WHEN EVERYONE'S A VOLUNTEER

The Effective Functioning of All-Volunteer Groups

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Friend and colleague Nancy David, and Energize secretary Ann Brennan, took seemingly random pieces of print and made of them a manuscript! I thank them for that, and the same to my niece, Allison (Ali) Scheier. Ali proofed the book and, more, affirmed that it was mainly intelligible (even though she has so far escaped formal training in volunteerism, something a niece of mine should never be able to do).

This preface, like most others, is the last thing written and, by this time, Susan Ellis has invited the manuscript, accepted it, and sensitively checked with me certain excellent editorial suggestions. So now at last I can be utterly frank: I'm *delighted* her organization is the publisher. A book which tries to break new ground *should* be published by a woman who is on everyone's short list of outstanding forward thinkers in volunteerism. She is certainly on mine. She is also a fine, task-oriented person to work with and to learn from. Thank you, Susan.

And thank you, readers, for the willingness to turn this page and explore together.

INTRODUCTION
THE UNDERWATER MOUNTAIN

In modern times we've learned a lot about how volunteers can work effectively with paid staff in agency volunteer programs. This impressive body of knowledge nevertheless misses 90% of volunteering in which volunteers are essentially on their own: nobody is paid, everyone is part-time, and everyone can leave any time they want. Paid staff presence, if it exists at all, is intermittent and infrequent, as in the occasional visit of a national staff person to a local PTA.

For the situation in which everyone is a volunteer, terms such as "voluntary organization," "volunteer group," or "volunteer-driven group" are sometimes used. The problem is that some private non-profit sector organizations referred to in this way actually have significant paid staffing. The terms used in this book are more precise and unequivocal: "all-volunteer group," "non-staffed group," or "entirely volunteer group."

Enormous Range

All-volunteer, non-staffed groups are pervasive. Check the following list. Chances are you belong to one or more such groups now, or have recently:

- Many religious and spiritually-oriented groups (especially in rural or small town areas)
- Self-help groups (an estimated half-million such groups in North America)
- Auxiliaries or "friends" groups, in most circumstances
- Support systems, networks (how many millions here?)
- Local chapters of service clubs (Zonta, League of Women Voters, Kiwanis, etc.)

- Many service-providing programs, especially in rural or small town areas, e.g., the volunteer fire department or rescue squad
- Many newly-created service programs, before there is money to pay salaries, e.g., the new rape crisis center
- Recreational or cultural groups (from bowling clubs to the Polish-American Friendship Society)
- Clubs and common interest groups of all kinds
- Hobby groups
- College or alumni groups
- Fraternal organizations
- Most neighborhood organizations
- Political/campaign organizations (especially grassroots/local)
- Advocacy or issue-oriented efforts
- Study committees, task forces
- In most situations, boards of directors, commissions or other policymaking bodies
- Most local chapters of national professional or other associations
- Most co-ops

The list is long and may be virtually endless, since practically any program, project or group can be non-staffed in certain circumstances. Thus, the board of a well-funded nonprofit may be liberally supplied with staff support and liaison. By contrast, the board of a small, struggling organization tends to function as if it were an all-volunteer group.

Importance of All-Volunteer Groups

Entirely volunteer groups are vital for two major reasons: they are where most people do most of their volunteering, and they are where a great deal of what we call quality of life is first imagined, created and maintained.

Look at the above list. There must be *millions* of all-volunteer groups with at least two people in each. . .or ten, twenty, or two hundred. By contrast, there are "only" about 100,000 agency-related volunteer programs in which volunteers work with paid staff. It's difficult to imagine a person who has never been involved in an all-volunteer group. If agency volunteer programs are an island, all-volunteer groups are like the massive underwater mountain underlying and supporting the island.

It is in all-volunteer efforts that risks can be taken on behalf of the quality of life (not that they always are taken). Well in advance of big budgets and bureaucracies, undeterred by cautious boards, here is the cutting edge of compassionate enterprise, where positive change can begin to happen. As Margaret Mead said: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

The Need for Specialized Principles

Are all-volunteer groups pervasive? Yes. Important? Definitely. Literally centuries of experience with them are part of our history. Then why can't we make these groups work better? I appeal to your own experience on this. It does seem to me that non-staffed groups often resemble roller-coasters. They go up with inspiring leaders, dramatic crises or other mobilizing events; they're down or dead most of the rest of the time. There are always happy exceptions, of course, but as a rule, it is amazing how such good individuals can make up awful groups.

All this suggests a need to explore development of a body of knowledge and set of expectations specialized to non-staffed volunteer groups. I find only a few scattered works that meet this need. By contrast, the subject of how to manage volunteers working with paid staff boasts scores of books, videotapes, and hundreds of workshops and conferences.

