

# 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 organizations, without them some groups would be unable to survive.
- Volunteers gain equally with the organizations, the volunteer gains work experience, fulfillment 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, eg. drivers license, computer skills for data entry, first aid, sales, marketing, journalism.

## WHAT IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY TO RECRUIT?

- Word of mouth
- Individual approach at a social gathering
- Advertise on community boards, community radio or local papers.
- Personal approach may require volunteers with good communication skills. Satisfied clients/members/spectators may make the best volunteers.
- Volunteers rarely volunteer - they need to be approached and invited to contribute.

## **VOLUNTEER EXPECTATIONS**

- To be valued
- To be given tasks within their capabilities
- To have tasks fully explained
- To be listened to
- To have completed task recognized

## **REWARD AND RECOGNITION**

Some groups recognise their volunteers at the AGM. This public recognition is great but is it sufficient? All volunteers are valued no matter how small their contribution. A simple thank-you is appreciated and often overlooked.

There need to be many different forms of reward and recognition. What pleases one volunteer may offend another. It is important to get to know and understand your volunteers.

### **Some ideas are:**

- handwritten notes
- official letter on letter head
- Flowers (out of someone's garden)
- Caring calls when unwell or with family problems
- Mention in the newsletter. (It is important to spell names correctly)
- Regular meetings with volunteers to learn, listen or just for fun.
- Involvement in the planning process of the organisation
- The opportunity to change their duties for a more or less challenging role.

Avoid conflict between paid and unpaid staff, be aware of any personality clashes. Management of volunteers is a bigger task than most realize, after all the volunteers have rights, freedom, and can say no!

## **JOB DESCRIPTIONS**

The volunteers have the right to be fully informed about the task and this would be a job description, which would set out the objectives and expectations of the position. This should include safety precautions and liability issues (see pamphlet 3 in this series on legal matters). At this point, you may choose to combine the job description and a contract, or prepare two separate documents. Whatever you choose, keep them simple and avoid scaring the prospective volunteer with extensive details and jargon. Explain carefully the reason for the job description and/or contract.

Before a contract is signed, out of pocket expenses, should be discussed and clarified, avoiding unrealistic expectations eg if a volunteer is expected to sell programs at a sporting event, the cost of entry should be offered.

## **ORIENTATION**

Orientation may be necessary including hands on experience with a staff member, or other volunteers.

- You should familiarise the volunteer with:
- Other staff and volunteers
- Where, when and to whom to report and where to go for advice about the organisation's facilities
- The organisation's goals, services, policies and relationship to the community
- A description of the administrative structure
- Set the ground rules in advance so everyone knows where they stand.

## **RIGHTS OF VOLUNTEERS**

- To have a clear job description
- To be understood
- To have adequate training
- To be fairly treated
- To have their achievement recognized
- To be respected - beliefs, religious and cultural
- To be involved in changes to role/tasks.

Volunteers are expected to be reliable and trustworthy. They can cause major problems by not turning up or phoning in with a weak excuse just before they are required. Such behavior is unacceptable and needs to be discussed at the outset.

## **WHY DO VOLUNTEERS LEAVE?**

- To use their skills in paid employment
- Because they feel they are being taken for granted
- Because of a lack of support
- Because they are bored
- Because their skills are under utilized

## VOLUNTEER EVALUATION

A review of the programme in which the volunteer is involved and the tasks performed should take place at regular intervals e.g. 6 monthly or annually. This evaluation or review should determine:

- If the volunteer is serving the purpose and goals of the organisation
- The growth, satisfaction and effectiveness of the volunteer
- Value of the volunteer to paid employees and other volunteers
- The opportunity for the volunteer to express feelings and suggestions about their work.

Discussions may prove that a volunteer could make a better contribution in some other part of the organisation.

## FURTHER RESOURCES

Personnel Practices in Voluntary Agencies: Volunteers - New Zealand Federation of Voluntary Welfare Organisations

---

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



Phone (09) 486-4820

Fax (09) 486-4823



Visit North Shore Community and Social Services Inc.  
Mary Thomas Centre, 3 Gibbons Rd, Takapuna



Write P.O.Box 33 284, Takapuna, North Shore City



email [info@nscss.co.nz](mailto:info@nscss.co.nz)

© Copyright

While reproduction by non-profit charitable agencies is encouraged, this material is the copyright of the North Shore Community and Social Service Council Inc. It may not be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in whole or in part or by any means (electronic, photocopying, recording, scanning or otherwise) without prior written permission of the owner. Written permission will not be unduly withheld providing full acknowledgement of source is made.