicators that can be measured than really identifying what the key elements of any job are and then creating (often with some difficulty) appropriate measures.

Some success measures are determined by the requirements of the job as established by the agency or institutional needs to get the work done. (Even these can be re-examined to ensure a comfortable fit for the volunteer).

While the volunteer position of Coat Check is very straight forward, many assignments extend over a long period of time and contain a series of distinct duties. If we look at the success measures for the chair of an advisory committee, the list might look something like this:

The Advisory Committee Chair Responsibilities	Success Measures
1. Chairs all meetings of the Advisory Committee.	1. Holds monthly meetings of the Committee.
2. Reviews minutes.	2. Reviews all minutes before they are circulated and returns them to the Secretary within 24 hours.
3. Ensures follow up of items raised at the Committee.	3. Creates an action list for agenda items; calls all those responsible to take action so that reports can be received before next meeting.
4. Represents the Volunteer Department at agency functions.	4. Attends meetings of agency steering committee monthly, inter-agency group once a quarter.
5. Communicates Advisory Committee decisions to the wider membership using a variety of methods.	5. Writes a monthly column in the Department newsletter.
6. Ensures smooth operation of all ad hoc groups reporting to the Advisory Committee.	6. Meets weekly with chairs of each ad hoc group to ensure smooth operation.
7. Acts as troubleshooter for the department.	7. Responds to concerns from members within 48 hours.

Important here is the negotiation of the measures that will indicate success. There must be agreement from both the volunteer and the director that these success measures accurately reflect the desired performance standards. In leadership positions or new roles, the interplay of institutional requirement, the skills and interests the volunteer brings to the job, will shape both a more meaningful placement and a more relevant evaluation.

Often these factors should be tempered by the volunteer herself. The experience, skill set and time frame should be considered in establishing a standard when work is initially assigned.

Let's look at the example of two volunteers who agree to become committee chairs:

- One has five years experience in the agency. She has been a committee chair of a similar committee in another agency. She is assuming leadership of a group that has been together for two very successful years.
- The second volunteer is a first time chair. She demonstrates superb skills as a committee member but has never taken leadership during her three years on a similar committee. The group she will lead has not had its first meeting yet and is being asked to restructure the entire organization.

While each is expected to chair the committee and get work done towards the task assigned, clearly to apply the same performance standards would be unfair. In discussing each assignment with the new chair, specific personal goals are jointly set and agreements are made about how performance shall be evaluated. There are of course implications for the supervision, training and support for each in these two cases. Each chair would create a set of success measures that would reflect their experience, their skills, the complexity of the task and their familiarity with it.

Success Measures: Specific, measurable, achievable and essential

Experienced

- I will meet each committee member individually for a personal interview by February of this year.
- I will groom a successor by next October.
- I will invite all members to chair task groups spawned by this committee during the next ten months.
- I will honour the rules established by the group for getting work done and will record these after our first meeting.

New Chair

- I will take a course in Committee Leadership offered by our Recreation Department by October.
- I will ask an observer to watch my performance and coach me for my first three meetings.
- I will create a committee that accurately reflects the diversity of people we serve in this community.
- We will establish a code of conduct for committee meetings during our first meeting.

You can see how very different success measures may be yet both sets are valid and useful in measuring the performance of that specific chairperson.

When you are really stumped about how to establish common standards for performance, it sometimes helps to bring three or four people together to discuss what constitutes reasonable expectations, especially if the assignment is new. Staff requesting the work can be invaluable in providing a clear picture of what they want to achieve in bringing a volunteer into their department and how it might be evaluated. Bringing together volunteers who are trying to do the job is often a source of new insights into the complexities of the work to be done and how best to measure it. You may ask them to reflect on the questions listed below.

- What is the purpose of the assignment?
- How will clients benefit?
- How will they be different as a result of the interaction with the volunteer?
- What are the key characteristics of the service we offer?
- How would I like to be dealt with in this situation if I were a client?
- How would I know if I had received excellent volunteer service?

How Policies Can Help in Developing Performance Standards

Not enough attention is paid to the policies you set that govern the entire running of your volunteer service. They should offer clear direction to all volunteers about what is expected.

For policies to be truly effective they have to be written down, widely shared, explained and consistently applied[1]. Keeping them in a binder you never consult in your office is not an effective way of shaping volunteer behaviour. Neither are policies that no longer reflect your current reality. Policies must be reviewed regularly if they are to be an effective tool in the management of volunteers. You don't want so many policies that people feel unable to act for fear of violating a policy, nor should they be used as a whip to limit creativity. (Please see Chapter 4 for an in-depth discussion of policies.)

Sharing key policies during initial orientation and screening sets the boundaries of acceptable behaviour. Then, all volunteers are working within the same policy and procedural framework . It is important to make explicit the assumptions about how volunteers are expected to behave and the consequences if they do not. Here are some common examples:

1. Volunteers will wear their uniform and name tag at all times.
2. Volunteers will look neat and professional with hair tied back, fingernails short, and without perfume or aftershave.
3. Volunteers will call in if they are unable to complete their assigned shift.
4. Volunteers are expected to be courteous and respectful at all times.
5. Volunteers are sworn to uphold a strict code of confidentiality.

