Building Sustainability for Nonprofit Organizations

A Strategic Approach to Talent Management

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Take The Next Step

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Building Sustainability for Nonprofit Organizations
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Welcome

Are You Building An Organization That Will Last?

With resources shrinking and demand for services growing, nonprofit organizations are increasingly turning to volunteers with professional experience to fill skills gaps. This workshop provides an opportunity for Board members and staff of nonprofit agencies to discuss and explore the challenges, opportunities, and strategies of engaging skilled volunteers in the work of nonprofit organizations.

Additional NewLevel Group workshops are available to help nonprofits explore each of the critical elements of sustainability in greater detail, with emphasis on the elements of fundraising, marketing, and leadership development.

Sponsored by
Community Foundation of Jackson Hole
June 18, 2014, 8:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

✓ Learning Objectives

- ✓ Understand the basic principles and practices of volunteer management
- ✓ Learn the elements of an effective volunteer management strategy
- ✓ Explore key elements of recruiting, retention, and evaluation
- ✓ Gain practical information and tools that can be put into immediate action

Overview of Talent Management Program

Nonprofits rely heavily on volunteers, but most organizations do a poor job of managing them. As a result, more than one-third of those who volunteer one year do not donate their time the next year—at any nonprofit. That adds up to an estimated $38 billion in lost labor. To remedy this situation, nonprofit leaders must develop a more strategic approach to managing this overlooked and undervalued talent pool. The good news is that new waves of retiring baby boomers and energetic young people are ready to fill the gap.

Mismanaging Volunteers

Most nonprofits do not manage their volunteers effectively

Good volunteer management practices	Percentage of nonprofits that use practice regularly
Matching volunteers' skills with appropriate assignments	45%
Recognizing the contributions of volunteers	35%
Measuring the impact of volunteers annually	30%
Providing volunteers with training and professional development	25%
Training paid staff to work with volunteers	19%

Source: Volunteer Management Capacity in America's Charities and Congregations, 2006

Nonprofits need more talent

The nonprofit sector desperately needs the professional skills offered by volunteers. The nation's nonprofits are under strain from the current economic crisis, a leadership drain as older executives retire, and high turnover among younger nonprofit staff. Volunteers are an undervalued and underused resource for tackling these challenges.

Why volunteer talent leaves

National volunteer rates are declining. Between 2005 and 2006, the percent of volunteers who did not do any volunteering the following year increased from 32 percent to 36 percent. Although nonprofits can expect, and in some cases even desire, some attrition, losing more than one out of three volunteers from one year to the next is clearly a problem.

1. *Not matching volunteer skills with assignments*

   Volunteers with valuable and specialized skills are often dispatched to do manual labor rather than tasks that use their professional talents. (painting houses, planting flowers, taking inventory)

2. *Failing to recognize volunteers' contributions*

   Nonprofits need to recognize volunteers through an organizational culture that values them and through specific appreciation ceremonies and events. (list volunteers just as you would donors)

3. *Not measuring the value of contributions*

   Measure the dollar value that volunteers provide to the organization. With hard data demonstrating the value of volunteers, boards and donors would be more likely to invest time and money in developing volunteer talent.

4. *Failing to train and invest in volunteers and staff*

   Volunteers need training to understand the organizations with which they are working, and employees need to be trained to work with volunteers.

5. *Failing to provide strong leadership*

   Take the time to develop or support volunteer talent adequately to avoid a poor or bland experience that leads to an unmotivated volunteer with little reason to return. Place a high value on volunteer talent and dedicate adequate resources to the task— don't assign volunteer coordination to a receptionist

Leveraging Volunteer Talent

1. *Rethink Work Roles*

    To create compelling opportunities for volunteers, some organizations are elevating the roles of volunteers and blurring the distinctions between paid and nonpaid staff

2. *Assign Appropriate Tasks*

3. *Create Bonding experiences*

    Keep volunteers engaged with challenges fresh and appropriate to skill levels

4. *Support & Train*

    Have staff and volunteers train together, or work together on important tasks like creating new curricula or programs

5. *Use new Technology*

    Build social networks to connect volunteers with each other and the organization

6. *Develop a Strategic Plan*

    Integrate volunteer roles and policies into formal planning

If you want highly skilled volunteers to come and stay, you need to expand your vision of volunteering by creating an experience that is meaningful, develops skills, demonstrates impact, and taps into volunteers' abilities and interests.
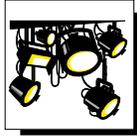
Strategic Approach to Volunteer Program Development

