

# **VOLUNTEERS**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **ARE YOU READY FOR VOLUNTEER?**

Too often a community group is overworked, cannot afford any more paid staff, and has tasks that are mundane so decide to “get a/some volunteers”. This is sadly often an adhoc response to a crisis situation.

A proactive organisation will decide on volunteer input at their annual plan process and the management of the volunteer input should receive the same consideration as other major projects.

For a successful volunteer programme consider issues such as:

- What are the tasks we want volunteers to do
- What skills are required
- Who will supervise the volunteers
- How will we reward the volunteers
- What will be the cost of the programme
- Are the paid staff happy with the concept of working with volunteers?

## **PRINCIPLES FOR A SOUND VOLUNTEER PROGRAMME**

1. The participation of Volunteers within a programme must meet the needs of the organisation.
  - a) Volunteers must be given jobs that complement or enhance the work of paid staff; they are never given work, which replaces the duties of paid staff.
  - b) Volunteers are not restricted to certain jobs or types of activities by virtue of their Volunteer status.
2. The application of a Volunteer programme should receive continued support from the organisation.
  - a) Such a commitment must be expressed through the allocation of resources (money, manpower, materials, working and storage space).
3. Management must accept responsibility for the administration of a Volunteer programme.
  - a) Co-ordination of a Volunteer programme should be the primary responsibility of a single individual.

4. Planning a Volunteer programme should be a process, which involves paid staff, and Volunteers.
5. Paid staff members at all levels must understand and accept the role and function of a Volunteer programme.
6. Volunteers must understand and accept the purpose and policies of the organisation.

## **COST OF VOLUNTEERS – RESOURCES, HUMAN AND FINANCIAL**

The use of volunteers will incur cost.

An essential part of a successful programme is including an item in your annual budget “Volunteer Expenses”.

You must include:

- Cost of Recruitment eg, advertising.
- Expenses incurred so they can carry out their tasks.
- Cost of volunteers acknowledgement, eg cards, lunches, gifts etc.
- Transport expenses - may be they are using their own cars and need to be reimbursed for petrol.

Financial Resources are one part of the equation but do not forget the human resources required.

An extra duty will fall on someone and must be some one willing?

## **THE RIGHTS OF A VOLUNTEER**

- The right of being offered the opportunity to become a volunteer regardless of race, financial status, sex or age;
- The right to be interviewed and appropriately assigned to a meaningful job;
- The right to expect training and supervision to enable them to perform the duties well;
- The right to be involved in planning and evaluating the programme in which they participate;
- The right to receive recognition, and most important of all;
- The right to be regarded as persons, with individuality, uniqueness and value.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF VOLUNTEERS**

- Be honest and open with the Co-ordinator of Volunteers and other staff, regarding intent, goals, needs and skills so that a good placement is possible;
- Understand the requirements of time and duties of assignments before accepting them and having accepted, fulfil the commitment to the best of your ability;
- Work to deserve being treated as a recognised and respected member of the team;
- Take the commitment seriously enough to participate in planning and evaluating the volunteer programme and in whatever training or learning opportunities are available;

- Share ideas, for the volunteer frequently has a fresh, new perspective that is valuable. However, do not be hurt or resentful if the ideas are not always implemented;
- Respect the confidentiality of the organisation and its clients;
- Seek and accept honest feedback on performance. Remember, negative feedback is valuable too, when viewed as an opportunity for growth;
- Serve as goodwill ambassadors and interpreters for the organisation and its services in the community-at-large

## Motivation Factors

These factors directly affect the motivation of the worker, making it higher or lower according to whether or not the manager is using a particular factor. The presence of these factors will both satisfy and motivate. Though their absence may not necessarily cause dissatisfaction, it will ensure an absence of motivation. The factors:

- \* **Achievement:** The worker needs to feel that he/she accomplished something.
- \* **Recognition:** The worker needs to feel that his/her achievement has been noticed.
- \* **Interesting duties:** The worker needs to feel interested in the work itself.
- \* **Responsibility:** The worker needs to feel that he/she is responsible for himself/herself and for his/her own work. The responsibility for new tasks and duties is also important.
- \* **Opportunity for growth:** The worker needs to feel that he/she has the potential to grow within the organization.