Determine in your own setting the twelve most important policies you want to ensure that volunteers to follow. Providing volunteers with their own copy of relevant and oft cited policies will go far to increasing compliance. Consider using other communication tools—like your newsletter or bulletin board to remind people of policies and their purpose.

Volunteer Evaluation: A Positive Look at Performance Review

Assessment is rather like recognition in that there are two parts. And like recognition, there is considerable controversy about the merits of the more formal approach of performance review. The formal assessment is in my mind less important than the informal, daily connecting and course correction that you do. While formal recognition is meaningful and important to some, the informal pat on the back is more likely to motivate in the long term. Having said that, I do believe taking time to determine success measures is invaluable because it demonstrates to the volunteer what success looks like, what she should be doing and what particular elements must most importantly be attended to. This is useful for every volunteer. I am less convinced that the amount of time spent in asking volunteers to identify future goals and to assess their experience is worth the effort for the general population of volunteers. However I see its value in working with long term volunteers, those in leadership and those with the potential to lead.

If you have encouraged volunteers to establish personal goals as part of their volunteer assignment and have engaged them in the development of both the position descriptions and the criteria for judging overall performance, you will have created a climate that welcomes performance review. Your next steps will be easier.

If on the other hand, people remain touchy and unconvinced about the value of personal assessment, you may wonder how to get such an initiative started. Perhaps the least threatening way to begin is to engage volunteers in project reviews and departmental evaluations. Work with them to develop strategies for continuous improvement. The work of Krug and Oakley in *Enlightened Leadership* is extremely effective and very non-threatening.

- Ask people to share what they feel went well, what they want to celebrate.
- Invite people to discuss what we must do more of. Note how softly this question leads us to evaluate needed improvements?
- Lastly, what must we do differently? Again the edge of criticism is dulled while people explore the same issues.

A wise supervisor is open to feedback about her own performance, asking volunteers how she could be more useful to them. You are role modeling behaviour you hope they will adopt. You can praise the small incremental improvements that you observe or that are suggested. Gareth Morgan[2] urges us to make a thousand changes of one per cent rather than overwhelming changes because the impact of massive change cripples both our spirits and our productivity.

Don't get discouraged if long time volunteers resist performance reviews. Always start where you find interest and openness to a new idea. Work with new volunteers and those who look for performance feedback. Once others see the benefits people are enjoying from personal performance review, they may agree to participate.

Introducing The Performance Review Process

Because of the sensitivity of the topic, performance reviews may be one of the last planks a director of volunteers puts into place in her management of volunteers. A strategy for introducing it might include:

- A discussion at your volunteer advisory committee about the concepts, its benefits and a draft proposal about how it might be done. I suspect in my own setting I would start by offering performance reviews to captains, buddies and other volunteer leaders on the advisory committee. Then we would train captains in the "art" of performance appraisal, inviting them to encourage their team members to take part.
- The advisory committee might form a working group that would develop a suitable performance appraisal form that was appropriate for the agency and its volunteers. A sample is included for your information.
- Before making the performance appraisal broadly available, a public awareness campaign would be launched in the volunteer newsletter, on bulletin boards and in letters to individual volunteers. Again the purpose would be to explain the concept, its benefits, the voluntary nature of the exercise and a process proposal. Including some favourable comments from volunteer leadership and a draft copy of the form to be used may reduce resistance and encourage participation.

The Performance Review Process

- Once initiated and accepted, a performance review should be done at least annually or whenever an assigned project is coming to its conclusion. The volunteer receives a self-assessment tool for completion.

- The volunteer is then encouraged to discuss the results of the assessment with her staff partner or volunteer captain. A meeting is set. Try to keep the setting as informal and friendly as possible. Memories of evaluations past will interfere with real sharing if the process is too formal or threatening.

- The staff or volunteer captain also completes a copy of the form, coming to the meeting to share advice, support and tactics to achieve as yet unrealized goals. Remember, this meeting is future focused, and positive. It is not the time to review past failures.

- In reviewing the self-assessment, you may discover that not all of the success measures have been achieved. "Life is what happens when you are making other plans." Try to explore what got in the way of reaching goals. Often the reasons are beyond the control of the volunteer—needs changed in the project, the time lines were inappropriate, the staff were unable to offer the needed supports, the plan was incomplete. Failure to complete success measures provides a learning opportunity for all concerned--the manager of volunteers will know in the future how to better assign work, the volunteer will appreciate the complexity of the task and future performance will improve. Seize the opportunity to provide on the spot coaching.

- The volunteer agrees to continue in her present assignment or not, but has outlined some future personal objectives. The staff partner or volunteer captain is committed to the achievement of the goals as outlined.

- The performance review becomes part of the volunteer's permanent file and is reviewed at the time of the next assessment.

Volunteer Self-Assessment Tool
Name Position Description
Purpose of Position:
Job Responsibilities:
Success Measures: Completion Date
1
2
3
4
5
Comments
In completing these responsibilities, I would rank my performance as: ❑ Superior, exceeded my goal o Excellent job, met goal o Need further training, assistance
What aspect of this volunteer assignment did I enjoy?

