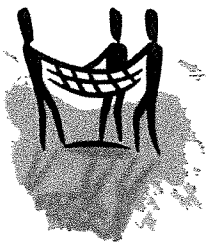
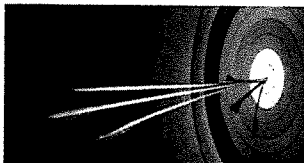


Cutting Edge Strategies For Engaging Volunteers to Meet Mission



© Minnesota Association for Volunteer Administration (MAVA) 2013

Volunteers and Mission



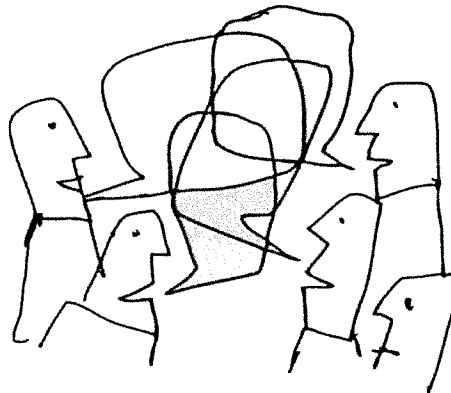
Action Plan

- How are volunteers currently contributing to your mission and/or strategic plan?
- How could they contribute more?



Share with a neighbor

What changes are you seeing in who is volunteering and what they are seeking?



What does the research say?

Changes in who is volunteering

- 45% More inquiries from **students and interns**
- 31 % More inquiries from **Boomers**
- 31% More inquiries from **young adults**
- 31% More inquiries from **retirees**
- 24% More inquiries from **job seekers**

"The Status of Minnesota's Volunteer Programs in a Shifting Environment 2014"



Changes in what volunteers are seeking

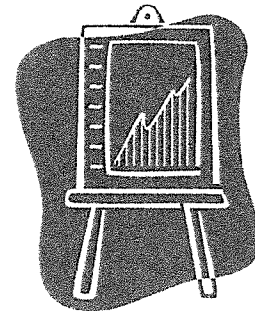
- 55% Increased interest in **short term volunteering**
- 37% Increased interest in developing or using **workplace skills**
- 32% Increased interest in volunteering on **evenings and weekends**

Volunteers in new roles

- 66% Involved volunteers in **new roles and positions**
- 45% Involved volunteers in **leadership positions or managing projects**

Increased reliance on volunteers

- 43% of programs reported increasing their reliance on volunteers to meet mission
- 53% predicted that their organization will continue to increase their reliance on volunteers in the future



"The Status of Minnesota's Volunteer Programs in a Shifting Environment 2014"

Three of the top trends found in MAVA's 2014 study remained top trends in the 2018 study:

- 47% seeing increased interest in short term volunteering
- 35% seeing increased interest in volunteering on evenings and weekends
- 30% seeing increased interest in using workplace skills

Volunteers seeming busy emerged as another top trend with 48% of organizations reporting seeing this increase over the past year.

Organizations reported that fewer inquiries about volunteering from the Traditional generation but inquiries from other generations of volunteers are growing.

- 35% seeing more inquiries from Boomers
- 31% seeing more inquiries from high school and college students
- 31% seeing more inquiries from Millennials
- 27% seeing fewer inquiries from the Traditional generation



Volunteer managers are proactively developing and implementing strategies to address complex changes in volunteerism.

- 66% reported involving volunteers in new roles and positions
- 60% increased communication with volunteers
- 57% increased use of social media
- 56% used technology in new ways to communicate with and track volunteers
- 53% streamlined/standardized practices for volunteer intake, screening, placement or training
- 51% reinvigorated volunteer recruitment
- 43% evaluated impact of work done by volunteers
- 43% increased scheduling flexibility for volunteers
- 42% reported involving volunteers in leadership positions or managing projects
- 41% added volunteer positions designed specifically for shorter term volunteers
- 40% stepped up internal advocacy to gain support for volunteer engagement
- 38% trained staff on how to lead and support volunteers



Conclusion of 2018 Study

- The MAVA 2018 Trends survey found that volunteerism is still in a period of change that requires organizations to reexamine how they are engaging volunteers and to update volunteer engagement practices. However, we also found that trends are more consistent than they had been over the past ten years of rapid change in the field. Although the trends appear to be stabilizing, now is not the time to become complacent, since we still have a lot to do to address the trends of volunteers seeking shorter term, more flexible and skill based opportunities, and we identified emerging trends that will require innovative responses.