Please notice that I said "special" body of knowledge, not "unique," in that it is mainly different in *emphasis* as compared to volunteer management in agencies. Nevertheless, these differences in emphasis are important. I have no "proof" of this, only a strong suspicion reinforced by the tendency of all-volunteer group leaders to avoid volunteer management conferences. I have also heard on occasion from people well-versed in volunteer program management who were frustrated by their inability to apply much of that knowledge to an all-volunteer group setting. Finally, there is a common-sense expectation that groups lacking the full-time continuity of paid staff *must* have to do things somewhat differently.

As a rough analogy, the overlap between the two bodies of knowledge is analogous to that between tennis and Ping-Pong. Certain abilities might transfer well, e.g., hand-eye coordination. In other respects, point-for-point transfer might be disastrous, as when the experienced Ping-Pong player proceeds to serve in tennis by bouncing the ball once on his or her side of the net!

Another issue is the wide apparent differences among types of all-volunteer groups. What, really, does a self-help group have in common with a service club? Or either of them with a volunteer fire department? Not everything, certainly.

I believe the situation here is very much like volunteer management in agencies. Some principles apply generally to volunteer programs in hospitals, museums, prisons, schools—whatever. But each of these settings must apply these general principles in terms of the special knowledge required in its own service area. In the same way, general principles for strengthening entirely volunteer groups would be an enriching additive rather than a replacement for manuals from a national resource headquarters for, say, a service club or local 4-H Club.

The remainder of this book explores seven special *emphases* which distinguish entirely volunteer groups from staffed volunteer programs in agencies:

1. The special need to cultivate a powerful, unifying vision as the "glue" of the group. You must take ample time out from implementation to talk about values, visions, and philosophy. You must raise the "why" questions and understand how what you're doing relates to these questions.

2. Wide, direct, and decisive participation of members/volunteers in setting goals to implement the group's vision. Please try to help members understand and absorb that *this is not a corporation*. No matter how excellent your plans "from the top down," ultimately you will only do what volunteers are willing and able to do. So why not give them a more direct share in setting goals in the first place?

3. Effective distribution of work among members/volunteers—especially vital because *everybody* is part time and *everybody* is here on a voluntary basis, or reasonably close to it.

4. Real as distinct from merely rhetorical inclusion of people. This is more a matter of spirit than method; more the taking of values seriously than technique or tactics. At the same time, some methods resonate well with the inclusive attitude.

5. Stability without staff and continuity on a bare bones budget.

6. Efficiency, flexibility, and the importance of not pretending you're rich. Just because everybody is part time and voluntary, and just because your group is (probably) poor, doesn't mean you have to be unstable. Resist the temptation to invest time and money you haven't got for sophisticated things you don't need (largely because they weren't designed with you in mind in the first place).

7. Drawing resources from within the group: serious networking. Networking is a nice, popular thing for well-staffed organizations. But for all-volunteer groups, it is a *necessity*. This is because there is little or no money to purchase resources from outside of the group, so these must come from inside.

1 THE IMPORTANCE OF PASSION

It may be possible to hold a staffed organization together by paying people to do meaningless things. You can hardly ever do this in an all-volunteer group because, once you run out of grudging obligation as an "incentive," volunteers will ultimately do only what they perceive as meaningful. Therefore, passion is especially important in all-volunteer groups, guided by a clear and relevant "cause" or vision.

The worst all-volunteer group I ever belonged to was also the *best*. It was the "worst" because we had no job descriptions, training, or serious inclination towards volunteer management in any form. All we had—along with Martin Luther King—was a living dream. And that was enough to make it also the best volunteer group I ever belonged to. Such "vision power" can come from almost anywhere—religious faith, environmental concern, a rage to confront injustice, a desire to make people more aware of the evils, dangers, or delights of (put your obsession here).

Whatever the purpose, it must be powerfully present; if not, all the slick management technique in the world won't rescue your group, or even justify it. To be sure, we must be well-organized on behalf of our vision. But beware of any suggestion that the passion part of it is somehow unrespectable, to be totally replaced by technical expertise as soon as possible.

Powerful purpose isn't just something you hope will happen to your group. It can usually be cultivated.

Are We for Real, Purpose-wise?

Speak together often to check carefully whether your reason for being remains relevant. Can your group's purpose be clearly stated and win reasonable consensus? Allow plenty of time for philosophical discussion here. The answers are not always crystal clear. Thus, once the neighborhood association has built the community center, the association's purpose has, strictly speaking, been served. But it might be appropriate to continue with the related purpose of maintaining the center and seeing that it is used well.

If careful, caring discussion honestly persuades that your group has outlived its purpose, stop trying to save the group with heroic measures. More than that, I'm all for active efforts to put organizational zombies out of their misery as quickly and painlessly as possible (with a final celebration perhaps).