What would I do differently if I were doing this work again?
What additional support from my staff person/ volunteer captain would have been helpful?
Would I willing to carry on with this assignment? ❑ Yes ❑ No ❑ Would like to discuss further
Are there other assignments that I would prefer? Please list here:
Date of scheduled meeting with contact: Signed:

Dealing with Poor Performance

We have talked about assessing performance, acknowledging people who are doing the right thing and helping those who need minor corrections in their behaviour. How do we handle those who seem to have consistently unsatisfactory performance or who seem determined to cause you grief?

> Managers of volunteers of the world UNITE! You have nothing to lose but your guilt! Give yourself permission to admit that occasionally (oh, yes, very occasionally) you feel discouragement, frustration, perhaps even anger, with the volunteers you manage. (MacKenzie, 1988)

In a short monograph called Dealing with Difficult Volunteers, I identified several situations that directors of volunteers claimed were particularly difficult to handle.

The premise of the monograph was that difficult volunteers are made, not born! It suggested that most difficult behaviours are caused because of our own poor management practices. When all phases of the Volunteer Retention Cycle were carefully and thoughtfully put into place, that many of the difficult volunteers disappeared. I still believe this to be true.

At that time, the following categories of behaviour were noted and solutions offered. Here are some of the most popular issues:

Difficult Volunteer Behaviours	Description	Possible Solutions
The Inexperienced	• critical of organizational procedures • wants quick changes • giving unwanted advice and direction • unaware of agency systems, lines of communication • often extremely competent • alienates others with unrealistic demands	• link with supportive "buddy" who is not defensive • listen to suggestions, facilitate their implementation when appropriate • explain established policies, routines, procedures • enlist her help with solutions to agency problems • encourage teamwork • reward efforts at consensus decision making
The Discourager	• consistently negative • discourages new members • finds fault with current plans • causes energy of the group to be dissipated • is committed to the group and its cause	• encourage use of her past experience to avoid future mistakes • praise positive comments • let her know how her behaviour is affecting the group • suggest a volunteer sabbatical • offer support to new members • honour her and move her out of active service • consider a shorter term of office

Difficult Volunteer Behaviours	Description	Possible Solutions
The Founder	• resists the need for change • uses respect and past powerful allies to block change • experiences conflict when hiring new staff (wants person to succeed, but is used to being the authority)	• accept that the founder is having difficulty letting go • position yourself as ally and supporter of the agency • work to build trust • listen to advice, don't argue • be patient
The Abdicrat	• promises to carry out tasks but fails to follow through • may not respond to phone calls or requests for information	• allow opportunity to gracefully withdraw • establish written, mutually agreed upon course of action • hold person accountable to standards set • assign a mentor or buddy
The Dictator	• wants to have her own way in all things • appears unable to delegate • complains about the work of others • has good ideas but doesn't share credit • seems overwhelmed and resentful but gets work done • may alienate others • works better alone	• clarify expectations • encourage involvement of others • stress the benefits of teamwork • support positive behaviours and great ideas • act as a role model of responsible delegation • work with volunteer to break assignments into smaller pieces

These behaviours can be difficult to address. Of course they need to be addressed promptly, as they occur, not at the end of a project or in a termination interview. Problems that are ignored tend to grow untended until they become so overwhelming that termination is your only option. It is only fair to volunteers that you point out unacceptable behaviour immediately so that a small correction can be made now instead of waiting until only radical surgery will remove the problem.

One common problem experienced by directors of volunteer resources is the failure of volunteers to act on feedback that is so carefully and thoughtfully delivered to them.

- Be sure that your feedback is given in a way that it can be heard and acted upon, not used to discourage or belittle.
- Focus on behaviour that can be changed—not appearance, accent or cultural issues.
- Keep your comments on the present tense, not past sins.
- Avoid labels or judgements. You may know only one half of the story.

Checklist for Giving Helpful Feedback

Criteria	Yes- Comments	No- Comments	Uncertain- Comments
Is the time/location for this feedback appropriate?			
Have I been honest with myself about the purpose of this feedback? • am I frustrated? • do I truly want to assist this person? • am I resentful?			
Have I used specific, concrete examples of what I have observed?			
Have I listened to his/her side of the story?			
Does the volunteer understand what is expected of him/her?			
Has my supervision been appropriate- recognizing : • the complexity of the task • experience of this volunteer • the time lines given			
Does my feedback strive to maintain the dignity of this individual?			
Have I outlined how work can be improved?			
Have I checked to see the message sent has been fully received?			
Have I stated my belief in the volunteer's ability to do the task?			
Have a set a date for follow up?			

A Model for Re-Directing Behaviour

Dennis Kinlaw in his book, *Coaching for Commitment*[3] ,has written persuasively about improving performance in employees but it appears to apply equally well to volunteers. In his original work he set out to determine what factors improved job productivity and employee satisfaction. Many argued that good performance depended on strong discipline, rigorous application of rules and policies and strict follow up. What Kinlaw discovered surprised many. Good job performance, increased employee satisfaction, and greater commitment to the work depended on four factors: **clarity, competence, involvement and appreciation**. In trying to determine how best to re-direct a volunteer it is helpful to consider these four factors and to put in place those that appear to be absent.

