University of Nebraska - Lincoln
DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Historical Materials from University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension

Extension

1-1-2000

G1415 Recruiting Volunteers

Janet Fox
University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/extensionhist

Part of the Agriculture Commons, and the Curriculum and Instruction Commons

Fox, Janet, "G1415 Recruiting Volunteers" (2000). *Historical Materials from University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension*. Paper 102.
http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/extensionhist/102

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Extension at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Historical Materials from University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

NebGuide
Published by University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension, Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources

G1415

Recruiting Volunteers

Janet Fox
Extension 4-H Youth Development Specialist

This NebGuide offers tips to volunteer coordinators that will help them recruit the best volunteers for any position.

With people's busy lifestyles, it's important that organizations know how to effectively recruit volunteers to support their programs. While people are busy, they are volunteering at record rates. The Independent Sector Gallup Survey (1999) reported that volunteerism is increasing with an estimated number of 109.4 million people volunteering. Approximately 50 percent of American adults and teens volunteer at lest 3.5 hours per week.

How does one go about recruiting volunteers to serve their organization? Knowing what motivates a person is the first step of understanding how to recruit a volunteer. According to Frederick Herzberg's Motivational Theory, there are five key motivators that should be kept in mind when providing volunteer opportunities. They are: achievement, recognition, challenging work, increased responsibility and development.

In addition, past participation in an organization motivates volunteers to give back to an organization from which they or family members have previously benefited. Friends and family serve as important motivators to service. It's important that the characteristics of the volunteer job are matched with the motivation of the potential volunteer.

Volunteer Recruitment Campaigns

Volunteer recruitment is one of those balancing acts in which volunteer managers are always engaged. Because volunteer needs and opportunities vary, recruitment methods have been developed to fit the difference circumstances organizations face when recruiting volunteers. Each is quite unique in what it seeks to accomplish and in what it is effective in accomplishing.

Mass Recruitment

Mass recruitment consists of spreading the message as broadly as possible about potential volunteer positions. The thought behind this method is that somewhere there is someone who will find the volunteer opportunity interesting. The primary methods for mass recruitment are:

- distribution of brochures and posters,
- use of mass media advertisements, and
- speaking to community groups.

The mass recruitment method will bring in potential volunteers, but the number and quality can't be guaranteed. With this method, volunteer managers find themselves juggling to make things fit together as they sort through the volunteers and potential jobs. While not the most desirable recruitment method, it is useful when a large number of volunteers are needed for a job that doesn't take a lot of skills and has a limited scope.

Targeted Recruitment

Targeted recruitment, the desired approach for most volunteer roles, works best when the role one wishes to fill is not suitable for most people. A targeted recruitment campaign is designed to track down a few people who have the specific skill or characteristic. A targeted recruitment campaign involves answering a series of questions:

- What are the skills and attitudes needed to do the job?
- Based on this picture, where can one located the desired types of people?
- How can the recruiter match motivations in recruitment efforts?

Targeted recruitment is highly efficient. Ultimately, the volunteer manager will identify people by name to approach about volunteering. Targeted recruitment is ideal when seeking involvement of new types of volunteers, because it helps

the organization think through the needs and interests of the population and then proactively seeks individuals within a new group. The limitation of targeted recruitment is that it is labor intensive, requires thinking, tracking and tailoring for each volunteer position.

Inner Circle Recruitment

Inner Circle recruitment works with people who are already connected to the organization. A clear strength of inner circles theory is that it approaches volunteers who are already involved in the organization. Ideal groups to structure inner circles recruitment include:

- Current volunteers
- Clients
- Staff
- Friends and relatives of volunteers
- Alumni
- Donors

By encouraging person-to-person recruiting, everyone in the organization becomes involved. Both the volunteers and staff should understand what their recruitment responsibilities are within the framework of the overall plan. The primary advantage of inner circles recruitment is to provide the organization with a constant supply of volunteers to compensate for attrition while the volunteer manager does remarkably little work to recruit. The disadvantage of this type of recruitment is that it can be very limiting and will lead to an in-bred group, all of whom look and think a certain way.

Characteristics of a Good Volunteer Recruitment Message

No matter what recruitment method is selected, the volunteer manager should know the qualities of a good recruitment message. These characteristics are consistent, whether an organization is running a widespread media campaign or a volunteer manager is personally recruiting a potential volunteer. The recruitment message should contain:

- The opening message should be interesting enough to entice the potential volunteer to consider volunteering for the organization.
- The body of the message should present information in an order that psychologically matches how people will think about the offer.