Fundamental Strategies

Essential for the new volunteer workforce



STRATEGY 1

Design volunteer roles to involve volunteers in a wide variety of roles, including higher responsibility roles and shorter term assignments. Closely align volunteer roles with organization's mission.

WHY: Because of changes in who is volunteering and what they are seeking.

Fundamental



Handouts 1 and 2

Design broader range of volunteer roles

DO:

1. Offer a wide range of choices of volunteer positions
2. Include skills based volunteer opportunities
3. Include positions that impact the heart of the organization's mission
4. Offer some positions that are short term
5. Offer volunteers projects where you agree on outcomes and they take charge of it from there



STRATEGY 2

Assess volunteer recruitment needs and activate recruitment efforts as needed.

WHY: Because the pool of who is available to volunteer is changing.

Fundamental



Handout 3

Assess and update recruitment

DO:

1. Assess:
 - Is current volunteer recruitment bringing the volume and type of volunteers you need?
 - Do you involve volunteers from a range of ages and cultural backgrounds?
2. Target volunteer recruitment to who you need
3. Place volunteer recruitment prominently on website with images of the volunteers you seek and use online volunteer recruitment sites like VolunteerMatch



STRATEGY 3

Update recognition for today's volunteers.

WHY: Because today's volunteer workforce is changing in how they like to be recognized.

Fundamental



Handout 4

Update volunteer recognition

DO:

- Create a culture of staff thanking volunteers
- Don't count on a party as your only means of recognition
- Send handwritten thank you notes
- Offer professional development as a form of recognition
- Tell volunteers the impact of their work as a form of recognition



Emerging Strategies

Critical ways to get ahead of the changes



STRATEGY 4

Standardize the volunteer program.

WHY: To improve efficiency.



Standardize the volunteer program

DO:

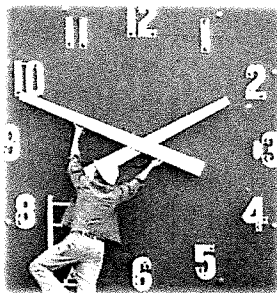
- Develop a volunteer handbook and consistent policies for volunteers
- Standardize volunteer recruitment and orientation
- Involve volunteers in volunteer recruitment and orientation



STRATEGY 5

Maximize use of technology in the volunteer program.

WHY: To save time.



Emerging



Use technology to save time

DO:

- Streamline orientation/training
 - Example: "Streamlined orientation to include an online portion the volunteer can do on their own time, at home prior to attending orientation session."
- Streamline communication
 - Example: "Emailed parent volunteers with information about upcoming events instead of sending a paper copy home."
- Streamline volunteer tracking
 - Example: "Implementing the use of the Volgistics database system for tracking and communicating with volunteers."



STRATEGY 6

Measure impact through volunteers.

WHY: Volunteers want to know they are making a difference and funders and stakeholders expect you to demonstrate impact.

Emerging



Handout 5

Measure impact through volunteers

DO:

- Understand the impact your volunteers are having – the changes they are making in people’s lives and the community. Think about the “so what” that volunteers accomplish.
- Attend a MAVA workshop on volunteer program evaluation
- See resources on program evaluation in Handout 5



Maximization Strategies

Lessons learned from organizations that meet most of their mission through volunteers

Handout 6



STRATEGY 7

Act on volunteers' ideas and put volunteers in positions to identify needs and solutions.

WHY: Increases volunteers' engagement and brings good ideas to the organization.

maximization



Act on volunteers' ideas

DO:

- Set up advisory committee of volunteers for the volunteer program
- When recruiting Board members, include volunteers
- Include volunteers in strategic planning
- Create an openness and be ready to act on ideas that will move the organization forward



STRATEGY 8

Define the role of staff to support volunteers and put in place a good organizational structure with well defined roles for volunteers.

WHY: Good communication is key to effectiveness.

maximization



Define the role of staff to support volunteers and develop well defined roles for volunteers

DO:

- Realize that this is more than just recruiting more volunteers and involves restructuring staff roles to support volunteers
- Develop clear roles, expectations and position descriptions for volunteers to be well organized and avoid stress for staff and volunteers

***New way of thinking:
"Volunteers lead, staff support"***



STRATEGY 9

Develop a positive organizational culture focused on impact through volunteers.