Clarity: Kinlaw argued that most unsatisfactory employees simply do not understand what is wanted or how that fits with their position. Sometimes the volunteer has not been informed of what is expected or has not remembered what she was told. Often we recruit volunteers in the spring to carry out work that does not begin until the fall. At that time, many of the important directions that were given in the orientation are lost.

- When poor performance becomes a problem, clarify expectations, instructions and the position description. Take time to review the purpose of the work and how it fits into the overall picture of the agency's work— give it relevance and importance.

Competence: Is this assignment a good fit for the skills, knowledge and time available offered by the volunteer? Kinlaw found people were easily discouraged if they were placed in a job that they were neither interested in, nor had the skills to complete. How often do we promote people to positions of responsibility because it's their turn to be chair, or we need someone who is willing even if the skill set is absent? When deciding to promote someone to a position that is outside of their skill set are we prepared to provide the necessary support, guidance, and training? It is a judgement call. Be sure to check with the volunteer to ensure that she is willing to get the needed training or to spend extra time to master the necessary skills. A treasurer should understand basic bookkeeping. A pure heart and a desire to help are not enough!

- When poor performance is an issue, review again the skills of the person who is seen as the problem. How can the volunteer develop competence? Is it worth the time and effort to prepare a treasurer from the ground up or would it be better to find someone with financial skills and target recruit them into the position?

Involvement: Volunteers will take greater ownership of a position if they are involved in both its design and evaluation. Buy-in is an extremely important element of effective volunteer management. Look for opportunities to include the volunteer's point of view in every aspect of running your department. Creating work groups to design jobs and determine performance standards takes time but is translated into better performance.

- In a poor performance situation, give the volunteer permission to leave the assignment with dignity if she would like. Ask if the volunteer wants to stay and what additional help she feels she would need to complete the work successfully. One of the most effective support techniques for a poor performer is a mentor. This may have been a person who did the job well in the past. Help the mentor be a support, not a saviour by not taking over the job but offering direction and advice from the comfort of the sidelines. Encourage the volunteer to select a mentor that they respect and can work with.

- When trouble looms, create a mutually acceptable list of next steps. You may want to put safeguards in place to ensure that the work will progress as you would hope. These might include action planning documents, regular reporting, deadline dates, contingency plans. Get it in writing and ask the volunteer to sign it. Be sure she has a copy.

- Arrange for follow up. Don't let a deadline date go by without a phone call or a reminder. If you ignore behaviour it will continue. Remind the volunteer of the mutually agreed upon plan and ask insistently but politely to have the promised document. Explain the purpose of your request: " as your supervisor, I am responsible for the successful completion of this project. I want both of us to be winners in the process." Ask the volunteer if they want to continue in the position. Suggest to them that their behaviour suggests that they do not.

Appreciation: Kinlaw discovered what we in the management of volunteers have known for a long time. Employees need to feel their efforts are noticed and recognized. Even in periods of poor performance, this need persists. Focus your negative comments on major problems, not minor issues. Don't sweat the small stuff! Look for opportunities to praise work that is well done or effort that is genuinely made. Keep your role in perspective. Assessment is designed to help the volunteer achieve success not feel worthless, unproductive and small.

Difficult Behaviours: An Update

In 1984, a survey of approximately three hundred directors of volunteers across Canada was undertaken. Of the one hundred responses received, four new situations were added where behaviour was troublesome. These areas were: The Volunteer with Diminished Capacity, Volunteers You Inherit who Don't Do a Good Job, The Volunteer who is Also a Client and The Blending of a Volunteer From Another Culture into Your Volunteer Department. Let us explore together these situations.

The Volunteer with Diminished Capacity

> *Mrs. Smith has been active in your literacy tutoring service. For three years she has helped over twenty people learn to read and gain a enhanced sense of self-esteem. She has worked tirelessly to get municipal funding for your agency. Last September, you were surprised to find Mrs. Smith in your office in tears. She claimed she just couldn't manage the stress of tutoring. When you questioned her, she told you about family problems, "nerve medicine" from the doctor and a short stay in hospital. Now you are getting calls from students complaining about Mrs. Smith. She is missing appointments, behaving strangely during lesson sessions and crying while she is teaching. What do you do?*

Possible Solutions:
Directors of volunteers have identified this situation as one of the most difficult they face. It may involve a senior who has been extremely loyal to the organization and is now experiencing memory loss, or a hearing or visual deficit that makes completion of their assigned work impossible. The woman in the case above is no longer able to tutor because

of mental illness. If Mrs. Smith is willing to take a volunteer sabbatical where she can focus on her problems and gain some perspective, this would be a wise course of action. You may call her in for a chat, let her know you are aware she is under stress and invite her to take a break. More difficult is the situation where the volunteer claims it is her volunteering that gives her life purpose, and to ask her to stop is to cause her great personal pain. In this case you want to place her in a position where she can still be of service without compromising the service you deliver to others. The safety of the clients and the reputation of the agency must be balanced with the desire of the volunteer to continue in her placement. Mrs. Smith may find teaching too stressful but might be willing to help in the office where she is surrounded by people who respect her past accomplishments and understand her troubled emotional state. Before you place her with clients you may need to have a note from her doctor that she is able to handle the stress of her former placement. You may want to ask her permission to speak with her doctor to make this request. Because of Mrs. Smith's long history of exceptional service to the agency, I would create a position for her if none existed and I would tinker with it until it met her needs.

