Tapping into Talent

Engaging Volunteers in Higher Responsibility Roles

Activity

How have you involved volunteers in higher responsibility roles?

A Framework for Volunteerism in the 21st Century

Expanded Role Volunteers Characteristics

Includes one more of these characteristics:
- Self-directed
- Taps talents
- Broad scope of duties
- High level of accountability and responsibility
- Entrepreneurial
- Flexibility
- Freedom to determine means to achieve the outcome

Typical Roles

- Doers Plus – high level of hands on tasks
- Managers – people who oversee, direct or coordinate a function
- Leaders – People who create a vision, set a direction, stimulate others to achieve results

Volunteers in expanded roles demands a new mindset

- A new staff / volunteer relationship
- A new type of training
- Staff cannot be threatened by the volunteer’s abilities
- Agency needs “buy in” at every level
Research
NCOA’s study found
- The Return On Investment with volunteers in higher responsibility roles was 8 to 1


ROI was highest when
- Volunteers used in teams
- Agencies used volunteers to train and coach others
- Volunteers developed their own work plans
- Got volunteer input on program development
- Tapped volunteer talent to enhance staff skills
- Managed volunteer performance as if they were staff

NCOA Study
What agency positions benefitted the most from volunteers in higher responsibility roles?
- Senior Executives
- Volunteer coordinators
- Project Leaders / Managers
- Accounting / finance professionals
- Marketing professionals

Deloitte study findings
- 72% of nonprofits believe they could increase their organization’s social impact if they could get contract and consulting resources on a pro bono basis.
- More than 9 in 10 nonprofits surveyed say they need more pro bono support
- One-fourth (24%) have no plans to use skills-based volunteers or pro bono support in any capacity in 2009.

MAVA Research
80% reported involving volunteers in project management roles
Of those:
- 42% involved 10+ volunteers in those roles
- 75% of volunteer project managers supervised other volunteers
- Good follow through was most important quality for project manager

Research results available at www.mavanetwork.org in December 2011

Steps for involving volunteers in higher responsibility roles
Planning

- Identify roles to involve volunteers
- Identify projects and build readiness for involving volunteers in projects
- Draft project descriptions or higher level volunteer roles
- Address - who will volunteers report to?

Position Description

See University of MN Extension
Master Gardener Community Garden
Resource Description

Project Description

A description needs to be written for each project. While some things from a traditional description remain, there are some new items to consider:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional</th>
<th>New</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Position Name</td>
<td>Title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reports to</td>
<td>Purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position Overview</td>
<td>Key responsibilities of the assignment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Skills Requirements</td>
<td>Desired skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Requirements</td>
<td>Developed in the position</td>
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<tr>
<td>Competencies Developed</td>
<td>Related to the position</td>
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<tr>
<td>Benefits</td>
<td>Desired qualifications</td>
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<td>Additional Requirements</td>
<td>Initial impact of the assignment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Financial Support</td>
<td>Sustain outcomes of the assignment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Company</td>
<td>Given in the position</td>
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<tr>
<td>Benefits</td>
<td>Given in the position</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>Developmental time and interest</td>
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Adapted from “Boomer Volunteer Engagement” Collaborate Today, Thrive Together by Jill Fixler and Sandie Eichberg, with Gail Lorenz, CVA

How to find volunteers for higher responsibility roles

Find skills from within organizations’ volunteer pool
- Record workplace skills of volunteers during initial interview/application.
- Tap into what staff who work volunteers know about the volunteer skills.

Promote your interest in higher level volunteers and be ready to capitalize on who comes your way

How to Find Corporate Volunteers

Build Partnerships
- Assess your organization’s needs
- Research possible partners
- Collaborate
- Compromise
- Celebrate

Corporate Volunteers

Factors to Ensure Success
- Set up clear roles and responsibilities
  - Sound support structure in place
- Utilize adult service learning model
  - Team approach
- Determine if financial resources are available
- Be clear on measures of success
  - Feedback is essential
- Deliver what you promise
How to Recruit Higher Responsibility Volunteers

- Interview questions may differ
- Intake process may differ
- Orientation process may differ

Complexities of Higher Responsibility Volunteers

- Staff and leadership buy-in
- Program scope creep
- Time commitment to manage
- Culture differences between nonprofit and corporate

Obtaining organizational buy-in

- Identify where in your organization is a good place to start
- Find your champions
- Market your successes

Activity

On own
- Think of a higher responsibility position or project for your organization
- Language to use in description

Activity

Group
- Identify 2-3 best ideas for projects or higher responsibility roles
- Key words from descriptions
- Key benefits volunteers would receive

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