WHY: Create trust in volunteers and be positioned to maximize their contributions.

maximization



Prioritize on action plan

- Which three to five of these strategies are most critical to advance volunteer engagement in your organization now?

NOW
 LATER



3 Groups Brainstorm Activity

- Come up with new volunteer positions for:
 - More closely aligning volunteers with mission
 - Involving volunteers in higher responsibility roles
 - Involving short term volunteers
- Identify tips for recruiting from each of these groups:
 - Interns/students/young adults
 - Boomers
 - Job seekers
- Decide how you can use technology to streamline:
 - Data tracking
 - Communication
 - Recruitment
 - Recognition



Obtain Organizational Buy In



Handout 7

Steps for Organizational Buy-In

#1 - Listen and learn

- Ask questions
- Identify potential obstacles



Steps for Organizational Buy-In

#2 - Identify your champions

On action plan:

- Who are your current champions?
- Who would be strategic champions you could develop into that role?



Steps for Organizational Buy-In

3 – Develop your case statement

On action plan:

- Who needs to know what?

Breakdown of a Case Statement

- What is the situation
- Why is the situation occurring
- What evidence do you have
- How will you address the situation



Steps for Organizational Buy-In

#4 – Strategize how to build momentum for the change

#4b – If not successful the first time, regroup and try again

If you did not get the results you wanted, evaluate changes in messages and who to involve and TRY AGAIN



Wrap Up

On Action Plan:

- List two items to do this week
- List three items to do in next three months



Handouts

Cutting Edge Strategies for Engaging Volunteers to Meet Mission

Handout 1: Designing Volunteer Roles

Handout 2: Six Ways to Restructure Volunteer Opportunities to Appeal to Volunteers Seeking More Flexible and Shorter Term Opportunities

Handout 3: Targeted Volunteer Recruitment Worksheet

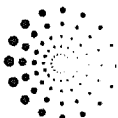
Handout 4: Volunteer Recognition Ideas from Minnesota Colleague

Handout 5: Resources on Volunteer Program Evaluation

Handout 6: Lessons Learned from Volunteer Centered Organizations

Handout 7: Obtaining Buy-In for Organizational Changes with Volunteer Engagement

*Thank you to the Otto Bremer Foundation and Bush Foundation
for funding this initiative*



Handout 1 Designing Volunteer Roles

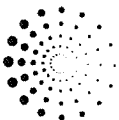
Identify new roles for volunteers at your organization

Exercise to do at your organization. Ask main volunteers and staff to:

1. Identify tasks they're doing now that they would like to give to someone else so they would have more time to do priority work.
2. Envision what volunteers could do that would help the organization more fully meet the mission and/or accomplish the strategic plan.
3. From this list, what are possible volunteer positions?

Format for position descriptions

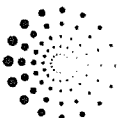
- Position title
- Position overview
- Key responsibility
- Impact of assignment
- Training provided/needed
- Support
- Commitment (time, duration and location)
- Skills and qualifications
- Benefits to the volunteer



Handout 2
**Six Ways to Restructure Volunteer Opportunities to
Appeal to Volunteers Seeking More Flexible and Shorter Term Opportunities**

1. **Substitution.** If it just has to be done every day, week or month, try creating the position of *substitute*: volunteers who are willing to be on-call and fill-in temporarily for volunteers in traditional jobs as their schedules permit.
2. **Job Sharing.** Why not assign two volunteers to the same opportunity? They may be given the same responsibilities or different ones depending on their individual skills. You might identify the two volunteers to job share or you could ask the new volunteer to recruit a job-sharing friend. The volunteers follow a prearranged schedule or work it out among themselves week by week.
3. **Rotation.** With this option four volunteers might take turns filling a volunteer assignment, each working for a period of just three months out of the year. Such an arrangement might work well for snowbirds or seasonal workers.
4. **Segmentation.** Can a labor intensive position be broken down into more manageable short-term opportunities? For example, a special event coordinator might be replaced by several short-term volunteers each working on one piece of the overall work plan.
5. **Team Volunteering.** Assign multiple volunteers to the same client, each having a specialized function. For example, instead of just one volunteer being assigned to a homebound senior, a care team is created. Perhaps one volunteer likes giving emotional support, another handling finances and a third doing housecleaning. No one volunteer has to do it all, making the load lighter for everyone.
6. **Telecommuting.** In this scenario, a volunteer provides the service from home or some other off-site location using technology. A good example of the application of this strategy is in the area of mentoring. School-based mentoring can be a fairly inflexible assignment. However, volunteers who cannot go into the school on a regular basis can still participate through e-mentoring, via email or video conferencing. Whether the volunteer is at work, overseas on vacation or at home, all they need to do is to get on their laptop to connect with their mentee. E-mentoring is not a replacement for face-to-face mentoring but it can be a way to involve a greater range of volunteers in the experience