## Maintenance Factors

These factors simply keep the worker on the job. They keep him or her from going elsewhere for work. The presence of these factors causes satisfaction; their absence causes dissatisfaction. Their presence or absence has no effect on motivation, however. The factors:

- \* **Supervision:** The worker feels that the manager is willing to teach and delegate responsibility. .
- \* **Administration:** The worker feels that management has good communication with the worker; also the worker feels good about company and personnel policies.
- \* **Working conditions:** The worker feels good about the physical conditions at work.
- \* **Interrelationships:** The worker feels good about his/her relations with peers, subordinates, and superiors.
- \* **Status:** The worker feels secure about his/her job.
- \* **Salary:** The worker feels adequately compensated for his/her work

## **SUPERVISION OF VOLUNTEER STAFF**

"Everybody needs reassurance and reinforcement that their performance is appreciated and valued." Supervision is ongoing and every Volunteer should relate directly to a staff person or to another experienced Volunteer leader. No staff person or Volunteer leader should supervise too many Volunteers (five to ten seems to be an ideal unit).

An organisational chart should be given.

Volunteers should know who is responsible for the Volunteers in your organisation or group. So, if possible, a job supervisor should be allocated for each Volunteer position (may be the same person for many or all). It should be made clear to these people what is expected of him/her in return to support the Volunteer. The supervisors should be committed, willing, warm and accepting towards working with a Volunteer and excited about the potentials involved. They will play a big part **in** the Volunteer's experience in your organisation or group.

## **TYPES OF SUPERVISION**

- a) Regularly scheduled and planned individual supervision (ie meeting between supervisor and supervisee).
- b) Casual supervisory chat while programmes are going on or immediately following the conclusion of a programme.
- c) Group supervision (formal or informal).

Ongoing supervision should include two components: ie housekeeping and maintenance topics.

- Definite planned training topics.
- Warm and friendly atmosphere
- Giving of advice, information, discussion of difficulties or problems-
- Share experiences.
- Regular evaluation
- Develop internal commitment and loyalty.

## **INTERVIEWING YOUR VOLUNTEERS**

Interviewing is an important part of your volunteer programme. When people enquire about volunteering for your organisation they will expect to be interviewed in a professional and efficient manner.

Some do's and don'ts of interviewing:

## DO

- ✓ be on time for the interview appointment
- ✓ stand up, greet by name and introduce yourself
- ✓ be relaxed and make volunteers comfortable, coat, chair etc
- ✓ explain the purpose of the interview and why the questions are necessary
- ✓ allow time for volunteers to think before making comments or answering questions
- ✓ keep descriptions of job or the agency brief – don't cause confusion
- ✓ look at the person during conversation – look at the whole person
- ✓ say why you feel a volunteer is suitable or unsuitable for the job
- ✓ make arrangements for the volunteer to meet the supervisor of the programme in which they will be working (It is preferable to have that person as part of the interview panel)
- ✓ explain training and orientation, when, where and by whom
- ✓ give information about when and where you can be contacted – give them a business card if you have one
- ✓ inform the person of the importance of communication within the organisation and the liaison between the volunteer and staff
- ✓ explain your expectations of the volunteer and provide handouts on the organisational structure, the volunteer contract/agreement, contact details etc)
- ✓ ask for questions

## DON'T

- ✗ Sit behind a desk
- ✗ Sit or stand at a higher level
- ✗ Rush
- ✗ Write during conversation
- ✗ Conduct the interview if you are tired
- ✗ Drink coffee or eat unless you both do

## EFFECTIVE VOLUNTEER TEAMS

<b>T</b>	<b>Trust</b> each other if you are to work as an effect team
<b>E</b>	<b>Esteem</b> – self esteem is gained as we contribute our strengths and abilities to the achievement high of our goals
<b>A</b>	<b>Action</b> - teams must be results oriented. They must do something worthwhile or they loose their purpose, direction and cohesion
<b>M</b>	<b>Meetings</b> - Teams must meet regularly to form strong loyalties and bonds They are merely groups of individuals.

## **WAYS TO GIVE RECOGNITION TO YOUR VOLUNTEERS**

Continuously, but always inconclusively, directors discuss the subject of recognition and co-ordinators of Volunteer programmes. There is great agreement as to its importance but great diversity in its implementation.

It is important to remember that recognition is not so much something you do, as it is something you are. It is sensitivity to others as persons, not a strategy for discharging obligations

Listed below are possibilities gathered from hither and yon.