Creating a Strategic Volunteer Plan

1. Market research and community needs assessment
2. Strategic planning to maximize volunteer impact
3. Recruiting and marketing to prospective volunteers
4. Interviewing, screening, and selection of volunteers
5. Orienting and training volunteers
6. Ongoing supervision and management
7. Recognition and volunteer development
8. Measuring outcomes and evaluating the process

Brainstorming Strategies

In thinking about developing an effective volunteer corps:

Group 1:

1. What programs or operations in your organization could utilize volunteers?
2. What skills sets or attributes would be required?
3. What additional resources would be needed?

Group 2:

1. What are your ideas about marketing and recruiting volunteers?
2. What resources are already available?
3. What additional resources are already available will be needed?

Group 3:

1. What will be required for strategy, orientation, ongoing training, and supervision?
2. What are your ideas for volunteer development & recognition programs?

Identifying Volunteer Needs: Template

Priority	Programs	Skills/Experience Needed	Training/Additional Resources
1	CAPE Program	Public speaking skills, good with children, use of curriculum, some direct service experience	volunteer training, specific to curriculum, include in staff meetings/trainings, background check
2	**Development Dept** admin events fund dev outreach	org. skills; phone; people; computer	volunteer training; fundraising basic training; Dev staff to create systems
1	**Family Economic Success** VITA FMT	financial; set schedule; bilingual organization; computer skills; bilingual experience in specific area of finance; bilingual	volunteer training tax law training curriculum training
2	**Parent Educators** Childcare Classes	child development; enjoy kids; bilingual group process; public speaking; adult ed; use of curriculum; bilingual	volunteer training; CPR; background check volunteer training
3	**Building Maint**. gardening shopping/supplies honey do list	handy, healthy, strong	Rebuilding Together; Home Depot; Master Gardeners
2	Accounting/Admin Assistant	Organized, detail oriented, flexible, consistent schedule.	volunteer training on filing systems (soft/hard copy)

Identifying Volunteers Needs:
Blank

Priority	Programs	Skills/Experience Needed	Training/Additional Resources

Identifying Volunteers Needs: Sample

Family Resource Center
Volunteer Position Description   **Child Assault Prevention Program**

Component	Definition	Example
Job Title	What the job or position will be	CAP Workshop Presenter
Purpose	The specific purpose of the position (expected results). If possible, the purpose should be stated in relation to the program's mission and goals.	Through scripted workshops, provide elementary school children tips, tools and strategies for preventing stranger abductions and safe and unsafe touches from relatives or strangers.
Key Responsibilities	Major duties, including what might be done to accomplish the purpose	Schedule workshops, memorize script, present to children in an age appropriate format. Report suspected cases of child abuse
Location	Volunteer's worksite	Elementary schools in the District
Supervision	Title to whom the volunteer will report, as well as the procedures for mentoring or reporting issues	Workshop facilitator or CAPC Director. Bi-weekly or monthly meetings
Length of Appointment	The time period in which the volunteer will serve, including any time restrictions	September to May
Time Commitment	The approximate number of days or hours required per week, and flexibility in scheduling	Up to two days per week, 6 hours per day
Qualifications	Education, work experience, knowledge, and skills required, as well as any requirement for a background check.	Ability to speak to and interact with up to 30 children. Must have Mandated Child Abuse Reporter training – which will be provided free of charge. LiveScan DOJ/FBI background check.
Benefits	Training, insurance, parking, events to thank volunteers, etc.	Volunteer appreciation event. Certificate of merit on completion of school year. Professional experience in community training and prevention work to keep children safe.
Support Provided	Resources available to volunteers	Volunteer handbook, orientation

Volunteer Description Worksheet

Component	Description
Job Title	
Purpose	
Key Responsibilities	
Location	
Supervision	
Length of Appointment	
Time Commitment	
Qualifications	
Benefits	
Support Provided	

Volunteer Description Worksheet

Component	Description
Job Title	
Purpose	
Key Responsibilities	
Location	
Supervision	
Length of Appointment	
Time Commitment	
Qualifications	
Benefits	
Support Provided	

Recruiting Tools: Volunteer Application

Date:	Name:	
Address:		
Phone:		E-mail:
Current Employer:		Title/Position:
Education:		
Languages spoken:		
Special skills/training:		
Availability:	Starting when:	
	Hours per week:	
	Hours per month:	
Why would you like to volunteer with the Family Resource Center?		

