

Volunteer Recruitment and Retention



Amy Nisenson, CGT

**Independent Consultant and Executive Director, The
Mary Morton Parsons Foundation**

GRAVA WORKSHOP

May 3, 2018

What will we cover...

Best practices with regard to volunteer recruitment and retention



- Volunteer motivations
- Benefits to organization of using volunteers
- When should you recruit
- Recruitment ideas
- Recruitment pitch
- Corporate volunteer recruitment
- Engagement/Retention

Volunteer Definition...



What is definition of “a volunteer”

According to Webster’s Dictionary--

- A person who **voluntarily** undertakes or expresses a willingness to undertake a service.
- Voluntarily**—to do willingly by choice because you want to do it

Why do people volunteer?



Different motivations

- Someone asks and people want to fill a need
- Passion for organization/cause
- Past personal experience/connection
- External recognition
- Want skills training or experience in your field of work
- Want social interactions

Why recruit volunteers?



- **Increase power of what organization can do**
- **Decrease burden on paid staff**
- **Increase membership of organization**
- **Increase awareness of organization through recruiting**
- **Need a specific task completed**
- **Have a specific event that needs volunteer assistance**
- **Get more done in organization while saving money**

When should you recruit volunteers?



- You have an upcoming event
- You are expanding your services
- Need specific work done/staff on overload
- Specific event/specific task needed

Specific ways to recruit volunteers



“WARM BODY RECRUITMENT

- Large number of volunteers for short period of time
- Outreach is broad—not targeted

“TARGETED RECRUITMENT “

- Looking for specific skills
- Usually for a specific timeframe/event

“CONCENTRIC CIRCLES RECRUITMENT”

- Look to those who already have relationship/contact with your organization
- Often clients of families, relatives, alumni
- Friends of current staff/volunteers
- People in neighborhood where organization is located

More recruitment ideas...



Volunteer groups in area

- United Way
- Hands on Greater Richmond
- Corporations
- Rotaries
- Churches/temples
- High school groups/Youth groups
- College students (sororities, fraternities)
- Older adults
- Other

Recruitment ideas...



Speak to your current/past volunteers

- Why do they volunteer?
- Why are they leaving volunteering (Exit interviews) ?
- How were they recruited?
- What were demographics of volunteers? How did this play in to their experience?

Recruitment ideas...



Plan out strategy

- Use a matrix to determine what skills, demographics do you need? What do you already have?
- Start a pipeline with targeted groups, individuals
- Discuss the talking points, who will recruit, best method(s) to use
- Make the asks
- Evaluate if strategy was successful

Recruitment ideas...



- Take stock of attendees at events, programs, board members, donors
- Set up booths, tables at fairs, etc.
- Post in strategic locations
 - Panera
 - Starbucks
 - Grocery stores
 - Libraries
 - Gym
 - University boards
 - Organizational newsletter, website, front desk

Recruitment Pitch



- Message should be specific
- Message should be inviting, appealing
- Include “job title” recruiting for
- Expectations or specific skills looking for
- Impact of volunteer efforts
- Application process
- Deadline (if there is one)

Corporate volunteer recruitment



- See if corporation has formal volunteer group
- Who is in charge of group
- Often helpful to have champion in corporation
- Contact corporation—be specific about volunteer needs (ie. lunch buddy; deliver meals; one-time event, other)
- Is money/sponsorship involved?
- Past volunteers or some kind of connection to corporation (ie. sweet spot, board members, grant, etc)
- Corporations have specific “perks” they can offer
 - Volunteer grants
 - Matching grants
 - Time away from work

You've recruited! How do you keep them engaged?



What's in it for the volunteer?

- Training
- Credentials
- Leadership opportunity
- Use skills they already have
- Socialization
- Other

Why don't volunteers stay?



- Wasn't given clear expectations
- Experience didn't live up to expectations
- Skills didn't match job
- No orientation/training
- Chaotic experience
- Not thanked/appreciated
- No mission connection
- No socialization with staff or other volunteers (*or client interaction if that is what they wanted*)

Engagement tips...



- Clear expectations
- Good match between skills/expectations
- Check in on a regular basis/good communication
- Listen/address issues immediately
- On-going training
- Friendly, professional work environment
- Offer recognition

Let's talk about any recruitment/ retention concerns...



Questions or Concerns with regard to presentation?



Thanks for attending...



Amy' s contact info---

Amy Nisenson

(804) 307-4653

<http://www.amynisenson.com/>

amy.nisenson@gmail.com