- **Treat to an ice-cream**
- **Ask for a report**
- **Send a birthday card**
- **Maintain a coffee bar**
- **Plan an annual award ceremony**
- **Invite to Staff meetings**
- **Recognise personal needs and problems**
- **Accommodate personal needs and problems**
- **Assist with preparation of a cv**
- **Be pleasant**
- **Use in an emergency situation**
- **Provide a babysitter**
- **Post an Honour Roll in reception area**
- **Respect the Volunteers wishes**
- **Give informal teas**
- **Keep challenging them**
- **Send a Thanksgiving Day card to Volunteers family**
- **Provide a nursery-**
- **Say "Good Morning"**
- **Greet by name**
- **Provide good pre-service training**
- **Help develop self-confidence**
- **Award plaques to sponsoring group**
- **Take time to explain fully**
- **Be verbal**
- **Invite an agency or VIP's to converse with them**
- **Hold rap sessions**
- **Give additional responsibility**
- **Afford participation in team planning**
- **34 Respect sensitivities**
- **Enable a volunteer to grow on the job**
- **Enable a volunteer to grow out of the job**
- **Send newsworthy information**
- **Have wine and cheese tasting**
- **Invite a volunteer to a launch, sponsors invitation or other functions you go to**
- **Ask members to evaluate**
- **Say "Good Afternoon"**

- **Acknowledge their work service**
- **Honour their preferences**
- **Create pleasant surroundings**
- **Welcome them to Staff coffee breaks**
- **Enlist volunteers to train other**
- **Have a public reception for Volunteers**
- **Take time to talk**
- **Defend against hostile or negative Staff**
- **Acknowledge the work of volunteers in your annual report**
- **Commend to supervisory Staff**
- **Provide references and recommend to prospective employers**
- **Write them thank you notes**
- **Surprise with coffee and cake**
- **Involve them in policy formation**
- **Celebrate outstanding projects**
- **Nominate for external Volunteer awards and achievements**
- **Carefully match Volunteer with the job**
- **Praise them to their friends**
- **Say "Good Night"**
- **Be a real person**
- **Accept their individuality**
- **Identify age groups**
- **Maintain meaningful files for your volunteers**
- **Send impromptu fun cards**
- **Plan occasional extravaganzas**
- **Promote a "volunteer of the month" surprise programme**
- **Send letter of appreciation**
- **Include a volunteer column as a regular part of your newsletter**
- **Plan a "Recognition Edition" newsletter**
- **Say "we missed you"**
- **Maintain safe working conditions**
- **Provide adequately orientation**
- **Send Christmas cards**
- **Have the staff entertain the volunteers at an end of year function eg a skit, play, carol singing etc**
- **Have a volunteer/staff picnic – but don't ask them to 'bring a plate'**

## **WHAT VOLUNTEERS HATE:**

- ✗ Harping on past mistakes
- ✗ A discussion of the past doesn't change the past, it only reinforces failure and raises the probability of future mistakes.
- ✗ Feeling powerless because they are not involved in any discussion
- ✗ Not being confident about what they are doing.
- ✗ Not being treated with the same respect as paid workers, committee members etc.
- ✗ Inferior working conditions to others
- ✗ Not being reimbursed for out of pocket expenses
- ✗ Inefficient rosters
- ✗ Being expected to fill in for others at short notice
- ✗ Arriving to find there is insufficient work or it is not clear what tasks they are required to carry out.

## **HOW TO MOVE FORWARD AND SUCCEED**

The way to change performances for the better is to start now.

### **DON'T.....**

- ✗ Don't criticize anything that cannot be changed.
- ✗ Don't criticize past mistakes.
- ✗ Don't hurt the other person in subtle or obvious ways.
- ✗ Accept excuses for non-performance unless in exceptional circumstances, instead work with the volunteer to make things work.
- ✗ Respond hostility with hostility.
- ✗ Over react – get all the facts first

### **Do's .....**

Remember the rules about constructive criticism:

- ✓ Do show the other person the right way.
- ✓ Do remember that people usually criticise themselves (perhaps too much).
- ✓ Do remember that people recognize and are sensitive to their own mistakes.
- ✓ Do build strength. ,
- ✓ Do remember that people want to learn a better way from someone who genuinely wants to help them.
- ✓ Let the person self -evaluate whether his or her behaviour is helping or hurting.
- ✓ Listen to the person's feelings but don't try to elicit feelings.
- ✓ The way to help people feel better is by moving toward performance.
- ✓ Negotiate win/win performance plans. Let them develop their own “improvement plans as much as possible then tie it down through the give-and-take of negotiation.