Family Resource Center
Volunteer Skill Survey

Support services:

☐ Data entry

   Software programs: _____

☐ Receptionist

☐ Word processing

   Software programs: _____

☐ Telephone work

Technical:

☐ Carpentry

☐ Web design

☐ Graphic design

☐ IT administration

☐ Professional writing

☐ Videography/ Photography

Client services:

☐ Crisis line

☐ Arts/Crafts instruction

☐ Life skills instruction

☐ Childcare

☐ Staff training

Leadership/Public Relations:

☐ Fundraising

☐ Public speaking

☐ Event planning

☐ Meeting facilitation

☐ Management consultation

Other interests: _____

for office use only

Date interviewed: _____

Orientation date: _____

Program assignment/Starting date: _____

Recruiting Tools: Characteristics of a Good Recruitment Message

The opening of the Message is interesting enough to entice the potential volunteer to continue reading or listening. The body of the Message is appealing enough to interest the potential volunteer in considering the volunteer opportunity or, at least, in contacting the agency to get more information. Boring Messages are only likely to appeal to boring people.

The body of the Message presents 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:	**Will I be capable of helping with it?**
Benefits:	**What's in it for me?**
Contact Point:	**How do I get involved?**

As a general rule, spend more space on need than on logistics. People will first decide whether you're worth volunteering for and then decide whether they can fit you into their schedule. The need you stress may be yours, your clientele's, or a perceived need/benefit of the volunteer.

- The Message is easily understood. The Message is intelligible and avoids jargon, unless it is included for a specific reason. The Message has been tested for ease of comprehension by someone other than the author of the Message. Remember: What Can be Misunderstood, Will Be.

- The Message gives a complete picture: problem, type of work, requirements, timeframe, person to talk with. The Message doesn't make the potential volunteer have to do any extra work in order to understand what is going on.

- The contact information for the Message gives the name of a person, preferably including their first name, not just the name of the agency. Volunteering is a personal decision and people like to talk with other people about it.
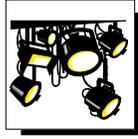
Recruiting Tools: Benefits of Volunteering

Volunteers have combinations of needs. The ability to keep volunteers motivated lies not only in knowing how to tap their own motivations, but in being able to figure out what combination of needs a particular volunteer has. One way to do that is to ask the volunteers periodically. Discuss their rating of the relative importance of the following factors:

- To gain knowledge of community problems
- To maintain skills no longer used otherwise
- To spend "quality time" with members of the family by volunteering together
- To get out of the house
- To make new friends
- To be with old friends who volunteer here
- To gain new skills
- To pay back
- To assuage guilt
- To feel useful
- To make business contacts
- To be part of a prestigious group
- To make a transition to a new life
- To get community recognition
- To fulfill a moral or religious duty
- To have fun
- To help those less fortunate
- To try out a new career
- To have fun
- To meet a challenge
- To improve the community
- To work with a certain client group
- To be in charge of something
- To be part of a group or a team
- To gain work experience to help get a job
- To meet important people in the community
- To gain status with my employer

Positive feelings of connectedness can be enhanced in volunteer programs by many leadership actions.

More Benefits of Volunteering

Benefits Agency-Wide
- Resume builder
- Community connection (professional networking, making friends)
- Community service hours (high school/college)
- Self-fulfillment/satisfaction
- Modeling good civic participation for children
- Skill enhancement in social service/community resources
- Learn more about resources available in your community

Family Economic Success
- Help working families increase their income – give families $$ (tax returns)
- Project oriented (beginning/end time)
- Learn how to become a certified tax preparer
- Enhance presentation skills
- Banks – CRI credits
- One-on-one contact with clients (direct service)
- Leadership skills/development
- Enhance/utilize Spanish

Child Assault Prevention Program
- Enhance presentation skills
- Work with children in a classroom environment
- Learn child/safety curriculum
- Leadership skills/development

Development Department
- Enhance presentation skills
- Develop fundraising skills
- Organizational skills

Recruiting Tools: Volunteer Commitment Letter

October XX, 2009

Dear XXX,

Thank you for your willingness to volunteer your services at the Family Resource Center.