The Results We Cause

Clear and powerful unifying purpose is the glue of an all-volunteer group. Once we have it, we must work to keep it fresh and strong through regular, results oriented reminders of what we are all about. Results-oriented reminders of purpose come in two flavors:

"Negative"...This is what it would be like if we didn't exist.

"Positive"...This is what it's like because we do exist.

Consider first the negative approach. As a volunteer in a juvenile probation department of many years ago, I knew the technical statement of our mission well enough. It was something like: "the rehabilitation of juvenile offenders consistent with primary concern for the public safety." We volunteers could repeat this to ourselves, mantra-like, but as much as we might hope, motivation would still flag now and then—that is, it did until the Chief Probation Officer, a motivational genius, would take volunteers over to the jail, let us see it and smell it and say: "that's where the kids will end up without your help." This is emotional, powerful communication of a goal, and was about 100 times more powerful than a precise statement of "program objectives."

Another example would be a fast for a hunger organization, possibly followed by a trip through a supermarket with a dollar in your pocket (a celebration banquet here strikes me as obscene). Or how about visiting or staying in sub-standard housing, if rehabbing same is the purpose of your organization?

Finally, this true story. It happened at a juvenile judges' conference which was trying to persuade judges of the value of alternative sentences instead of jail for youth. The scene: a wine and cheese party for the judges. Then, interruption by local police who advise the judges that drinking is illegal in the building and proceed to throw them in jail—temporarily, as a "learning experience." The ruse was then explained to the judges but I expect the experience made a profound impression on them and their sentencing proclivities. The staff person who devised this emotional learning experience was also profoundly affected. He lost his job.

While an actual negative experience may be too much realism for some people, verbal "heart tugs" may help. Take the time to put your powerful purpose into succinct words. Here are two examples from anti-poverty programs:

In many elderly households, fresh vegetables or social activities are sacrificed to pay the rent. Dental and eye care lose out to property taxes. Community Action actively pursues affordable, appropriate housing options to meet the needs of lower income elderly.

Farm laborers (migrant workers) exist in substandard living and working conditions. There are no governmental regulations at any level which govern this unrepresented population in our midst. It is difficult to imagine living in a space which lacks water, indoor bathrooms and forces an average of 2.6 persons to sleep in a single bed. A common question is: "How can eight plus people live in 300 square feet of space?"

Whether experiential or verbal, negative result-reminders may be too controversial for some people, or may risk reminding people of things they prefer not to be reminded of; for example that there is hunger a lot closer to home than Ethiopia. Here, glorying in "positive" experiences may be the way to go, and this is valuable as balance in any case. Examples of positive results-reminders:

- In the middle of a long arduous board meeting for a volunteer-with-youth program, full of arcane budgets, personnel policies and the like, an actual living volunteer-youth pair comes in to talk about how much the relationship has meant to them. "Aha," say board members "that's what it's about, is it?" And back they go to wrestle, renewed, with abstractions.

- At one HABITAT for Humanity's headquarters, there was a day each week in which, with the homeowner's permission, volunteers could visit homes which they or their predecessors built, to see samples of successful outcomes from their labor and love.

- It's much better if your trash "pick up parade" people stay and relish the clean vistas they have created for a while.

When purpose-positive results are achieved, taking time to bask is basic.

Another Look at Charisma

It is often the charismatic leader who keeps an all-volunteer group energized, motivated, and mobilized through "force of personality." Many view such a leadership situation as something to escape from as quickly as possible, substituting management technique or organizational structure for individual inspiration. But it may not always be possible to substitute procedure for personality. Worse, even trying to do so may turn off the charismatic leader (often one of the group's founders) sooner than you need to.

Unless an inspirational leader is moving toward dictatorship, or no longer truly represents the wishes of the group, it might be better to cherish charismatic people, with a view to keeping them around as long as possible. Who knows? Maybe sometimes we can go from one charismatic leader to another, with little or no interruption in the continuity of charisma.

Looking Forward

It's been said that the principal difference between a manager and a leader is the leader's ability to capture and communicate an exciting vision of the future. Similarly, the difference between a group that is merely well-organized—important though that is—and one that is also inspired, is that same vision. Looking forward winnows away the obscuring and sometimes frustrating detail of the present, and allows mission to shine through. So, do a lot of looking ahead together. Some of the most successful all-volunteer groups I know live in the grip of dreams, more than they glory in ancient history.

One useful way to do "futuring" with your group is to ask members to visualize five years ahead (or a similar period). First, think about how much better things will be if your group functions well during that period, and then how much worse it will be if it doesn't. Of course, there is always the danger that there will be no detectable difference, in which case, go back to square one: do we have a reason for being (that's worth the effort)?