<u>You Inherit Volunteers Who Don't Do a Good Job</u>

> *This is your first month as manager of a friendly visiting service for seniors. You are enormously frustrated by the lack of support you have received from the leadership volunteers. They can't say enough about how wonderful the past manager was. You aren't impressed. There are no files, few policies or procedures in place. You feel like you're starting from scratch! If you had your way all of the existing volunteers would be gone. None of them seem able to carry out their roles without constantly checking with you. None seem willing to consider the need for any changes in the services or structure. What do you do?*

<u>Possible Solutions:</u>
This situation is a common one faced by new directors although knowing that doesn't make it any less painful. During these first few months it is tempting to point out all the short comings of the previous director and to launch into your own wonderfully enlightened program. Slow down. Volunteers may be confused by your leadership style and may not know how to react. The constant checking that you find so tiresome may have been the expected mode of operation under the previous director. Try to listen to the comments of the volunteers. What dreams do they have for the volunteer services department? How do they like to be supervised? What advice would they have for you? Be patient—as you gain their trust and respect you will be able to gain their committed performance at a level you want. Recognize small steps in the direction of success. Give yourself permission to observe, learn and appreciate the volunteers for the first six months of your stay.

<u>Blending Volunteers from Diverse Cultures into Your Department</u>

> *Jema is tearing out her hair in frustration. The funder has suggested that her agency must involve more people of different ethnic backgrounds in her drug and alcohol treatment program. She arranged for an*

information meeting at the Centre and contacted several prominent leaders of the three major ethnic communities in her area. No one showed up. No explanations or regrets were forwarded to her. The mainstream volunteers were quite relieved because they didn't really want "those people" in their program. Now what?

Possible Solutions:
Our increasingly multi-racial population here in Canada demands that we in volunteer management must learn to thrive in diversity. Culture influences all aspects of our behaviour dictating how we interact with others, how we handle conflict, disappointments and even joy. Mainstream organizations have long been run by our dominant culture who have enjoyed their power, their way of doing things and their privilege. This dominance is now being called into question.

Some cultural differences are easily accepted and dealt with—for example, we recognize that depending on your cultural programming your may be eating cold toast, kippers and tea for breakfast if you are British, steak and eggs if you're from the Southwestern United States and sushi and rice if you are Japanese. However, difficulty may arise around power sharing, new ways of doing things and a demand by us that others conform to our way of doing things.

Involving new cultures often begins with an educational process where each partner in the new relationship learns about the other. Perhaps your invitation was directed to the wrong person in the community, perhaps it was unintentionally offensive. Support for cross cultural initiatives need board support and board training to make your agency welcoming to the particular cultures you seek to include.

Consider inviting second generation representatives to come and share elements of their cultural practice with you. You may discover you already have some front line volunteers who are of that cultural group. Feature them in public relations documents; ask them to help you recruit, for they can help people bridge the gap between their own community and mainstream volunteering. Be patient—we have much to learn from people of other cultures about the immediacy of helping and caring for one's community.

The Volunteer Who is Also a Client

Megan wants to be a volunteer in the Eating Disorder Clinic. It is three months since Megan was a patient and her course was extremely rocky. You feel she is not yet out of the woods. When you suggest a waiting period, Megan is crushed. She feels you are discriminating against her. She accuses you of being a know-it-all professional who really can't relate to people with anorexia. What do you do?

Possible Solutions:
Here's a situation where a clear policy about the time lapse between active treatment and eligibility for volunteering would be of great help. Many programs suggest a year is appropriate. Time is a very arbitrary measure. You will encounter some young people who would be wonderful role models in the first month after treatment and some who would not be ready even two years later. The intent of the policy is to give most people a chance to focus on their own needs, to solidly develop good health habits and to confront some of the challenges that face any one who has battled a serious health problem. Placing Megan in a position she is not ready for does her no

favours, for she is likely to fail. Nor are clients well served because they are working with someone who can't be fully attentive to their concerns and issues because she is still working on her own. An option you might consider is to have Megan working in the office or behind the scenes, away from clients. Here she might feel she is helping the cause without potentially causing problems.

In those services where clients are encouraged to volunteer while under treatment, I think you need to be very clear about the standards that you can reasonably expect. You may limit the vulnerable clients' exposure to situations that you feel will cause a setback. If your mission is to provide volunteering opportunities for clients you must re-think the nature of the support required, the number of volunteers you can handle, and the definitions of success. Be sure you are not making unsupported assumptions about the skills and abilities of the volunteers you hope to place. Test out those assumptions by letting people demonstrate how they would handle a new situation like a computer or an office receptionist job. Enquire about making adjustments that would allow the volunteer to complete work more effectively. We have found a six week assessment period working in the volunteer office can give us the confidence to more effectively place volunteers with severe handicaps.