## **Make sure that all plans are specific – be specific about:**

What is to be done?

When it is to be done

Quantity and quality standards

Points for reviewing progress

Encourage strong commitment to the plan as if there is no commitment there will be no performance.

## **MOTIVATION AND RECOGNITION**

### **THE ONE-MINUTE PRAISE**

Tell people up front that you are going to let them know how they are doing

Praise people immediately

Tell people what they did right, be specific

Tell people how good you feel about what they did right, and how it helps the organisation and the other people who work there.

Stop for a moment of silence to let them “feel” how good you feel.

Encourage them to do more of the same

Shake hands or touch people in a way that makes it clear that you support their success in the organisation.

### **THE ONE-MINUTE REPRIMAND**

Tell people beforehand that you are going to let them know how they are doing.

The first half of the reprimand:

Listen to the facts

Reprimand people immediately

Tell people what they did wrong, be specific

Tell people how you feel about what they did wrong and in very clear terms.

Stop for a few seconds of uncomfortable silence and let them feel how you feel.

**The second half of the reprimand:**

If necessary review their plan

Remind them of how much you value them.

Reaffirm that you think well of them but not of their performance in this situation

Shake hands, or touch them in a way that lets them know you are honestly on their side

Realise that when the reprimand is over, it is over.

(Adapted from Canadian Volunteer Management Programme)

## **FIGHTING FAIRLY - SOME GROUND RULES**

Sometimes things go very wrong and there is conflict. Here are some guidelines which may help. Remember to deal with problems when they are little as if ignored they are sure to get worse!

**Purpose:** The parties in the conflict agree that the goal is to fix the problem - not to assign blame, hurt, humiliate, or threaten.

**Timing:** Both parties agree as to when they will work out the solution. (Timing means individual readiness, psychologically, physically, or mentally, to invest energy in resolving the conflict.)

- Commitment:** Both parties agree to “stick it out” until an equitable solution is found - neither party will avoid the issue or run away from it.
- Mediator:** Both parties participate in the decision as to whether or not a third party or mediator is needed. If one is desired, both parties must agree as to who that person will be - preferably someone who is objective to the problem, flexible, assertive about moving things along, has a sense of humour, and has the ability to cut through the superficialities to the meat of the problem.
- Place:** A place that is comfortable and neutral is best. It should provide privacy and be free of all kinds of interruptions.
- Food and Drink:** No drugs or alcohol will be consumed. Refreshments and food should be available as needed.
- Recording:** Both parties need to agree on how the issues and resolutions will be recorded: newsprint, tape recorder, third party, etc.
- Confidentiality:** Both parties agree that whatever happens in the conflict session will remain confidential. Only the terms of any agreement are public and are published jointly.
- Bad-Mouthing:** The parties agree not to bad-mouth each other before or after the session.

**REMEMBER GOODWILL AND TRUST TAKE A LONG TIME TO  
BUILD AND ONLY MOMENTS TO DESTROY**

## **FURTHER READING**

Managing your Voluntary Agency in New Zealand 1993 – NZ Federation of Voluntary Welfare Organisations

Volunteer Fact Sheets – North Shore Community and Social Services,  
PO Box 33 294, Takapuna email [NSCSSC@xtra.co.nz](mailto:NSCSSC@xtra.co.nz)

A Guide for Volunteers and their Organisations by Mary Woods

## OUR DAY WILL COME.....

*Many will be shocked to find  
when the Day of Judgement nears,  
That there's a special place in Heaven Set aside for volunteers.  
Furnished with big recliners,  
Satin Couches and footstools.  
Where there's no committee chairman,  
No Group leaders or car pools.  
No eager team that needs a couch,  
No bazaar and no cake stall.  
There will be nothing to staple  
And not one thing to mail,  
Telephone lists will be outlawed,  
But a finger snap will bring  
Long, cool drinks and gourmet  
Dinner and more treats fit for a king.  
Who'll cook, who'll serve these privileged few  
And work for all they're worth"  
What, all those who reaped the benefits and not once volunteered on  
earth!!*

*Brilliant Enterprises 1975*