2 MEMBER PARTICIPATION IN SETTING GOALS

Once you have a powerful, unifying vision or purpose, you need to be concerned about how to select goals to implement that vision. A special challenge here is setting goals which motivate your membership towards achievable purpose. When all-volunteer group goals are not owned by members, widely and deeply, who else will achieve them? A small core of overworked faithful—in the process of burning out? And what then to fall back on? Not staff; there is no staff. Not money; there usually isn't much of that. What is needed is far more than "ownership" of goals by members. We're talking of ensuring *do-ability* by volunteers.

Here's an example from when I worked with a mainly volunteer neighborhood association. One day Bob (I'll call him) showed me six goals the neighborhood organization had set last year. I asked him how we did and he said: "pretty well; we achieved three of the six goals." I congratulated him and then suggested we should talk about the three goals we failed to achieve. "What three goals?" said Bob. "Wait a minute," said I. "You can't ignore missed goals if you want to do better next year." "No," said Bob, "we didn't fail to achieve anything because, in a volunteer group like ours, *what volunteers won't do can't be a goal*!" A little tricky, perhaps, but a solid point underneath. In an all-volunteer group, what volunteers won't do, ultimately won't get done. The program is the product of the people. Therefore, set goals in the first place on the basis of what volunteers are willing to do. More than just "willing"; if possible, *glad* to do.

A lot of us could take lessons from Bob because there is a tendency to concentrate more on the ideal than the do-able in setting goals; more on what the heart would like to see than what the hands can do. Such fantasies are fed by forgetting that in fact we do not have staff. Thus, unchecked idealism generates unrealistically high goals which sets us up for failure, demoralization, and frustration. Eventually, we begin to *expect* failure in an all-volunteer group and, at that point, almost always get it. Such concerns led to the development and field-testing of the following "Membership Input Process." This process is designed to:

- convert passive membership to active participation;

- promote ownership of the organization's programs by its members;

- avoid over-extending the organization, to the point where it effectively accomplishes nothing; and

- prevent people from "dumping" goals on the organization while doing nothing to help accomplish those goals.

The process provides a structured way for a group to elicit input from as many members as possible, followed by collating and synthesizing the ideas by a "Goal Review Committee," and then final adoption of the goals by the full membership.

Preparing for the Process

The first question is: "Whom shall we include in the process?" The answer is: everyone…at least everyone who might by any stretch of the imagination be relevant to achieving your mission. The contrast is "top-down" goal setting by a few (the board or executive committee, for example). What we want is the enfranchising of every stake-holder "from the ground up." The annual planning or kickoff meeting is a good time to run the process. A large number of members can be expected to attend, and the process works best in person. However, participation by e-mail or postal mail can also be offered to absentee members in good standing who have valid reasons for not attending the meeting.

Safeguards in the process itself will work to eliminate the input of people who really don't care about the group and might not even understand it. Therefore, it's safe as well as desirable to be inclusive. This might mean inviting at least a few former members you'd like to see get involved again, and some potential members who have never yet been involved. This process has definite potential for recruiting new members.

Finally, some groups try to include major supporters even when they are not members or ever likely to be, such as donors of money or materials.

Once you've decided on who to include as participants, explain the sequence of steps they will follow to complete the Membership Input Process (see next section). Preface the process with clear orientation or re-orientation on four points:

1. A clear reminder of and, as needed, further discussion of overall group mission. Examples are: "this association aims to promote quality of life for residents of the Elm Street neighborhood," or "our purpose is public education on the AIDS epidemic," or "we want to help one another gain even more enjoyment from flower gardening."

2. A reminder on a timeframe in which goals should be achievable. Typically, but not always, this would be about a year. Whatever, be crystal clear on timespan to deter disasters of people suggesting five-year projects for one-year timeframes.

3. Usually a reminder on the desolate state of the treasury will be in order. Therefore, even moderately expensive goals must be accompanied by suggestions for *feasible* fundraising strategies (see Chapter 6).

4. Encourage each member to give input independently as an individual. Some "lobbying" of other members is usually permissible later in the process, and will probably happen anyhow.

There are some grassroots organizations in which people are not comfortable in putting anything in writing. If this is the case in your group, complete the process orally, perhaps with someone recording things said on a blackboard or taking good notes on a legal pad or directly onto a laptop computer.

Outline of the Process

Here are the instructions for the Membership Input Process. The exercise can first be done by each participant individually or can be completed through group discussion.

STEP 1: What are the three top subjects, projects, or goals on which our group should be working over the next year (or 18 months, or ?)? Be as *specific* as you can.