Firing a Volunteer

No one likes to think about firing volunteers. But there are situations when firing is the only alternative. Your first and most important priority is the protection of the clients you serve. In situations where they are at risk, your action is clear cut. Examples that would suggest immediate dismissal:

- stealing money or goods from the charity, from cash receipts, from a client's home, from a campaign donation
- physically assaulting a client, family member, staff or another volunteer
- sexually harassing a staff member, volunteer or client
- alcohol or drug abuse while representing the organization
- offering alcohol or drugs to youth at an agency function
- encouraging others to engage in illegal acts
- using the records of clients or donors for personal gain.

In these situations, action is swift and sure. The volunteer is immediately terminated for cause. No warning is required. The more difficult situations are those where the organization's harmony or reputation are at risk. Often attitudes are at fault effecting work performance not only of the volunteer involved but other team members as well. These scenarios require much more careful thought and collaboration before action is taken. Sometimes the community reaction and the press coverage that will go with it must be weighed against the damage currently resulting from keeping that volunteer in place. After all the efforts have been made to win over the volunteer, discussion with staff to gather data, and with other local volunteers have failed, more appropriate and less radical strategies are chosen:

- A volunteer may be assigned to a task that is less central and visible to the operation of the agency, therefore lessening her opportunity to influence others. For example, the chairperson who acts without consultation and who bullies others, may be made chair of a one person task force that is to work alone and then report to the full board.

- Recognize the efforts of a volunteer with a public display of appreciation and make them an honourary member of the agency with no voting power. One agency named a prestigious award after its founder and still asks her to present the award annually.
- Assign a support volunteer in whom all real power exists. The troubled volunteer retains the title and much of the public glory while the work gets done behind the scenes.

Perhaps you have tried all of these face saving manouevre and still a problem exists, what next?

Ideally a firing interview is best conducted by a volunteer who knows and respects the volunteer being let go. In practice, this rarely happens. It is most often the staff person involved—the director of volunteers buoyed up if necessary by the executive director. For a firing to occur, there is usually a long history of failed attempts to deal with the problem. The executive director should be consulted and fully aware that this action is being taken just in case she is contacted by the press. In a multi-layered organization, often a regional representative is brought in to deal with the situation. It is imperative that the regional representative and the head office have the full support of the local agency to proceed. It is for this reason that a leadership volunteer is often present when the firing occurs. Volunteers find dealing with volatile issues of this nature difficult and unpleasant. Often the troublesome behaviour has reached this stage because neither staff nor volunteer had the courage to intervene earlier. Everyone just hoped the problem would disappear.

A firing interview is not a discussion of "one last chance." It is a delivery of the final message that "your volunteer work is no longer wanted here". If you have been following the fair practices of progressive dismissal this will come as no great surprise.

- You have worked with the volunteer over an extended period.
- Your concerns have been identified and documented.
- You have outlined how the behaviour must change to make it acceptable.
- a work plan that outlines the needed improvements and how these might be realized has been sent to the volunteer. It is useful if the plan has been mutually developed and signed. Some volunteers refuse to acknowledge the need for change.
- You have tried to follow up, making yourself available to review progress towards the goals set.

Yet no progress has been made.

In most situations, collect at least three examples of unacceptable behaviour that you personally have seen. Keep a file with your observations and the dates that the examples occurred. You should also include the actions you took to prevent re-occurrence. Record meeting dates, results and agreed upon actions. This information should be shared with the volunteer. In progressive discipline the first warning is often a verbal warning, followed by a written warning but in my experience, because behaviour is often not dealt with, I believe any warning should be recorded and the volunteer should know what improvements you are seeking by what date. Written statements of agreement should be co-signed by the volunteer if possible. This is not a short term project but one that takes considerable time and effort. It is not to be entered into lightly and thankfully, it is not one that is entered into often.

The Interview Itself

Practise what you will say and how you are going to say it. The words need to be comfortable for you.

> *"Your behaviour suggests to us that you no longer choose to work in our agency."*

This is my personal favourite because it points right back to the volunteer. They made a choice by continuing to behave in a particular way despite your best efforts to correct them.

> *"Your volunteering with us is now terminated."*

Most people know what terminated means. The comment is clear, short and can be heard. Often we try to soften the blow by using long sentences, subordinate clauses, pauses for effect. Keep the comment short and the language clear. One common frustration is that people try so hard to be nice that the volunteer doesn't realize that they have been let go. Don't apologize for your decision. It was their action and their choice that created the situation. Don't change your mind. Respect the process you have engaged in and your decision. It may be important to alert the person that you have the full backing of the agency in your decision. You have consulted the executive director or talked with the president, and they agree. You want to ensure that this is not a personal vendetta that you have waged against them.

- Try to preserve the person's dignity. Have tissues close at hand but don't hover. By the same token don't get pulled into a power struggle. If there are angry words or hurled insults, don't respond. If you fear violence, plan the interview in a public place like a small coffee shop or alert others that you are going to carry out the termination in your office with the door open just slightly. If necessary, call for help. The presence of others, even strangers may be a deterrent.

