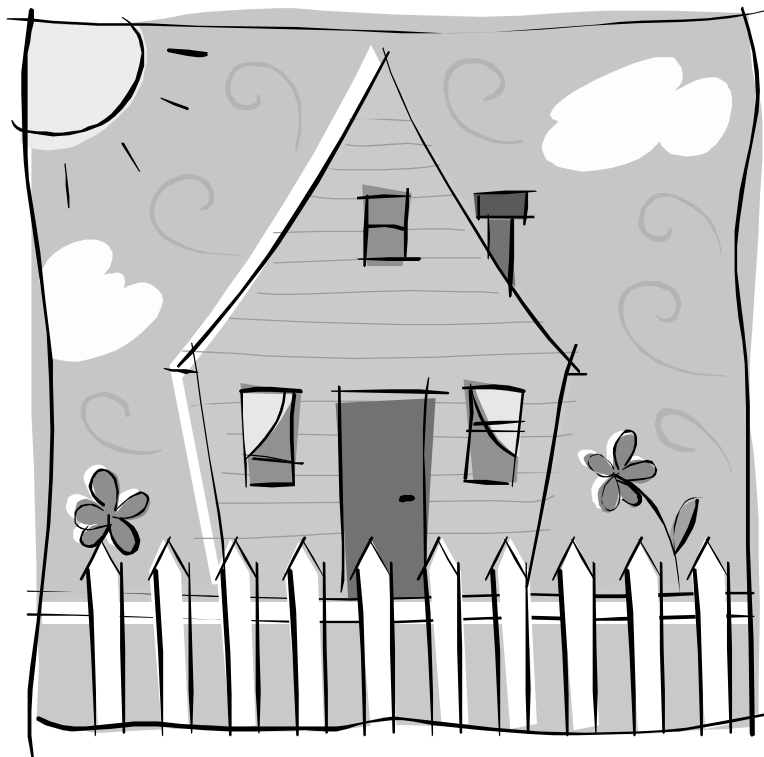


The Three “Rs” of Volunteerism

Recruitment, Retention and Re-Training



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Volunteer Trends

MACRO TRENDS

1. **Age As a Diversity Issue**

The population is aging but don't expect baby boomers to retire in the traditional sense. Barring illness, someone aged 60 today does not think of himself or herself as old, nor does anyone else. As a result, organizations may find volunteers "aging in place," tenaciously clinging to traditional roles and responsibilities and entrenched in key leadership positions.

Now is the time to build in enforced rotation of board members, committee chairs, and other functions. This gives newer volunteers room to grow. Simultaneously, your corporation should find a variety of ways for veteran members to continue to be of support. This could mean developing meaningful roles for active (and homebound) volunteers in their 90s.

The largest generation is the youngest generation – the Millennials. They are expected to be civic minded like their grandparents and they have grown up volunteering. They are tech savvy and look for many avenues to volunteer – including over the internet.

2. **Technology**

The Internet has placed a growing wealth of volunteerism materials literally a click away. With a little bit of search engine skill, your members can find information on volunteer recruitment and retention, boardmanship, recognition, community building, and so on.

It is increasingly important that you use the Internet to manage and involve your volunteers and to build their base of knowledge. Show them where to find information to build their skills. Make sure your Web site has information of value to volunteer leaders; consider developing an area where volunteers can post questions and support one another.

MICRO TRENDS

1. **Volunteers want short-term assignments**

Reluctance to commit to a long-term volunteer assignment is so prevalent that it's moving from a trend to a reality. People are stressed and time-starved, yet associations have earned the reputation of rewarding good volunteer work with more volunteer work, meaning that we often burn out our best people.

Give volunteers what they want by involve them in specific, time-limited projects like task forces. Consider ways to involve people who would be willing to do some work but don't want to be bogged down by endless planning meetings. Find ways to provide single days of service or short-term assignments.

Additionally, examine your recognition practices. Do you give awards for longevity (the 15-year pin)? Do you only get to be on the corporation board if you've "come up through the ranks" or are a member of that particular chapter? If so, be careful. You may be sending the message that service has no foreseeable end or limiting the volunteer pool by ostracizing members from other chapters. Continue recognizing those who have volunteered for a long time, but consider adding awards for rookie of the year or the volunteer who did the most in the least amount of time. Also, some of the most strategic board members have life experience to share, not just lengthy volunteer time spent with your organization.