Based on our previous discussions, your activities as a volunteer will involve _____

_____ *description of duties* _____ .

You will begin _____ *date* _____ and will continue as a volunteer through the completion of these projects. At the conclusion of these projects, we will discuss additional volunteer commitments depending on your preferences.

You have indicated that you can spend approximately _ hours per week on these activities.

The Family Resource Center agrees to provide you the resources, access to staff, expense reimbursement, and training and networking opportunities to ensure your successful completion of these projects.

We understand that your circumstances may change at any time, and we are happy to discuss any changes to this arrangement as may be needed. We are greatly appreciative of your willingness to share your expertise in these important projects.

If you have any questions or concerns during your time with us, please don't hesitate to let me know.

Sincerely,

Joan Jensen
Executive Director

Recruiting Tools: Orientation Checklist

Family Resource Center

Name

Position   Start Date

By	Date	Time	Check Off	Topic		Handouts
				Organization		
					Mission, History	
					Culture and philosophy	
					Confidentiality	Policy
					Green practices	see Policies
					Expectations	
				Overview of Programs -		
					CAPE	
					Family Economic Success	
					Parent Education	
					Drop-in Child Care	
					Home Visitation	
				Your Job and Department -		
					Job description and duties	
					Office layout	
					Personnel	List
					Office Tour and introductions	
				Personnel-		
					Personnel policies	Policies
					Safety & insurance	Policies
					File setup	Forms & info
					Background check	Forms & info
				Administrative -		
					Computers & Network	Passwords
					Phones and voice mail	Passwords
					E-mail & website	Passwords
					Keys & alarm system	Password
					Meetings, events	Calendar
					Conference room schedule	Calendar
					Supplies, forms	
					Office equipment	
				Meet the Staff -		
					Volunteers	
					Development	
					Program Managers	
					Admin	

				It's All About You!	Form

It's All about You/Es Todo de Ti

It's All About / Es Todo de:

_____date/fecha_____

Employee/nombre

- ■ What is your favorite soda flavor? ¿Qué es su refresco favorito?

- ■ What is your favorite candy? ¿Qué es su dulce favorito?

- ■ What is your favorite color? ¿Qué color prefiere?

- ■ What is your favorite restaurant? ¿Cuál es su restaurante favorito?

- ■ What is your favorite flavor of ice cream/sorbet? ¿Qué es su sabor favorito de helado/sorbete?

- ■ What type of flower do you like? ¿Qué tipo de flor le gusta?

- ■ What is your favorite kind of cookie? ¿Qué tipo de panecillo dulce prefiere?

- ■ What type of food do you like? ¿Qué tipo de comida prefiere?

- ■ What is your hobby? ¿Qué es su chifladura?

- ■ What is your favorite snack? ¿Qué clasé de antojito prefiere?

- ■ Do you collect anything special? ¿Collecciona algo de especial?

- ■ What is your favorite subject to read about? ¿Qué es su asunto favorito sobre que leer?

- ■ What is your favorite type of music? ¿Cuál es su tipo de música favorita?

- ■ What is your favorite store? ¿Qué tienda o almacen prefiere?

- ■ What is your favorite coffee or special beverage? ¿Cuál café o bebida especial prefiere?

- ■ If you could treat yourself to a gift under $25.00, what would it be?

- ■ ¿Si pudiera regalarse un presente que cuesta menos de 25$, que seria?

- ■ Would you prefer: 1) private recognition, 2) semi-private recognition, 3) public recognition, or 4) no preference?

- ■ ¿Qué prefiere – reconocimiento 1) privado, 2) semi-privado, 3) publico, o 4) sin prelación?

  - ✓ Please complete this form and turn in to your manager
  - ✓ Favor de llenar este papel y deselo al manejo

Volunteer Policy

Sample policy available in electronic format

7 Steps for Program Success

Seven steps to achieve effective volunteer support

1. Define why you need volunteers

Are you looking for volunteers to enhance the services that you provide, to strengthen your community involvement, to enrich your exposure to certain communities? Is there a genuine reason to use volunteers?

