



**Yellowfire  
Press**

**THE INGREDIENTS OF  
VOLUNTEER LEADERSHIP**

**A Capability Analysis  
For The Careerist**

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At three 1984 workshops in California and Michigan, attendees were asked to brainstorm responses to these questions: "What does a volunteer coordinator do? What must she or he know in order to be successful?" Most of the approximately 180 people who participated in the exercise were volunteer coordinators, and there was reasonably good consensus on what it takes to do this job.

An alphabetized and roughly categorized list of responses is presented below. The list stays close to the actual words participants used, and thus, much the same thing is sometimes said in different ways. Nor did it matter for recording purposes whether the role description was expressed as a noun, verb, participle, or some exotic hybrid.

The list is a useful reminder in preparing or revising a resume; it also can help in assesment, goal setting, and transition. Of course, not every volunteer leader is endowed with all the listed competencies, skills, or experiences. But most of us have many of them. So, perhaps there is a tactful way in which the list may be allowed to fall into the hands of supervisors and colleagues, too. There could be dividends in appreciation and respect, even in job security. If the process also reinforces your self-respect and confidence, so much the better. Reconsider the list frequently, especially on bad days, and keep adding to it, on good days and bad.

In updating your resumé, review the list, and for each item check to see if you've given yourself credit for competency or experience. The same kind of review should help target appropriate career directions and goals.

**ABILITY** to organize, prioritize, etc.

**ADMINISTRATOR**

**ADVISOR:** academic, career, etc.

**AWARENESS** of political factors,  
existing resources, etc.

**BACK-SLAPPER**

**BRINGER-IN** of outside  
information & ideas

**BUDGETING**

**CAMPAIGN MANAGER**

CAREER COUNSELOR  
 CHANGE AGENT  
 COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS: oral  
 and written  
 COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT  
 COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION  
 COMMUNITY RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT  
 COMMUNITY, understanding of  
 COMPUTER SKILLS  
 CONSULTANT  
 COORDINATOR of special events  
 COUNSELING/COUNSELOR: personal,  
 CREATING opportunities for  
 people to express themselves  
 CREATIVE  
 CRISIS INTERVENTION  
 CRISIS MANAGEMENT, planning  
 CROSS institutional lines  
 CUSTOMER service representative  
 DALE CARNEGIE instructor  
 DATA MANAGEMENT  
 DELEGATOR  
 DEVELOPER of community resources,  
 special events, friends, skills-  
 banks, opportunities for people to  
 express themselves  
 DIPLOMAT  
 DIRECTOR: agency, career, etc.  
 DOCENT  
 DOER of more with less  
 DONOR MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS  
 DRUDGE, drudgery  
 ECONOMIZER  
 EDUCATOR  
 ENTHUSIAST  
 EVALUATOR of programs and of  
 individuals  
 EVENTS COORDINATOR  
 EXPERTISE: motivational, graphics,  
 in own area of service, etc.  
 EXPLORER (creative)  
 FACILITATOR  
 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT  
 FLEXIBILITY  
 FUNDRAISER  
 GENERAL MANAGEMENT  
 GRAPHICS  
 GRANT WRITER  
 GROWING PEOPLE  
 HEADHUNTER (recruiter)

HUMAN RELATIONS EXPERT  
 INDEPENDENT WORKER  
 INFORMATION CENTER  
 INNOVATOR  
 INTERDISCIPLINARIAN  
 INTERVIEWER  
 JOB ANALYSIS  
 JOB DEVELOPMENT  
 JOB ORGANIZER  
 JOB TRAINER  
 LABOR RELATIONS  
 LEADERSHIP: skillsbank,  
 career, etc.  
 LEGISLATOR  
 LIAISON SKILLS  
 LIFE PROBLEM HELPER  
 LINKER, NETWORKER  
 LISTENER SKILLS  
 LOBBYIST  
 MAKE-DO-ER  
 MANAGEMENT MANAGER:  
 general financial, personnel  
 data, etc.  
 MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS:  
 design and operation  
 MARKETER of programs, jobs, etc.  
 MARKETING  
 MEDIA COORDINATOR  
 MEDIATOR  
 MENU PLANNER  
 MINISTER, CLERGY  
 MORAL VALUES BUILDER  
 MOTIVATIONAL EXPERT:  
 staff, agency, etc.  
 MOTIVATOR  
 NEEDS ASSESSMENT  
 NEGOTIATOR  
 NETWORKER  
 NEW IDEAS: information,  
 (bringing in), etc.  
 OMBUDSPERSON  
 ORAL COMMUNICATION  
 ORGANIC JOB DEVELOPMENT  
 ORGANIZER of jobs, people,  
 events, etc.  
 PEOPLE GROWER  
 PEOPLE orientation, in  
 transition, etc.  
 PERSONNEL DIRECTOR  
 PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