STEP 2: For each goal, list at least three *do-able* steps to implement achievement of the goal. These must be things which are realistically within the capabilities of our organization. No suggestion will be considered unless accompanied by *at least three* (four? five?) do-able steps, plus your promise to participate personally in implementing at least one of these steps (see the next instruction).

STEP 3: Put a check mark next to any do-able step in which you are personally willing to invest significant amounts of time and effort. These are sometimes called "participation promises."

Note: The participation promise requirement might be eased for members with long and loyal histories of contribution to the group. However, balance this consideration with concern not to appear too biased towards insiders, or good 'ol boys or girls. Getting away from that is the main object of the exercise here.

Once Steps 1 to 3 are completed with all the participants, you are ready for:

STEP 4: Form a Goal Review Committee to correlate and analyze the goal suggestions of all participants, and to develop a set of recommendations to be brought back to the group as a whole for adoption.

To get a feel for how this exercise works, look at the example on the next page for Cynthia Brown, a member of a solar power advocacy group. She has completed the process for a one-year timeframe.

MEMBERSHIP INPUT PROCESS

Organization: Solar Power Advocacy Group
Member's Name: CYNTHIA BROWN

Here are the three projects I think our group should work on this year

1. *Educational Campaign in local Junior and Senior High Schools*

<u>Do-able Steps:</u>

Secure support of superintendent of schools and principles of target shcools.

Design curriculum. Select content, develop teaching aids, etc.

✓ Recruit and train presenters.

2. *Present a "Solar Fair" next year in conjunction with the annual County Fair*

<u>Do-able Steps:</u>

✓ Gain support of County Fair Board.

Research what other communities have done and adapt this to our situation.

Prepare back-up plan in case it rains the day of the Fair.

Try to interest 4-H or other youth groups in taking on the project.

3. *Demonstration project to teach neighborhood people how to build their own low-cost solar collectors*

<u>Do-able Steps:</u>

Select target neighborhood.

✓ Purchase, or get donated, materials sufficient to make 50 low-cost solar collectors.

Develop a simple manual and slide show on how to build your own low-cost solar collectors

✓ Recruit and train a corps of trainers to present workshops in the target neighborhood.

Select accessible neighborhood sites for the workshops.

Additions to Consider

The Membership Input Process is simply one form of guidance towards realistic decisions on group goals. It may do that satisfactorily in its present rough form, or you may decide to get more detailed input. Two additional considerations are *time available* and something that might be called *strength of motivation*.

Ask participants to put in parentheses by their "participation promise" check, how much time each expects to be able to contribute in the task area checked. Be clear on what the numbers mean. Hours or person-days? Per week? Per month? Over the entire project?

Also useful, if you want to go to the trouble, is the person's estimate of total time the task would take. Enter it like this example for Cynthia in the illustration:

(5/20) Gain support of County Fair Board

would mean she "pledges" five hours to this task, but estimates it might take twenty hours in all.

Here, as generally, it's well to reassure people that their participation promise check does not mean they're expected to do it all alone. Others will almost certainly be involved, too, if the project/goal is adopted by the group. An individual's time available estimate should also be understood in terms of his/her involvement elsewhere in the group's activities. Viewed in the context of significant involvement elsewhere, a relatively low time available estimate is more acceptable, or at least understandable. Heavy involvement elsewhere, however, may be a danger signal that the person is already over-committed.

As for strength of motivation, it does make a difference if the task the individual promises to take on is something s/he enjoys doing and is good at. If Cynthia happens to like advocacy with groups such as the County Fair Board, and is pretty good at it, the chances are much better that she will come through successfully on this task. Obviously, participation promises backed by enjoyment of the task are to be preferred over those backed by grimly obliged mediocrity. In a small or medium-size group, this is something you might know about individuals. Otherwise, it is something that should be looked at later in the goal review process, and certainly before it is completed.

The Goal Review Committee

Form a Goal Review Committee to correlate what could be a mass of individual input. After all, if we have 50 members averaging three goal-suggestions each, we will have 150 packages of goal input to process.

If your group happens to be clique-ish, and this committee represents only the cliques, the entire process is eviscerated. Be sure instead to have a solid presence of "new kids on the block" and other folks outside the in-group.

Goals are reviewed and recommendations made for selection based on at least six criteria:

1. The goal suggestion is within our overall mission area. (Cynthia's suggestion of a solar-power educational program in the schools is just fine, but probably not for a Parents Without Partners group.)

2. The goal is clearly stated and internally consistent where possible. The Review Committee can get back to any member whose suggestion is ambiguous or internally inconsistent. For example, "raise more money by increasing our membership and raising our membership fees" has the potential inconsistency that raising fees might put membership out of the financial reach of many people, therefore decreasing membership and lowering total revenue.