- Thank the volunteer for work well done on behalf of the organization. If you can genuinely recall positive contributions made by this person do add them here. If not, don't make empty statements that you can't personally support.

For example, "Mr. Abbott, your contributions to our residential canvass have been very important to our community over the years. Thank you for your help in this area."

If you can in good conscience direct this person to your local volunteer centre or to another agency by all means do so. Your purpose in the interview is not to personally attack the volunteer but to bring to an end unsupportable behaviour. In another setting, this person may thrive.

- Outline your observations and the end result.

A Final Comment

Working with volunteers allows us the privilege of helping others become the best they can be. Re-direction is an opportunity to "polish the diamond", to stretch, grow, learn and be renewed while delivering service to others. If "service is the rent we owe for the room we occupy in life", than re-direction is the means to make the experience an exceptional gift for both the giver and the recipient.

Endnotes

[1] Graff, Linda L. *By Definition*, Toronto, Ontario: Volunteer Ontario, 1993.

[2] Morgan, Gareth , *Imaginization, the Art of Creative Management,* Newbury Park, California: Sage Publications, 1993.

[3] Kinlaw, Dennis, *Coaching for Commitment,* Pfeiffer and Jones, San Francisco, California, 1992.

Chapter Review

This chapter looked at ways to deal with some of the most challenging situations that managers of volunteers face:

1. What are the most important factors to consider when assessing volunteer performance?
2. In your own agency, how might performance reviews be best initiated?
3. What problems do you anticipate and how would you minimize these?
4. What does it mean "difficult volunteers are made, not born?"
5. What are the essential steps you must put in place before you fire a volunteer?

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CHAPTER 15: A LOOK AT TOMORROW

KEY POINTS:

Now that you know the basics, what next? This was only the beginning, now is the time to polish skills and think of tomorrow.

✔ the future of management of volunteers
✔ new roles for managers of volunteers
✔ new tools for managers of volunteers

This chapter was written by Ginette Johnstone of Johnstone Training and Consultation (JTC) Inc.

The future of management of volunteer services as a profession has been the subject of many animated discussions. There is a fair amount of concern that, in this ever-changing world, the profession will not succeed in achieving the status and recognition its practitioners so long for.

"The voluntary sector is facing several daunting realities" says Keith Seel in his article "*Corporate Volunteerism, a Different Approach, a Greater Return*"[1]. He goes on to list these realities:

- government is downloading services;
- there is a need to find creative solutions;
- the rate of change is increasing;
- there is an increasing commitment and expectations from volunteers;
- there are reduced resources;
- the workplace and community are changing; and
- there is increased competition.

It is up to every manager of volunteers to consider these realities and assess how it will affect the department and to plan how to cope successfully.

With the diversity found in the volunteer population, it becomes the responsibility of the manager of volunteers to create an environment that welcomes and encourages that diversity and to create opportunities that will suit the many talents and interests of individuals, in order to meet organizational goals.

It is not that managers of volunteers do not have a vital role to play, it is that they have been too focused inward. They have failed in looking outward and have thereby failed to get their message across.

In the past, managers of volunteers took pride in their many varied skills, in all the hats they wore successfully... It's just that now, no one really knows where our real expertise lies! Furthermore, they have not acquired the skills and tools that are necessary for them to become effective senior managers and decision-makers.

Management of volunteers is at a crossroads. There is a real need:

- to redefine our roles and relationships;
- to reassess our position in our organizations; and even
- to redefine just who is a volunteer.

This is happening at a time when volunteerism is gaining some recognition from the private sector and governments at all levels. With the trends toward devolution of responsibilities by governments, volunteer activity will be more visible than ever. It is a time when the management of volunteer services can make a real difference.

New Roles for Managers of Volunteers

The first step in this re-assessment is a critical look at what managers of volunteer services do and how they perceive their work. As senior managers, they must learn to delegate the daily operation of their department (to experienced volunteers if necessary) and turn their efforts outward to the rest of the organization.

Volunteer services must cease being a "program", apart from what goes on everywhere else in the organization, to a service that is integral to all that the organization does. Managers must divest themselves of their "isolationist" tendencies and reach out so that volunteers can become active partners in carrying out the organizational mandate.

Managers of Volunteers as Advocates

Managers of volunteer services must be strong and effective advocates. The challenge is to educate senior management, co-workers, public officials and even volunteers about the realities of volunteer activity. It means going beyond advocating for volunteers to advocating for colleagues, for organizations and even for themselves.

Being advocates will also mean taking risks and demonstrating all the skills and expertise that managers of volunteers have in order to achieve the credibility needed to have influence.

Managers as Resource Brokers

Managers of volunteers are skilled at bringing together resources, paid and unpaid, human and physical, from different parts of their organizations and from outside their organizations, for a specific purpose. This skill requires managers to look at the global picture and analyze how all the pieces fit together and how each player contributes to the success of the whole.

The effective exercise of this skill, even when not asked for, gives the manager of volunteers a great deal of influence in determining outcomes.

Managers of Volunteers as Team Builders

Once managers have identified the resources, they are ready to bring everyone together and build an effective team. They have the skills to help teams work in a goal-oriented, process-rich fashion.