Every volunteer program must begin with an understanding of why your organization wants or needs volunteer support. Ensure that you have the support of your board of directors and senior administrators before embarking on a recruitment campaign. At the initial stage, it is also essential to establish desired outcomes for volunteer involvement. Establishing these outcome objectives early in the process will help to guide the types of volunteers that you recruit, and the way that you manage them once they have come on board.

2. Design valuable volunteer opportunities

By designing valuable volunteer assignments you provide volunteers with challenge and motivation for continued success. Lay out the responsibilities of each job. Plan training and support programs to facilitate volunteer learning and development, and ensure that volunteers are aware of the goals and outcome objectives for their involvement.

3. Recruit carefully

When you've designed your volunteer opportunities, target the appropriate audiences to recruit those who are truly interested in the project. Understand the characteristics of your existing team, and recruit volunteers to mirror this team. Be honest about the workload and time commitment involved in the project. Above all, ask for help but don't plead - you want volunteers who want to be there.

4. Screen, interview and place cautiously

Screening and interviewing potential volunteers facilitates their commitment to the organization or to the project at hand. It shows potential volunteers that you take both the project and their time seriously. Screening also gives you an opportunity to match qualifications and skills with your needs and the needs of your volunteers. An interview is also the best time to define availability and schedule activities that fit both the organization and volunteers.

5. Bring them on board with training

Comprehensive orientation and volunteer training programs give volunteers a feeling of belonging and status. It shows that your organization values them enough to make an investment in them and, again, helps to reinforce their commitment to the cause. Orientation also helps set the tone of the work area and allows volunteers to adapt more easily to the organization's surroundings.

As part of the volunteer training sessions, you should provide a general orientation to the organization, including a discussion of its mission and philosophy. Outline the organizational framework, and any codes of conduct that are enforced. Offer any project-specific training that is necessary to develop needed skills, and don't forget to tour the work area and point out the sometimes-not-so-obvious features like washrooms and water fountains.

6. Recognize. Recognize. Recognize.

Recognition programs show that your organization values volunteer support. They also provide a motivation for continuing commitment from your volunteers. Recognition should be both formal and informal, with events supported by the organization, as well as personal notes and communication. Don't forget to recognize volunteers publicly when newspaper or other media opportunities arise or when it's time to write the annual report again.

7. Follow-up effectively

A final element of a successful volunteer program is continual follow-up and evaluation. Effective follow-up provides feedback to volunteers and staff and opportunities to improve service to both. With a careful plan, and continual volunteer communication and training, it should be easy to evaluate your success and improve your program with time.

Article: Feedback & Evaluation

When people are working because they believe in the importance of the task, it is especially important to let them know when they succeed and when they fail.

Experienced leaders and directors of volunteer programs have observed over and over again that lack of feedback and direction can drain the energy from a volunteer program. Directly stating goals and holding people to reasonable standards in achieving them is essential to the continuing success of volunteer projects. The way the evaluation process is conducted may well be different when the subject is volunteer performance, but the need for doing it is no less strong.

Basic Guidelines for Giving Feedback

1. Clarity -- Be clear about what you want to say.
2. Emphasize the positive -- This isn't being collusive in the person's dilemma.
3. Be specific -- Avoid general comments and clarify pronouns such as "it," "that," etc.
4. Focus on behavior rather than the person.
5. Refer to behavior that can be changed.
6. Be descriptive rather than evaluative.
7. Own the feedback -- Use 'I' statements.
8. Generalizations -- Notice "all," "never," "always," etc., and ask to get more specificity -- often these words are arbitrary limits on behavior.
9. Be very careful with advice -- People rarely struggle with an issue because of the lack of some specific piece of information; often, the best help is helping the person to come to a better understanding of their issue, how it developed, and how they can identify actions to address the issue more effectively.

Why Evaluate Volunteers?

Rather than dreading the prospect of evaluation, the smart volunteer supervisor should realize two important facts:

1. Most volunteers want to do the best job that they can. The absence of feedback and assistance is both demeaning and disturbing to them.
2. Most volunteers will 'win' in assessment situations.

Failing to evaluate a volunteer sends a clear message that you don't care about the quality of the work being done, and that you don't care much about the volunteer. Both volunteers who know they aren't doing well and those who think they should be congratulated for good work will think less of the volunteer effort, and of you, if evaluations are not conducted.