From "Creating Boomer-friendly Volunteer Opportunities: Restructuring Existing Opportunities" by D. Scott Martin.



Handout 3 Targeted Volunteer Recruitment Worksheet

Volunteer job description (summary):

Skills and qualities needed to perform this job:

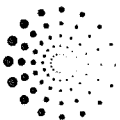
What types of people are most apt to have these qualities? (age, gender, educational level, experiences - what types of people have made the best volunteers in this position previously?)

What are the best sources for finding my needed volunteer(s)? (service clubs, corporations, colleges, youth clubs, etc.)

What techniques or methods would be most appropriate to gain access to them? (friend or colleague to personally ask, speak to Rotary, talk to classes at the local college, PSA on teen radio station, etc.)

What benefits will these volunteers receive by doing this job? (i.e. what exchange are we offering them: work experience, networking opportunities, making a difference?)

Who is the best person to do the recruitment and why?



Handout 5 Resources on Volunteer Program Evaluation

Books

Eystad, Melissa. Editor **Measuring the Difference Volunteers Make: A Guide to Outcome Evaluation for Volunteer Program Managers.**

Ellis, Susan J. **Volunteer Management Audit**, Energize Inc., 2003. (Order at <https://www.energizeinc.com/store>)

McCurley, Steve and Sue Vineyard. **Measuring Up: Assessment Tools for Volunteer Programs**, Heritage Arts, 1997. (Order at <https://www.energizeinc.com/store>)

Articles and Downloads

Graff, Linda, "Recognizing the Value of Volunteer Work"
<http://www.lindagraff.ca/Past%20Musings/Musing%20-%20Reconceptualizing%20The%20Value%20Of%20Volunteers.pdf>

Cravens, Jayne. "What Are Your Volunteers Saying?" e-Volunteerism Journal, Vol 111, Issue 2, Jan-March 2003. (www.e-Volunteerism.com)

Goodrow, Tony "Calculating the ROI of Your Volunteer Program – It's Time to Turn Things Upside Down," e-Volunteerism, Oct. 2010, <http://www.e-volunteerism.com/volume-xi-issue-1-october-2010/feature-articles/888>

Keyboard Roundtable. "Is Assigning a financial Value to Volunteering a Good Idea? Vol 111, Issue 2, Jan-Mar 2003. (www.e-Volunteerism.com)

McCurley, Steve, "Valuing Volunteer Time". e-Volunteerism Journal, Vol 1, Issue 2, Winter 2001. (www.e-Volunteerism.com)

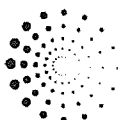
"Making It Count: How to Measure the Impact of Volunteerism," Starbucks Coffee Company, January 2011, [http://missionmeasurement.com/files/Making%20It%20Count%20-%20Measuring%20Volunteerism MM Starbucks Jan2011.pdf](http://missionmeasurement.com/files/Making%20It%20Count%20-%20Measuring%20Volunteerism%20MM%20Starbucks%20Jan2011.pdf)

Web Sites

<https://independentsector.org/value-of-volunteer-time-2018/> - Independent Sector's, "The Value of Volunteer Time"

<http://www.pointsoflight.org/tag/reimagining-service> - Reimagining Service supports and disseminates research aimed at highlighting effective volunteer engagement practices and policies and their impact on the core mission of the organization

<http://performwell.org/> - Urban Institute's Perform Well aims to provides information and tools to measure program quality and outcomes



Hand Out 4 Volunteer Recognition Ideas from Minnesota Colleagues

Thank yous

- Keep a log of when you hear a volunteer has done something especially good. Then call, e-mail or send a note to the volunteer to commend them.
- Send personal handwritten cards
- "Thank You" said daily