3. The goal, or a similar one, has been suggested independently by a significant number of other members (consensus). Be alert for goals suggestions that are similar enough to be combined in some way. For example, Cynthia Brown suggests securing the support of "superintendents and principals." If another member suggested getting the support of "science department heads," the two ideas could easily be blended.

4. Collectively, from all members suggesting the project/goal, there are sufficient realistic steps to achieve the goal, including sufficient resources.

5. Collectively, there is substantial (not necessarily perfect) coverage of do-able steps by participation promise checks.

6. These participation promises are credible in terms of both time available and quality of motivation.

The object is to get all or virtually all steps covered by participation promise checks which: have credible amounts of available time behind them; reflect, insofar as possible, some enthusiasm for the task beyond mere willingness or guilt; and have some back-up or redundancy in the system. In case one person doesn't come through on her or his piece of the action, we have other participation promises for each task.

The review process is rational and committed to genuine participative involvement of members in the guidance of the group. But no one said it was easy or entirely "objective." How, for example, do you weigh a project which is strong on consensus but relatively weak on do-ability, against a goal which is stronger on do-ability than on consensus? And what if you come out with several projects/goals which clearly meet all the criteria, but entirely leave out several key members/stakeholders? To what extent do you water down the criteria to ensure involvement of the left-outs?

Finally, the method's orientation towards consensus and do-ability must not be allowed to snuff out creativity. In the early stages, creative ideas are often held by loners. If the goal review process eliminates these seemingly wild, group-stretching ideas this year, they must at least be recommended for discussion as goals next year. Indeed the goal review committee's recommended goals for adoption should be accompanied by another set of recommended goals for serious discussion in the future.

As the last step of the process, the recommendations of the committee are presented to the membership-at-large for final decision making.

Do-ability or Stretching

Do-ability versus stretching of capacity is a fundamental issue in goal setting which divided even the greatest community organizers of the 20th century. Saul Alinsky, for example, held that groups needed a string of assured victories, however small, while Myles Horton was of the growth-through-stretching school of goal setting.

Maybe both approaches have their place. I can visualize a productive mix of several do-ables and one group-extending goal in the set of annual targets for an all-volunteer group. On the other hand, the optimum pattern may be sequential, as with the strategies of some college athletic teams. You schedule a few "sure thing" warm-up games at the beginning of the year (the goal being to win, of course) and hope this builds confidence for tackling tougher assignments for the rest of the season.

In all this let us remember *do-able is not necessarily trivial*. Achievable goals can be extraordinarily *important*, as is demonstrated daily by all-volunteer groups from neighbors organizing to deliver hot meals to people homebound with AIDS, to an Ecuadorian community organization teaching street children to read.

3 EFFECTIVE DISTRIBUTION OF WORK

A special challenge for all-volunteer groups is the part-time nature of participation. Many tasks routinely handled by one employee in the paid-workplace must now be broken down into parts. The total is then accomplished by a cooperating set of people rather than one individual. Leaders and facilitators must be skilled in parceling out large jobs in smaller pieces, helping people decide who does what on the basis of willingness and ability. I call this process "co-delegation" because it is mutual delegation by participants to one another, rather than one-way assignment of work by, say, a staff person to a volunteer.

The first part of this chapter deals with co-delegation as a kind of "horse trading" of tasks among potential participants. The second section concentrates on the delegation needs of one kind of all-volunteer group participant: the over-burdened president or other leader.

Co-delegation and the Work Assignment Grid

The Work Assignment Grid (we'll call it "WAG") distributes work to maximize the extent to which people are doing what they do best and like most. The payoffs are increased effectiveness and work satisfaction in the allocation and delegation of work, in the formation of teams, and in the building of motivationally self-powering networks.

For maximum applicability, the work chosen for grid analysis should be of fairly large scope, and divisible into discrete elements which are realistically do-able independently of one another. It would normally be silly to divide the work of typing into the left or right parts of the keyboard, or the first and last parts of the alphabet.

The work selected can be either a project with a definite ending, or an ongoing job, role, or program. The process has been applied to optimum delegation of the work of a household or an office, and to projects such as fundraising campaigns, publicity efforts, recognition events, getting out a newsletter, cleaning up after a gathering, organizing the work of a board or a committee, or any project goal set in the Membership Input Process (see Chapter 2).

A simple example would be "Preparing the Annual Report," a project which we initially see as being divided among Mary, John, George, and perhaps others, in our entirely volunteer group.