There are two basic reasons for conducting a volunteer evaluation:

1. To help the volunteer work closer to their potential.
2. To help the organization better involve volunteers.

And there is one key reason for not conducting evaluations: To deal with all the small performance problems that supervisors have been ignoring since the last evaluation. A periodic volunteer evaluation can help shape the overall performance of the volunteer, but it cannot and should not replace the day-to-day on-site coaching and supervision that must occur.

Setting Up the Evaluation System

There are a number of ways to develop an evaluation system. The first issue to be faced is what to call it. Here are some possibilities:

- Evaluation system
- Performance assessment system
- Work appraisal
- Progress planning
- Feedback

Clearly these have different connotations. Our suggestion is that you call the system by the same terminology as is used for paid staff, since this will send a clear message about job equality. You should also attempt to make the processes of the system congruent, if not identical, to that utilized with staff.

Whatever system you create should contain the following elements:

- A policy on performance appraisal and review.
- An initial trial period for all volunteers, before they are officially accepted and enrolled by the agency.
- A system for developing and maintaining current and accurate job descriptions for each volunteer.
- A periodic scheduled evaluation meeting between the volunteer and their supervisor to discuss job performance and satisfaction.
- A method for reviewing commitments to change made during the evaluation meeting.

This system should be explained to each volunteer during their initial orientation session, and should be reviewed with each staff person who will be supervising volunteers.

Conducting the Evaluation

The evaluation session should be a two-way meeting. It is your chance to talk about the volunteer's performance, giving either praise or suggestions for improvement. It should also be the volunteer's opportunity to talk about how their participation can be enhanced, which might even include discussing their moving to a new volunteer position.

The easiest method of conducting the evaluation session is to follow the RAP method:

- Review the past.
- Analyze the present.
- Plan the future.
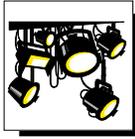
Article: Retaining Volunteers

There is no point in being good at recruitment if you cannot keep volunteers coming back. Recruitment is a solution to the problem of not having enough volunteers; retention is a way to avoid the problem altogether.

Motivation

As has been emphasized throughout this book, volunteer programs are fueled by the motivation of the volunteers and the staff of the organization. Problems of volunteer retention can usually be traced to problems of motivation.

A motivated volunteer is one who wants to do the job that needs to be done in the spirit and within the guidelines of the organization. People behave in motivated ways when the work satisfies a need of theirs. Children, for example, are motivated to open birthday presents because doing so meets a psychological need. Starting here, you correctly see that volunteer motivation comes from inside the volunteer, stemming from a set of needs which are satisfied by doing things which are found to be productive.

When you encounter volunteers who are not behaving as you would like, you may label them "unmotivated," but actually this is incorrect. So-called unmotivated people are actually just as motivated as a motivated person. Their behavior meets their motivational needs. However, for reasons you will explore in this chapter, those needs are met in counterproductive ways. They behave in the way they do because doing so is more satisfying than the behavior you would like them to choose. In other words, people behave the way they do for a particular reason.

All Behavior is Motivated

Sometimes, "unmotivated" behavior is caused by frustration. If a volunteer has a high need for achievement, for example, and he sees little to accomplish or "win" in his job, he may choose to set up a win-lose situation with those in authority. For example, a volunteer might go to the board of directors every time there was a disagreement, seeking to get the decision overturned. This so-called "unmotivated" behavior meets the volunteer's need for achievement. It provides a challenge. It creates an opportunity to win.

When we talk about motivating volunteers, we are talking about creating a volunteer experience that allows an individual to meet their motivational needs in ways that are productive for the organization and satisfying for the individual. You remove barriers to motivation by designing satisfying work experiences and create systems that allow the volunteer to meet her needs. You make sure, in other words, that volunteers receive their motivational paycheck for the valuable contributions they make to the work of our organization. This is the essence of volunteer retention.

Because each volunteer has a different combination of needs, each will do best in different working conditions. Some volunteers may be highly motivated by gaining job experience, whereas others may be highly motivated by the desire to meet new people. Still others may have a burning passion to do something to contribute to the cause. For the first type, you need to make sure that they have the opportunity to learn the skills they want to learn. The second must be placed in a work setting where they can work with others. The third needs a job that makes a meaningful contribution to the organization's mission.