Small gifts

- Give out candy bars with a note related to candy such as for Tootsie Rolls - "Appreciate the role you play in our success" or with a mint "You are worth a mint"
- Goody treasure bag at work (i.e. candy, pencils, etc.)
- Pictures, certificates, personal achievements

Recognition when volunteering

- Have ribbons for the volunteers to wear at work to draw attention to them
- Communicate birthday/accomplishment to other staff and volunteers so that they are aware to offer congratulations

Personal attention

- Send birthday cards
- Pick a nice e-card, then send it out to all the volunteers on their birthdays
- Get well/sympathy cards
- Seek personal moments
- Anniversary card (when they started)
- At anniversary, call and talk about how their volunteering is going

Public attention

- Do public acknowledgement
- Have a "Volunteer Hall of Fame"
- Take a picture and post for all to see
- Highlight volunteers in newsletter
- Nominate volunteers for awards

Extra responsibility

- Ask volunteers who do an especially nice job to mentor newer volunteers
- Promote to more challenging tasks

Social opportunities

- Offer opportunities for group interaction
- Provide lunch and a chance to visit with other volunteers

Learning

- Offer training
- Send to a conference

Nice working conditions

- Providing a welcoming atmosphere
- Provide them with their own work space
- Access to equipment, and technology needed and the training required
- Name tags
- Introduce to all
- Provide treats daily

Share organizational success

- Send e-mails when organization is in the media to look for it
- Let know about organizational successes

For a project

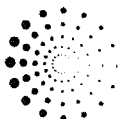
- Include results in a thank you card and in a newsletter
- Make sure paid staff are aware of the results of the project
- Present them with a special specific recognition based on that project
- Separate rewards at project intervals and upon completion of project goals
- Team incentive/friendly competition

When other staff are the direct supervisor

- Make up a chart for supervisor of times to check in with volunteers (45 days after start, six months and anniversary)

To learn what would like

- Use SurveyMonkey to ask volunteers what they would like for recognition
- Ask in initial interview



Handout 7

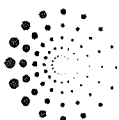
Obtaining Buy-In for Organizational Changes with Volunteer Engagement

Many leaders of volunteers understand the changes needed to more fully engage volunteers in their organization. However, they realize the changes will only happen if the organization buys into the opportunities presented by today's volunteers, and is willing to change to new forms of volunteer involvement. Approaches to consider for obtaining organizational buy-in:

- Find opportunities to learn more about specific challenges staff are facing to build your understanding of their perspectives and to create the working relationship for implementing change.
- Run ideas by staff you trust and who trust you to get their input/suggestions to build your case.
- Anticipate staff resistance and be prepared to share benefits for the organization.
- Identify possible barriers to the changes needed to more fully involve volunteers and strategize ways to overcome the barriers.
- Identify who in the organization needs to know how to better involve volunteers.
- Know your audience and customize your message.
 - Executive level can help build an environment/culture of volunteerism in the organization.
 - Middle management level can make or break your efforts. Need to demonstrate impact/value volunteers can bring to accomplishing a specific outcome. They are usually concerned about the bottom line.
 - Supervisors/line staff need to be involved in the planning and development of the new opportunities with you. You can guide the creative process in order to incorporate the components of a quality opportunity.

Asking questions:

- Talk with your Executive Director, a member of the management staff, or a Board member (whichever is the most appropriate for the organization) to ask:
 - How do you see volunteers impacting mission the most?
 - How could volunteers have more of an impact on mission?
 - What is coming up for the organization and how volunteers might help?
- Prepare for focused conversations with staff. Use "discovery" questions for a focused conversation.
 - Permission: Would it be all right if I asked you some work-related questions?
 - Fact Finding: What projects are not being completed due to staffing resources?
 - Feeling Finding: What do you believe will be the impact of the decision?
 - Best/Least: What seems to be working well? What would you change?
 - Magic Wand: If you could snap your fingers and fix everything, what would be different?
 - Tell-me-more: Can you tell me more about the results you are looking for?
 - Catch-all: What else should I ask you about?
 - Third Party: One of the managers in another area feels that managing new volunteers is a key issue, what do you think?
 - Paired: Can you tell me the development target for the team and what it will mean to the organization's bottom line?
 - Checking: If I understand you correctly, your greatest concerns are...?