First we divide the total project into fairly specific, do-able components such as compiling the statistics, preparing a first outline, preparing the visual illustrations, etc. We then ask each of our three participants to rate each component according to the following scale:

+	=	Like this a lot and do it well (a cousin to the "participation promises"described in Chapter 2)
(blank)	=	In-between, uncertain, no strong preference either way.
−	=	Dislike this a lot (it doesn't matter whether the person does it well or not; this is a no-no)

Most users prefer to have each participant do their ratings independently of all other participants and discuss it together later. But some groups prefer to discuss their ratings publicly in the group as they are made. Especially in the latter case, I hope potential martyrs will be discouraged from taking on a task simply because it's not yet covered by anyone else. This is precisely what the grid wants to get away from!

For "Preparing the Annual Report," we might then get a work assignment or co-delegation grid that looks like the one below.

Preparing the Annual Report

	Mary	John	George	…and others
1. Statistics		+	−	
2. Illustrations	+	+		
3. First Outline	−	−		
4. Proofing		+	−	
5. etc,				
6. etc.				

This is a simplified sample of the WAG, which has handled up to 180-190 task components, as in the work of an entire office or household. Experience suggests, however, an effective upper limit of about 50 to 75 task components and 15 to 20 potential participants.

Completion of this grid does not automatically ensure effective co-delegation. The grid simply organizes and summarizes the information base for deciding who does what, for maximum effectiveness in getting the total job done. Here are some rough guidelines on the use of the grid for deciding who does what:

1. Separate out rows which have one or more "plus" in them. (Rows 1, 2, and 4 in the example.)

2. Where a row has two or more pluses (row 2), decide first if the task actually could use two or more people on it. If so, fine. If not, try assigning the task to: a) a person who is less heavily engaged else where in the grid (in this example, George); or b) a person who is "plus" on a clearly related task; or c) someone whose effectiveness in that task is best validated or documented.

3. Where a row has only minuses (row 3) a number of options exist for getting the task done. Among these options are:

    - clarify and give more information on the task and maybe it won't seem as unattractive to some people;
    - divide the task further and re-grid it;
    - offer training in the task;
    - team it or rotate it among several people;
    - offer incentives;
    - offer trade-offs (do this, and we'll give you your most favorite task elsewhere in the grid);
    - reorganize the task;
    - seek out other volunteer or staff people not in the grid now, who might be "plus" for the task. (However, don't "volunteer" absent people, including people who just left to go the rest-room!); or
    - hate it, but do it anyhow!

    All else failing, you might pay someone to take on this task, assuming you have the money to do so.

Refinements to the WAG Process

Take account of a) how much time a person has to give overall to the work and b) how much time each task component needs. One way of estimating overall balance in contributed time is to check vertical columns of the grid as well as horizontal rows. This might, in our example, cause concern that John is becoming over-committed. Generally, try to balance every grid vertically as well as horizontally.

Recognize that some task components are more interconnected than others. Thus, in preparing a report, collating and stapling are probably more closely related tasks than, say, graphics and proofing.

Refinements to the WAG process include:

- Develop a more extensive rating scale, with five or ten points rather than just three (—,+ and blank).
- Add an additional type of response: "Q" which signifies: "I'm interested in having more background information on this task. At present, I don't have enough information to make up my mind."
- Use a scale which eliminates minuses altogether, in situations where people, especially staff people, might be reluctant to admit they dislike parts of present or potentially assignable work. In such cases, participants might be asked to identify only the four or five tasks or components they like most in the work.
- Another way of handling this reluctance is to require that people chose the three (or four, five, etc.) "most plus" and the same number of "most minus" tasks for them.

Below is a second WAG example for the task of matching students to homework tutors. As just noted, the "Q" symbol means: "I'd like more information on this before deciding."

Participants:	MRB	FB	JF	LJ	BR	JS	BW	NE	HL	EW
Matching Activities: Receive school referral		−	−		−	+		+	+	+
Assign to tutor/set appt.		−	−		−	−		+	+	+
Follow up missed appts.	−	−		Q	−	+				+
Initial tutoring session	+	+		+	+	+	+			
Develop tutoring plan				+	+	+	+			
Get parental permission				+	Q	+	+			

The "follow up missed appointments" task component is relatively lightly covered; otherwise, there seems to be ample redundancy in coverage of task components (three or more +'s). This apparently comfortable redundancy is frequent in the WAGs I've seen. It's surprising what a high proportion of task components will be adequately covered "naturally" in this way. On the other hand, there will usually be significant shrinkage in the coverage after the initial enthusiasm of "participation promise" sign-ups wears off.

So much for horizontal usage of the Grid. Vertical usage suggests that JS, LI, and perhaps BW and EW may be over-committed, and in danger of overload. This isn't a certainty, just something to watch and be aware of in task assignments. On the other hand, JF and perhaps FB and MRB as well, seem to be *under*-loaded in this work system.