Volunteer Trends continued...

2. **Volunteers prefer opportunities in community**

Volunteering is a leisure-time activity in which people choose to participate **after** filling the priority demands of a job and/or family. Volunteers, however, will complete all sorts of tasks if they enjoy what they are doing and the people they are doing it with.

Organizations that allow families to volunteer together, for example, may be more successful in recruiting. Be sensitive, though, to the changing definition of family. Your members may now consist of blended families from second or third marriages; single parents by choice; same-sex couples with or without children; grandparents raising grandchildren; older children caring for aging parents; and other variations on the theme. Similarly, many people feel that they don't have time to be with their friends. Recruit friends to volunteer together--enjoying each other's company while helping your cause. Be creative in finding multitasking opportunities for members.

3. **Volunteers are open to virtual volunteering or online service**

Virtual volunteering is probably one of the first genuinely new forms of volunteering in a century. And while face-to-face contact will always be important, consider replacing at least some of your association's time-consuming and costly meetings with well-run list-servers, chat rooms or social networks.

Members can fulfill many volunteer activities through electronic communication—from conducting research to proofreading materials to running publicity campaigns. This means that your volunteers can come from anywhere on the globe--holding out an interesting potential for 24-hour services.

Example: The political group MoveOn provides one model for online mobilization. From holding bake sales to raising money, and from writing letters to the editors of major newspapers to mobilizing voter registration drives, these folks do it all by electronic communication, but with reminders, thank-you notes, and after-activity reports.

What will you do?

Now that you are aware of some of the trends affecting your organization and its members, what will you do? Some suggestions:

- You can ensure that your board members weigh the relevance of these trends to your facility and future tenants.
- Evaluate your existing volunteer model.
- Develop a volunteer strategy to include recruitment, retention, and education to keep your organization on the cutting edge.

Others thoughts?

A Successful Volunteer is ...

Aware

Exhibits foresight and understands the mission of the organization. Aligns volunteer work with organizational objectives.

Cooperative

Eager to work with others and help them succeed. Communicates regularly and effectively. Works as part of the team to make sure everyone gets a chance to participate and do a fair share of the work.

Dependable

Shows initiative by fulfilling all commitments and responsibilities and seeking the resources necessary to do the work well. Does what he/she says they will do and does their best.

Disciplined

Is realistic in accepting the responsibility of volunteering. Plans the time to dedicate to the volunteer role or opts out gracefully if he/she cannot fulfill the responsibility.

Eager and Enthusiastic

Seeks ways to be more effective and to stay engaged. Reaches out, if necessary, to be sure he/she is fulfilling responsibilities. Doesn't complain but seeks to help.

Humble

Doesn't volunteer for the perceived power or authority that comes with a position. Doesn't volunteer to get attention or to feel superior. Happy knowing that he/she is making a difference in whatever role asked to play. "Service over self-interest."

Knowledgeable

Knows and understands the job and the written job description. Actively participates in organized training (if available). Pays attention.

Respectful

Always shows respect for other people and experiences. Tries to empathize to be more effective.

A Role Model

Behavior, example, or success can and should be emulated by others, especially by younger people. One who considers his/her ability to recruit additional volunteers through example.

Selfless

A servant leader. One who doesn't think about what he/she can do to help herself, but consistently thinks about what he/she can do to help the cause, community, or organization...



because they've been shown the way.

Wise Whys	Glad Gifts
Yearn to Learns	No Nos
Volunteer Work Window	

Instructions:

- Pane 1: In the first pane of the work window under "**Wise Whys**," answer the question: "Why do I want to become a volunteer for this organization?"
- Pane 2: "**Glad Gifts**" are special skills, talents or interests you can offer that the organization would benefit from; fairly specific things you like to do and can do well (*examples: good at public speaking, good with numbers, can design a website, etc.*).
- Pane 3: The third pane is for "**Yearn to Learns**" - those specific things you would like to learn more about, or skills you would like to improve or develop. An area you would like to venture into because you find it intriguing and would like to learn more (*examples: would love to know more about investing, want to learn to facilitate workshops, etc.*).
- Pane 4: "**No Nos**" or taboos. The fourth pane is for tasks you never want to be asked to do because you have no interest and/or no skill. (*examples: bookkeeping, meeting planning, traveling, etc.*)