This is further complicated by the fact that a volunteer's needs may change over time. For example, a volunteer may work well on an independent project. It satisfies her need to achieve something meaningful. Then her husband dies. Her need to be with others may suddenly become much more important than the need to achieve something meaningful. To satisfy this need and retain the volunteer, you might transfer her to a group project.

Retaining Volunteers

The key to retaining volunteers is to make sure they are getting their particular complex of motivational needs met through their volunteer experience. Another way to say this is that if the volunteer experience makes the volunteers feel good, then they will continue to want to volunteer. When this is occurring across the volunteer program, a positive, enthusiastic climate is created which, in turn, encourages people to continue to volunteer.

An environment most likely to make a volunteer feel good is one which bolsters the volunteer's self-esteem. When the work experience boosts a person's self esteem, she feels good about her job, be it paid or volunteer work. She looks forward to going to the workplace.

Connectedness

When people feel connected, they feel a sense of belonging, a sense of being part of a relationship with others. In a highly mobile society, where friends and loved ones may live hundreds of miles away and the next door neighbor is sometimes a stranger, this need is often unmet, leaving people with a sense of isolation, dissatisfaction, and loneliness.

A sense of identification with a work group can meet this need, producing healthier, happier individuals. In our seminars over the past four years, we have surveyed more than 1500 individuals who at one time in their lives felt a positive sense of connectedness. The following factors are most often mentioned as producing this:

- A common goal
- Common values
- Mutual respect
- Mutual trust
- Sense that a group member's weaknesses are made up for by another group member's strengths

Positive feelings of connectedness can be enhanced in volunteer programs by many leadership actions, some of which have been referred to previously:

1. The Volunteer Program Manager can work with staff to make sure that there is a common purpose or goal for the team. Nothing is as fundamental to a team's effectiveness as a common sense of what they are trying to achieve together. Both staff and volunteers should see themselves as equal partners in pursuing this goal.

2. In developing jobs for volunteers (other than for one-shot volunteers whom you don't expect to retain) you should avoid setting performance standards that are too low. If the expectations are too easy to meet, people will not feel special about their participation. Volunteers should not have lower standards than paid staff.

3. The Volunteer Program Manager should insure that staff and volunteers are treated equally. Be on the lookout for inadvertent behavior that makes volunteers feel excluded. A common example is that volunteers are not invited to staff meetings, not because they are deliberately excluded but because no one thought to give them the option to attend. Such a situation can make volunteers feel like second-class citizens.

4. When working with staff to develop jobs for volunteers, the Volunteer Program Manager should make sure that volunteers (or teams of volunteers) have a sense of ownership of a client or project. Fragmentation of ownership generates blame and criticism – which is the enemy of connectedness.

5. The Volunteer Program Manager should encourage leaders to celebrate the accomplishments of volunteers in context of their contribution to the goals of the group. Recognition must be consistent so that people do not suspect favoritism. Team accomplishments can also be celebrated, giving equal credit to all team members.

Leaders of volunteer programs should be on the look out for comments people make about the expectations they have of themselves and their co-workers. If people say things like "I'm just a volunteer," or "What do they expect for free?" it should cause alarm bells to ring. People's self-esteem drops when they regard themselves as part of a below average group. This negative sense of connectedness leads to high turnover of staff and volunteers. When they hear negative statements such as this, leaders should try to generate positive ideas for improving the situation. They might ask: "What makes you say that? What can you do to improve this situation? What kind of place would you want to work? What can you do to make this organization more like the kind of place you want it to be?"

Another way to promote interaction is to involve people in the decision-making process. When each group member feels she has a say in deciding the unit's strategy, her feeling of connectedness is enhanced. In such meetings, it is important that you do not let your own biases and positions be known in advance. Group members who know what the person in authority wants will tend to support that position. If you already know the way you want to go, you might as well say so.