PHOTOGRAPHER  
 PLANNER: short range, long range,  
 of programs, etc.  
 "POLITICIAN," POLITICAL AWARENESS  
 PRIORITIZER  
 PROPOSAL WRITER  
 PROBLEM SOLVER  
 PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT  
 PROGRAM EVALUATION or ASSESSMENT  
 PUBLIC RELATIONS SPECIALIST  
 PUBLIC SPEAKING  
 RECORD KEEPING  
 RECRUITER  
 REPORT WRITER  
 RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT  
 RISK TAKER  
 ROLE MODEL  
 SALES, SALESPERSON (marketer?)  
 SCUTSWORKER  
 SELF-STARTER, SELF-EMPLOYED SUCCESS  
 SENSITIVITY  
 SKILLSBANK development and  
 operation

SMALL BUSINESS EXPERT  
 SOCIAL DIRECTOR: cruise ship,  
 etc.  
 SOCIOLOGIST  
 SPECIAL EVENTS developer and  
 coordinator  
 STATISTICIAN  
 SUPERVISION-PLUS  
 SYSTEMS ANALYSIS  
 TALENT SCOUT  
 TALK SHOW HOST  
 TEACHER  
 TOUR GUIDE  
 TRAINER, training  
 TRANSITION PEOPLE,  
 understanding them  
 TREND REPORTER  
 UNDERSTANDING: of people in  
 transition in the  
 community, of delegations,  
 of networking, etc.  
 WARMTH GIVER  
 WRITER, WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

A suggested exercise at professional association meetings is for the group to brainstorm their own list first, then to compare their results with this list. Almost always, a few new aspects of the role will appear. Group discussion of either or both lists will then yield dividends in awareness and understanding of our complex and fascinating role.

What about the person who daily is able to fulfill this demanding role? She/he is surely more than a dilettante, though some have worried about that. Rather, this is a versatile and creative generalist whose skills and experience merit and can help earn solid respect, status, and financial compensation, should she or he decide to stay in the volunteer leadership field. Otherwise, these competencies and experiences qualify their possessor for a wide range of other meaningful jobs. Among the possibilities mentioned by participants in the exercise were personnel director (Human Resource Development), sales, marketing, resource development and fundraising, public relations, communications, human relations, and management generally, especially management of an enabling type. Somewhat less frequently suggested are politics, small business entrepreneurship, the clergy, and education and training. Some of these above competencies and jobs are frequently needed in profit-making organizations. Group discussion here indicated that many of us have overcome our inferiority complex vis-a-vis the profit sector; we are prepared to predict that we can function there as effectively as we do in the non-profit sector.

Yellowfire Press welcomes and will acknowledge your contributions to this role description list. We also invite ideas on visual representation of the role.

#### OTHER READINGS

Virtually every publication on volunteer leadership inevitably describes leadership functions and competencies.

Elsewhere in the Yellowfire Mini-Series, the reader interested in professional development will find the following two articles on local associations of volunteer coordinators, or DOVIAs.

Activating Your Local Association of Volunteer Coordinators (Yellowfire Mini-Series #12) and Local Associations of Volunteer Coordinators: A Profile of North American DOVIAs (Yellowfire Mini-Series #11).

For effective transfer or translation of the listings to your resumé, see any good reference on resumé writing.