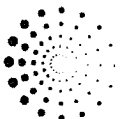
Handout 6

Lessons Learned from Volunteer-Centered Organizations

Minnesota Association for Volunteer Administration (MAVA) leader Judie Russell has pondered a question for years of how organizations that historically have made the decision to deliver most of their services through volunteers are different than organizations that deliver services primarily through staff, with a volunteer department as an add on. Now, when the pressures of tight budgets and increased demand for service have created openness in some organizations to engage volunteers in new ways, the time seemed right to explore this question for strategies useful to organizations trying to rely on volunteers in new ways. MAVA gained many insights from several focus group discussions with organizations that deliver the majority of services through volunteers, which are outlined below.

Factors for success in delivering most of services through volunteers

- The value of volunteers is embedded in the organizational culture – everyone honors, trusts and values volunteers.
- The role of staff is to support volunteers. If staff is not supportive of the value of volunteers they are in the wrong place.
- The organization acts on volunteers' ideas and gives volunteers a voice.
- Volunteers are involved in high responsibility roles and leadership roles.
- A good organizational structure is in places with well-defined roles for volunteers. The best practices for engaging volunteers followed.
- A focus is on building relationships – between volunteers and volunteers, volunteers and staff, volunteers and people served.
- The organization stays in tune with changes in who volunteers and how volunteers' expectation change, and adapts to the changes.





Advice from the Field: 100+ Tips, Tactics and Tools for Keeping Pace with Today's Volunteerism

In the MAVA 2018 Trends Survey, Volunteer Managers and Nonprofit Leaders were asked about strategies they've implemented to make their volunteer program as effective as possible. Over 100 tips, techniques and tools were shared. How many of these have you tried?



Designing Positions

Shorter term and flexible positions

1. Break down a traditional long-term task into a mini grab and go.
2. Define the volunteer task so that one volunteer can pick up where the other left off.
3. Have task forces meet only a few times a year vs. every month.
4. Assign volunteers in pairs and teams as to not ask for as much time from the volunteer.
5. Set up evening volunteer opportunities.
6. Be flexible with how long volunteers can leave program for travel time.

Higher responsibility positions

7. Create a volunteer leadership program.
8. Develop roles for high capacity volunteers to take on more responsibility - i.e., volunteer newsletter editor, teaching monthly classes.
9. Empower volunteers to set their own schedule to work with the person they are assisting on a day, time and location that works best for them, instead of scheduling them yourself.

Variety of opportunities

10. Empower all staff to identify ways volunteers can support their work.
11. Increase variety of volunteer opportunities to increase the number of participating volunteers and number of hours served.
12. Develop a new virtual volunteer program.
13. Assign projects directly to volunteers, shifting tasks from staff to volunteers.
14. Create positions for families volunteering together

Position descriptions

15. Clearly define the role and expectations of volunteers.
16. Tweak how you write up volunteer opportunities so they sound more interesting and/or doable.
17. Collaborate with departments to review/revitalize volunteer roles.



Recruiting

18. Develop postcards to give to present volunteers, volunteer sites, friends and family to recruit other volunteers.



Orienting

47. Refresh your volunteer orientation and volunteer handbook to appeal to different learning styles and increase accessibility.
48. Use face-to-face orientation to create a relationship with volunteers.
49. Use a system-wide volunteer orientation so volunteers at all locations get the same information.
50. Offer online training followed by a Saturday morning wrap-up session for personal contact.
51. Develop an online orientation and post-test to ensure that all new volunteers are receiving the same information in a standardized presentation.



Training

52. Spread out training requirements and opportunities so it doesn't slow down the onboarding process and lets volunteers get started more quickly.
53. Try to be as flexible as possible with when and where volunteers complete their in-person training requirements; go to convenient locations for the volunteers.
54. Incorporate quarterly brunch/trainings with a social aspect and relevant training session.
55. Offer additional support/coaching sessions to help volunteers better understand role/responsibilities, if needed, that are optional to attend.
56. Standardize the initial volunteer training and offer different, more advanced trainings for returning volunteers.
57. Bring together volunteers who mostly serve independently.
58. Use distance technology for volunteer training - e.g., webinars or calls accessible online (via smart phone or tablet/laptop), so volunteers can be part of trainings in a "live" webinar but participate from the comfort of their home, car, or other location.