Managers of Volunteers as Negotiators

Doing all this will require that managers of volunteers play a central role in negotiating partnerships in which all the parties have their needs met.

New Tools for Managers of Volunteers

If managers of volunteers are indeed going to achieve the status and recognition needed to be effective, they will need new skills and tools.

Following is an article from the Fall 1997 issue of the *Journal of Volunteer Resources Management* (reproduced with permission) which considers the new skills that managers of volunteers will need.

Sharpen Your Elbows

Ginette Johnstone

It seems to me that during the recent Ontario provincial conference for managers of volunteers, many conversations revolved, as they usually do at such gatherings, around the future of the profession. More than that, some even questioned the viability of the profession in this ever-changing environment.

There is no question that management of volunteer services, as a profession, is at a crossroads. For years, we have discussed what it means to be "professional" and we have worked hard to demonstrate that what we do is in fact management. We have talked a good line, but in my opinion, practitioners in this field have not been prepared to walk the talk. We want to be valued and recognized, but too often we are not prepared to do what it takes.

So, we have a choice. We can go on contentedly with the status quo, or we can be pro-active and make something of this profession. As a colleague of mine said: "It is time to sharpen our elbows" and get into the fray.

If we want, as a profession, to be respected and valued as senior managers and decision-makers, then individually, we need to do the things that senior managers and decision-makers do. We need to acquire the skills and master the tools that the "big boys at the top" have.

I know, I know. We have all been taught that we are "people" people, that our main concern is to nurture our volunteers, facilitate their getting along, build the team. We are, and we do. At least, we need to make sure that those things happen. We also need to be prepared to spend a much larger amount of our time, at least 50% of our working hours I believe, dealing with the top levels of decision-making in our organizations. That means delegating, to other staff or experienced volunteers, the more comfortable parts of our jobs and take on the hard tasks.

Just what does that mean? It means, as I said above, learning the skills and mastering the tools that high level decision-makers use.

We need to become credible internal business partners to the CEO's and decision-makers.

Here are some ways I think we can do this.

1. Develop and maintain a business plan for volunteer services. We may not want to admit it, but decisions, especially in times of fiscal restraint, are based on fiscal reality. I believe this is a good thing in that it forces us to prove the value of what we do. A good business plan will assess the viability of our service and programs and clearly demonstrate the value that they contribute to the organization. Remember that a business plan does not only look at the financial aspect of a service, but its objectives, how it fits with the organizational goals, its destination and how to get there. It will demonstrate to the decision-makers that we have realistic goals and expectations that can help the organization meet its mandate.

2. Develop a cost-benefit analysis for each program. Each program that you offer within your service must be analyzed for cost-benefit. In other words, what does it cost and what does it bring in. If you cannot demonstrate that each program is worth more than what you expect the organization to spend on it, you are not doing your job. Doing a cost-benefit analysis does not imply that you will only look at dollars coming in and dollars going out. It does mean that you apply a dollar value to resources coming in and resources going out. It will put a dollar value on the contribution of the volunteers and show the dollar lost if that contribution was non-existent.

3. Conduct on-going critical analyses of your programs and services. Assessing efficiency and effectiveness is an on-going function. Learn how to conduct operations reviews and establish regular evaluations of all your programs and services. It is your responsibility to know how your programs and services are functioning, and more importantly, how they further organizational goals. It is also your responsibility to constantly improve the ways in which your programs and services contribute to the overall success of your organization.

4. Learn to negotiate with the decision-makers. If you want status and money to run your volunteer service, negotiation skills are critical. I am not talking here about traditional negotiations, but interest-based negotiation that looks for common ground and build mutually beneficial solutions. If you are to be a "credible internal business partner", you must consider more carefully the needs and interests of the decision-makers and do your damnedest to help meet them.

5. Use your power. Power is not a four-letter word, it is reality. It is also a reality that you have lots of power. You must recognize it and use it, not in a controlling or manipulative way, but in a way that will benefit your department and your organization. The first step is to recognize the base of your power; it lies in your skills and abilities, in your unique expertise and in all those volunteers you lead. The second step is not to be afraid of it. Effective use of power will put you in big leagues. The third step is to develop strategies to use that power delicately and for the right reasons.

6. Be prepared to take risks. Most of us are not good risk takers. However, we have too much to lose if we don't step into the fray. Taking risks does not mean that you should take a "devil may care" attitude and act rashly. It does means that you learn to trust your instincts and act in the way you know is right - without asking permission, without asking for approval, without waiting to be asked.

As I said we have a choice... we can continue complaining, or we can sharpen our elbows. What will you choose to do?

The challenges are out there... it is up to every manager of volunteers services in Canada to take them on. And they can do it.

Endnotes

[1] Seel, Keith, "Corporate Volunteerism, a Different Approach, a Greater Return", *Journal of Volunteer Resources Management,* Volume 3.3, Summer 1994, pages 8 to 11.

Chapter Review

The future holds many challenges for managers of volunteer services.

1. List three main challenges you see facing the manager of volunteer services.
2. What new tools do you think you need to master?
3. As this is the end of the course, it is also the beginning of a career. What is your next step in professional development?

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