Need:	Is there a problem?
Solution:	Can this job help solve it?
Fears/Questions:	Can the prospective volunteer help with the job?
Benefits:	What's in it for the prospective volunteer?
Contact Point:	What steps does the potential volunteer need to take to get involved?

As a general rule, people will first decide whether the organization is worth volunteering for, then decide whether or not to get involved. The volunteer opportunity stressed may be to the organization's, the clientele's, or volunteer's perceived need or benefit.

- The message must be easily understood. Test the message to see if it makes sense to someone other than the person writing or designing it. Is the message clearly understood?
- The message should give a complete picture of the problem, type of work, requirements, time frame and contact person.

Managing Volunteer Recruitment Campaigns

No matter what method one uses to recruit a volunteer, following these guidelines will help make the volunteer recruitment campaign successful.

- Be ready to put volunteers to work before any recruiting is conducted.
- The more creative you are in designing vital work for volunteers, the greater the potential will be to attract all sorts of people to volunteer.
- Find the balance between the needs and dreams of the organization and the motivations and dreams of the people who might want to volunteer.
- Success in recruitment is measured only in finding the best people for the positions available — or in finding the right resources to fill a need.
- Recruiting is connected to, but different from, advertising, public relations and publicity. An organization's public image can help or hinder their ability to recruit volunteers.
- An organization should always be recruiting, even when not consciously doing so. Think about the recruiting consequences and ramifications of everything that is done.
- Never assume potential volunteers know what is needed or who wants to become involved.
- One must believe in what they are asking others to do — believe in the mission of the organization and in the value of volunteering.

Recruiter's Evaluation

Take a look at yourself as a recruiter using this sample evaluation. Give yourself a score on a scale of 0-10 with 0 for never to 10 for always on each criteria of success. The higher the score, the better.

_____ 1. I called the person by name and took time to get acquainted.

_____ 2. I shared my belief in the organization and its purposes, and offered opportunities for the potential volunteer to ask questions about the organization.

_____ 3. I discovered the prospective volunteer's needs, interests and motives and offered them an opportunity that fits.

_____ 4. I helped the potential volunteer by being specific about the role and time involved.

_____ 5. When necessary, I helped the volunteer stay interested by breaking the job into smaller parts, offering opportunities the volunteer felt comfortable with and, offering a choice of several roles that were complimentary of the volunteer's qualifications.

_____ 6. I demonstrated that volunteering for this organization is a worthy cause and focused on benefits to the volunteer and their family while also discussing the challenges of the role.

_____ 7. I explained the kinds of resources, training and support available, showing examples of materials.

_____ 8. I gave the person a clear and reasonable job description.

_____ 9. My personal biases did not affect my recruitment of the volunteer.

_____ 10. I asked for a decision, including when the person was available providing I needed them to start within a month of the conversation.

_____ 11. I thanked the volunteer for his/her time.

Source

Campbell, K. N. and Ellis, S. J. (1995). The Help I-Don't-Have-Enough-Time Guide to Volunteer Management. Philadelphia, PA: ENERGIZE, Inc.

Mc Curley, S. and Vineyard, S. (1986). 101 Ideas for Volunteer Programs. Downers Grove, IL: Heritage Arts Publishing.

Mc Curley, S. and Vineyard, S. (1988). 101 Ideas for Volunteer Recruitment. Downers Grove, IL: Heritage Arts Publishing.

Vineyard, S. and Mc Curley, S. (1995). 101 More Ideas for Volunteer Programs. Downers Grove, IL: Heritage Arts Publishing.

This publication was reviewed by Dr. Mary Kay Munson, University of Illinois Volunteer Specialist; Dr. Leverne Barrett, University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension Leadership Action Team Co-Leader; LaDeane Jha, University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension Leadership Action Team Co-Leader; Dr. Dale Safrit, Ohio State University Associate Professor and Dr. Mary Williams, Florida Cooperative Extension County Director/4-H.

File under: CONSUMER EDUCATION
D-29, Consumer Information — General

Issued October 2000, 2,000

Extension is a Division of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln cooperating with the Counties and the United States Department of Agriculture.

University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension educational programs abide with the nondiscrimination policies of the University of Nebraska–Lincoln and the United States Department of Agriculture.

© 2005, The Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska on behalf of the University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension. All rights reserved.