Communicating and Building Relationships

High touch

59. Visit sites when volunteers are working and talk with them, ask for input/ideas to improve.
60. Build personal connections when possible.
61. Have regular contact with volunteers to discuss concerns, make sure problems are taken care of early, and/or just an opportunity to socialize with those in the same position.
62. Implement a volunteer newsletter to share upcoming opportunities, recognize volunteers, create connections to the mission, and build relationships.
63. Create volunteering documents in other languages.
64. Note that seniors still like face-to-face communication and like to read the newspaper for information; while it's good to move forward with technology, remember where seniors are looking for information.

High tech

65. Send general "News and Updates" emails on an as-needed basis - weekly or monthly, depending on the particular news items.
66. Increase communication with volunteers through email, social media and regular mail.
67. Text volunteers who work remotely to make sure they're making their visits as expected.

19. Reach out to current and previous volunteers, and see if they have friends who want to volunteer.
20. Utilize all staff for volunteer recruitment with team incentives.
21. Make more use of LinkedIn, Facebook and social media for recruitment.
22. Expand your list of resources you use to recruit volunteers (print media, online resources/sites, and social media).
23. Reach out to individuals who may have experienced the benefit of a volunteer's assistance in the past.
24. Hold regular outreach events to recruit new volunteers.
25. Highlight the skills needed for each particular position.
26. Use Next Door website for recruiting.
27. Use the Talent Gather app on an Ipad or tablet at intern recruitment events.
28. Place articles on LinkedIn and Facebook re volunteer opportunities.
29. Get hyperlocal – use community Facebook pages to find volunteers for neighborhood-focused initiatives and events.
30. Send a monthly short video clip and invitation to participate to both volunteer prospect list and to client referral sources.



Onboarding

31. Update your volunteer application form (printed and online copy).
32. Have volunteers participate in an introductory session before signing on as volunteers.
33. Make it as easy to sign up to volunteer as possible.
34. Use a formal volunteer interview process to get to know your volunteers better from the start.
35. Change from a paper-driven onboarding process to a more electronic process
36. Make onboarding quicker from the time a volunteer applies to when he/she starts.
37. Standardize the onboarding of volunteers throughout the organization.
38. Create a nametag that has pins attached to give to every new volunteer at their first event to make them feel welcomed and to keep for future volunteering.
39. Involve volunteers in onboarding process of new volunteers.
40. Have your entire application and basic orientation/training online, so volunteers can access it 24/7 at home.
41. Use a database such as Volgistics or Better Impact for volunteer application, assignment, communication and tracking volunteer statistics.
42. Set up direct deposit for volunteer mileage reimbursement instead of mailing checks.



Assigning

43. Offer self-schedule option (picking up shifts online) vs. making volunteers commit to a weekly schedule of same-day, same-time.
44. Have a mobile app option for signing up for shifts.
45. Provide a yearly comprehensive brochure of upcoming volunteer opportunities for the year so volunteers can plan in advance, and allow volunteers to sign up early.
46. Create a diversity of ways for volunteers to sign up for volunteering opportunities on their own, rather than individually calling volunteers and asking them; include a physical sign-up at your site, online Sign-up Genius, and monthly newsletter listing upcoming opportunities.

68. Carry a cell phone to be easily reached; advocate for your organization to provide the phone as a necessary tool so you don't have to give out your personal information.
69. Develop volunteer blog that is shared with staff, leadership and volunteers.
70. Use Skype for Business to hold monthly committee meetings and support volunteer management for remote volunteers.
71. Start a closed Facebook group to allow volunteers to communicate, share and get to know each other better.
72. Use MailChimp or Constant Contact for more professional looking communication.
73. Use Instagram Stories to share volunteer activities.
74. Have volunteer teams use Basecamp or other project management software to communicate back and forth.
75. For those working in natural resources, have volunteers use eBird or iNaturalist apps to collect data.
76. For event volunteers, increase social media posts and emails with volunteers between the time of registration and the event.



Recognizing and Supporting

77. Send handwritten thank you postcards.
78. Report client satisfaction to volunteers.
79. Offer a recognition program that includes lifetime membership after X amount of hours served.
80. Do more recognition such as lunch events or gift cards twice a year, t-shirts and personal thank yous.
81. Free food.
82. Centralize recognition program to replace decentralized, non-standardized recognition.
83. Highlight volunteers in the local paper.
84. Thank them. Thank them. Thank them!



