

# VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

**Who** volunteers?

**Why** do people volunteer?

**What** do volunteers expect?

**How** do you recruit volunteers and keep them happy?

- Volunteers are the backbone of many organisations, without them some groups would be unable to survive.
- Volunteers gain equally with the organisation. The volunteer gains work experience, fulfilment and interaction with others.
- Volunteers come from many backgrounds and give their time and skills freely.
- Volunteers are never free.
- You must be aware of their needs and understand how diverse they may be.
- You are possibly a volunteer yourself, so how do you feel?
- If your organisation is dogged by conflict, lack of funding, negative feedback etc people will not want to volunteer. Success ensures success.

## PLANNING

No matter how small, the group needs to have a planned approach to recruiting, retaining and rewarding volunteers. A volunteer plan should be part of your overall plan.

- Establish what needs to be achieved
- How many people are required
- How often and for how long
- What skills are required, e.g. drivers license, computer skills for data entry, first aid, sales, marketing, journalism.

## ASSESSING YOUR NEEDS

The objective of this activity is to determine how volunteers can help you and what type of volunteer skills you will need. There are many ways to approach this task. The following approach has worked well in a number of areas and may work for you. It can be handled either as a brainstorming session at any level, or by individual supervisors.

1. Develop a list of all tasks, projects or activities performed by staff members in your area over the course of a year. Be specific. List everything from emptying the

- trash to writing speeches. (This should be based on real activities, independent of what is stated in job descriptions).
2. Add to the above list all projects or tasks you would like to accomplish, if only you had the time, personnel or funds. Be sure to include tasks or projects requiring specific training or skills not found in existing staff.
  3. From the above list (combination of 1 & 2) identify those tasks that are currently not being done by any employees.
  4. In addition, identify those tasks currently being done by employees where the employee needs or could make good use of assistance. (Do not forget one-time assistance needs or small jobs such as running errands or organising a storage room) someone may volunteer for whatever needs to be done on a certain day.

The product of steps 3 and 4 above constitutes your list of work that volunteers can probably help you accomplish, but there is one more step before it is final. That step is to review the list and remove any items where you feel the expected results would not be worth the commitment of time, training and supervision required. Once those tasks, if any, have been removed you will have a master list of tasks that volunteers can probably help you accomplish.

Now break this master list into two parts as follows:

1. Tasks that can be done by people without specific training or with minimal instruction (clerk, receptionist, general maintenance, etc.)
2. Tasks that require skilled or trained persons. (List types and levels of skill or training needed for each task).

And finally, put the tasks in each of these lists in order of priority, according to management goals and objectives, with the most critically needed work at the top of the lists.

### **KEYS TO A SUCCESSFUL PROGRAM:**

Complimentary to the goals of the whole organisation will be the goals and objectives of your volunteer programme. You have established the tasks you want volunteers to complete, now you need to plan for that programme.

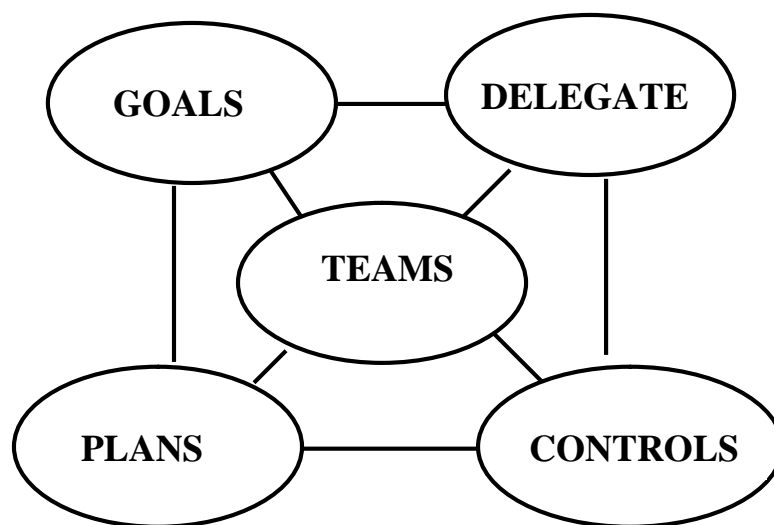
- |            |                                                                                                                                                  |
|------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Goals      | Need to be short term, middle term and long term and fit within the overall goals and objectives. These goals must be measurable and achievable. |
| Planning   | How do you achieve the goals? The how's, when's and who will do what.                                                                            |
| Who        | Matching your volunteers to the tasks required and if necessary forming teams of paid staff and volunteers.                                      |
| Delegation | Providing the necessary training, motivation and coaching to take up the challenge.                                                              |

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Controls      Measuring, evaluation, providing feedback both positive and negative, appraisals, letting go of ineffective volunteers

- Assess your needs
- Determine volunteer resources
- Develop job descriptions
- Develop contracts
- Ensure policies provide an adequate framework
- Delegate
- Develop controls and an honest evaluation system

**THE VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT MOLECULE**



**GOALS**

Long Range	Mid-Range	Strategic Planning	Short Range
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- What business are we in?
- What are our high priorities?
- What are our low priorities?

**PLANS**

Setting Priorities	Sticking to priorities
Scheduling	Effective management and committee meetings
Time Management	Stress Management

- Planning is ... learning to think on paper
- Planning is ... learning to think in reverse

Every hour spent planning will save 3 hours of doing

## TEAMS

Recruiting	Testing
Choosing the right person for the job	Evaluation
Screening	

## DELEGATE

Training	Orientation	Motivating
Counselling	Instructing	Coaching
Effective Communication		

## CONTROLS

Recognition and Appreciation	Feedback	Measurement	Programme Evaluation
Letting go of ineffective volunteers	Reprimand	Praise	Accountability
Creating Self-Managing Volunteers			

Some of the items above could fit into more than one category. There is no need to be dogmatic, however do be systematic.

## FURTHER READING

“A Guide for Volunteers and Their Organisations” - Mary Woods  
 Legal Issues Affecting Voluntary Organisations – Dunedin Volunteer Centre

**If you would like a list of our other community resources, or to be put on our mailing list, contact us at:**



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