People's sense of connectedness is enhanced by engaging in new experiences together. By insisting passionately on constant improvement, leaders encourage people to try out new ways of doing things. If these are done by teams, the sense of connectedness grows. So,
- **Give Them a Great Place to Work**
- **Give Them What They Don't Have**
- **Give Them a Good Time**

If All Else Fails, Do Things Correctly
The final answer to volunteer retention and recognition is quite simple – operate a well-managed program. Volunteers, like the rest of us, tend to make rational decisions about the allocation of their time; they will strive to spend it in settings where they obtain value. This value may be the social aspects, the work objectives, the situational settings, or a combination of all of these. Programs that enable volunteers to do good work, in a good setting, with good people are uniquely positioned to provide this sense of value and accomplishment, and often can do so in ways that paid work settings are not able to provide. The principles of good volunteer management described in other chapters outline the actions that can enable a volunteer program to provide this positive environment.
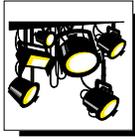
Article: Volunteer Conflict Resolution

By Steve McCurley & Rick Lynch

How to Generate Conflict Between Paid Staff and Volunteers

- Don't involve staff in the decisions as to if and how to utilize volunteers within the agency. Everybody loves a surprise.

- Don't plan in advance the job descriptions or support and supervision systems for the volunteers. These things will work themselves out if you just give them time.

- Accept everyone who volunteers for a position, regardless of whether you think they are over-qualified or under-qualified. Quantity is everything.

- Assume that anyone who volunteers can pick up whatever skills or knowledge they need as they go along.

- If you do insist on training volunteers, be sure not to include the staff with whom the volunteers will be working in the design of the training.

- Assume that your staff already knows everything it needs about proper volunteer utilization. Why should they receive any better training than you did?

- Don't presume to recognize the contributions that volunteers make to the agency. After all, volunteers are simply too valuable for words.

- Don't reward staff who work well with volunteers. They are only doing their job.

- Don't let staff supervise the volunteers who work with them. As a volunteer director, you should be sure to retain all authority over 'your' volunteers.

- Try to suppress any problems that come to your attention. Listening only encourages complaints.

- In case of disputes, operate on the principle that "The Staff is Always Right." Or operate on the principle of "My Volunteers, Right or Wrong." This is no time for compromise.

Dealing with Conflict

1. Clarify what the problem is; clarify what the problem is not

2. Identify any commons goals, values, assumptions

3. Experiment until you find an approach that gets through effectively

4. Keep conversations focused on issues, not personalities

5. Use simple wording to explain your position. Practice your position in advance until you know it well and can say it effectively

6. Rehearse positive interaction before the meeting

7. Keep your attitude positive

8. Clarify what you want/need from the other person -- distinguish between the two

9. Watch out for old attitudes that are interfering with your current effort

10. Make sure your body and verbal language are in agreement

11. Don't get sidetracked into irrelevant arguments

12. Speak in private if a difficult issue must be addressed

13. Don't take their dislike personally

14. Don't discuss them with other people -- the walls have both ears and mouths

15. Set a limit on what you will put up with and stick to it

16. Remember that you are not God. 'Winning' may only mean arranging a tolerable working relationship, not solving all their personality defects

17. Treat them nice, anyway – it may make them like you or it will, at worst, simply confuse them
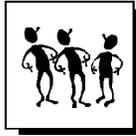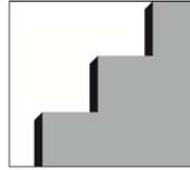
Next Steps

What is the very first action step you will take based on your participation in this workshop:

- As a Board member?

- As the Executive Director?

Take the Next Step

About NewLevel Group...

Who we are

NewLevel Group is a values-driven consulting firm supporting the work of socially responsible organizations and their leaders in advancing missions that benefit people, profits, and planet.

Our team is made up of seasoned professionals who look at challenges from various perspectives honed from decades of experience in the business and nonprofit sectors. We plan as well as implement, never losing sight of our goal to deliver your desired results.

What we do

First and foremost, we listen. We listen to you, your board, your clients, and your colleagues to fully understand the challenges you face. Then, we form a team that will partner with you to identify your goals, outline strategies to achieve them, and, if needed, work with you to implement the tactics.

How we do it

Our approach to helping organizations improve their results reflects our shared values of collaboration, commitment, and community. We are different from other consulting and management firms in several significant ways:

- We work collaboratively; not just treating symptoms, but finding solutions for the underlying causes.
- We implement; we don't just create pretty plans, but roll up our sleeves to get the job done.
- We're focused on results; a good process is important, but the outcome is what really matters.

Supporting the work of social impact organizations and their leaders in advancing missions that benefit people, planet, and profits

Strategic Planning ● Marketing & Communications ● Research ● Sustainability ● Meeting Facilitation ● Management & Governance Development ● Organizational Effectiveness ● Nonprofit and Foundation Management

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