Evaluating and Tracking

85. Offer mobile-friendly reporting options that volunteers can utilize in the field as they are doing their work.
86. Develop online reporting to eliminate paper and reduce work on your end.
87. Conduct a comprehensive volunteer survey to determine the satisfaction levels of volunteers and how they would like to be more involved or recognized.
88. Assess volunteer satisfaction and reassign to a more personally rewarding volunteer role.
89. Implement ideas from the annual volunteer survey.
90. Have volunteers evaluate themselves.
91. Offer an app to provide a mobile way for volunteers to record hours as well as find opportunities and find information.



Partnering with Staff

92. Present on volunteer engagement to new staff during New Hire Orientations.
93. Train key employees on best practices for working with volunteers.

94. Train staff on the process of requesting a volunteer and creating a volunteer role and position description.
95. Invite MAVA staff to train volunteer supervisors on effective volunteer management practices.
96. Encourage staff to take time to communicate with volunteers to make sure they feel valued and are engaged in meaningful activities.
97. Develop training manual for staff that manage volunteers.
98. Create a communication piece on "why" volunteers choose to volunteer with us and use to help educate staff.
99. Develop a form and process for departments to use requesting a new volunteer position.
100. Initiate a traveling showcase of your volunteer program to take to different several teams or departments within your organization.



Positioning Volunteerism in the Organization

101. Establish a full-time volunteer program manager position if the organization don't already have one.
102. Invest in project and time management tools to track tasks and communicate with others about shared projects.
103. Set up a volunteer committee with Board Members and volunteers.
104. Consider forming working groups that meet just a few times a year.
105. Develop agency-wide volunteer policies and procedures to provide consistent services.
106. Go through Service Enterprise! It is a game changer!
107. When re-certifying as a Service Enterprise, take the opportunity to toot your horn internally by sharing information about volunteering an All Staff meeting, working with leadership team to get their buy-in on the action plan, and holding planning meetings with all departments.
108. Set up a cross-functional team that represents all departments that work with volunteers within your organization to create and monitor the processes used to engage volunteers.
109. Talk to leadership about the successes of volunteers and their importance to the organization.
110. Share the impact of the volunteers' work with internal staff.

To learn more about where these ideas came from, and get up-to-date on the latest trends in volunteer engagement, visit the Minnesota Association for Volunteer Administration (MAVA) website – www.mavanetwork.org – and look for the Trends in Volunteerism 2018 Report at www.mavanetwork.org/shiftingenv.

Art Credit: All icons created by Vectors Market from the Noun Project (www.thenounproject.com)



Action Plan

Cutting Edge Strategies for Engaging Volunteers to Meet Mission

Minnesota Association for Volunteer Administration

Aligning volunteers with mission and strategic plan

How volunteers are currently contributing to mission and strategic plan?

How could they contribute more to both?

Strategy	Currently Doing	Not a Priority	Medium Priority	High Priority
<i>Fundamental strategies</i>				
1. Design volunteer roles to involve volunteers in a wide variety of roles, including higher responsibility roles and shorter term assignments. Closely align volunteer roles with organization's mission. <i>Ideas to try:</i>				
2. Assess volunteer recruitment needs and activate recruitment efforts as needed. <i>Ideas to try:</i>				
3. Update recognition for today's volunteers. <i>Ideas to try:</i>				
<i>Emerging strategies</i>				
4. Standardize the volunteer program. <i>Ideas to try:</i>				
5. Maximize use of technology in the volunteer program. <i>Ideas to try:</i>				
6. Measure impact through volunteers, <i>Ideas to try:</i>				



Strategy	Currently Doing	Not a Priority	Medium Priority	High Priority
<i>Maximization strategies</i>				
7. Act on volunteers ideas and put volunteers in positions to identify needs and solutions. <i>Ideas to try:</i>				
8. Define the role of staff to support volunteers and put in place a good organizational structure with well defined roles for volunteers. A focus is on building relationships – between volunteers and volunteers, volunteers and staff, volunteers and people served – true bonds. <i>Ideas to try:</i>				
9. Develop a positive organizational culture focused on impact through volunteers. <i>Ideas to try:</i>				

Prioritize Strategies

- ▶ Circle the three to five of these strategies that are most critical to advance volunteer engagement in your organization now

Organizational buy in

Who are your current champions?

Who would be strategic that you could develop into a champion?

Case statement - Who needs to know what?

Who	What

Work Plan

This week I will:	Over next three months I will:
1.	1.
2.	2.
	3.