Two Concerns

The Work Assignment Grid process has been tested in practice and works well. However, two concerns should be considered. First, the grid process allows people to enter *claimed* competence; that is, **+** means I like this *and also can do it well*. But the person could be willfully or innocently wrong about this. The best situation is when claims of competency/preference can immediately be validated, either because the person has a known record of previous performance, or because s/he can readily be allowed to attempt the task with no serious damage done if performance is poor. Thus, you could let both Mary and John, as "competency claimants," submit sample graphics for review, and decide on that basis (no real harm done if neither is good enough to do it).

Much harder is the case in which there is no checkable record of previous performance and where a tryout failure would be disastrous; for example, a person who would love to assemble parachutes. Here, intensively supervised operations or simulated tryouts are the way to go. Otherwise, whoever claims parachute-packing expertise gets to take the first jump!

A second concern, or trade-off, is that dividing work always adds another task: *coordination*. Related is a caution about being especially careful to clarify lines of accountability when a number of people are responsible for various aspects of the total task.

Running *from* President

I love groups who do good things for their members with a minimum of muss and fuss, formality and structure. But there comes a time in the life of every growing organization, when you do need officers, committee chairs and such. That's when all-volunteer groups discover how hard it is to find and hold good people in leadership positions. A good Chair nowadays is hard to find—and probably always was.

Often underlying the difficulty is an unconscious tendency to treat officers *as if they were full-time paid staff*. And, of course, they aren't. The other parts of their life—paid job, family, friends, other volunteer groups, even hobbies—do not disappear on election day. So, they burn out, or they make sure beforehand that they never get in the role they know will lead to burnout. Really, we must STOP treating officers and chairs as if they were full-time (over-time?) staff and START treating them as what they are: *part-time volunteers.*

This means, first of all, *shorten timespans* wherever possible. Some or all of the following have worked for some organizations, at one time or another:

- Shorten terms of office and compensate for lesser time to learn the ropes by having pre- and post- slots. Instead of one lonely President for three years, it is often better to have a President-Elect, President, and Past-President cooperatively serving one-year terms. Then, why not a Treasurer-Elect, Past-Treasurer, etc.?

- Shorten tenures even without the above kind of pre/post compensation. Groups blessed with a number of leadership-experienced people, none of whom want to be tied down forever, have actually tried six-month terms, without the world ending—or the organization. Related to the minimum-tenure concept is *rotation* of some leadership responsibilities, e.g., the person who hosts the monthly meeting is the program planner and facilitator of that meeting. (Although s/he may well draw the line at also providing food and entertainment. Try a Work Assignment Grid on that.)

- Job-sharing. At least one group I know of was successful with co-Presidents for awhile, and it happens far more frequently with co-chairs. There's the usual caution: be darn sure the co's can communicate effectively with one another, like each other, and share basic values.

- Whatever the tenure or teamwork arrangement, do some detailed delegation with leadership positions. Start early on—if possible, before the burning-out leader is more than slightly singed.

Remember, there's a "volunteer death period" with volunteer officers—usually in the first few months. Elevate recognition of this to a principle:

The membership-at-large must show awareness and concern for leadership, not just expect leadership to support them.

We're talking about a *mutual* support system here. The leader will be a better help-giver if also treated as a help-*needer*.

One way to help this process along is liberal use of the Work Assignment Grid to distribute work more widely and gladly among all members. Also, be sure to check vertically on the grid columns to guard against overload for group leaders.

A second strategy for heading off early burnout is to use the "Burnout-Prevention Checklist for Leaders" shown on the following page. I suggest that leaders of all-volunteer groups be given the opportunity to respond to questions like these early in their tenure, and periodically thereafter. The result will be worthless, of course, unless openly and thoroughly discussed with the membership-at-large, followed immediately by a very serious attempt to implement resulting recommendations.

Interpreting the Checklist

The Burnout Prevention Checklist signals to the leader that somebody cares. Response A1 ("work and/or life situation has changed to leave less time") is not usually something the group can do anything about, except to be sympathetically aware of the situation and adapt to it as they can.

A2 and A3 type situations (regarding the "magnitude of the task") can often be ameliorated, if not prevented, by more honesty on both sides in the initial leadership selection or nomination process. That honesty, in turn, will be assisted by having good job descriptions for group leadership positions. Even better than job descriptions would be a detailed layout of task components of the leadership role, exactly as we do down the left hand column of Work Assignment Grids. The leader can then begin to rate each task component (+,−, or blank) as in a Work Assignment Grid and, further, start trying to spin off some of the minuses or even an overabundance of pluses.

BURNOUT-PREVENTION CHECKLIST FOR LEADERS

Feeling that the job will be too much?
Some options and some questions…

A. PLEASE CIRCLE BELOW ANY OF THE THINGS THAT MAY HAVE CHANGED BETWEEN FIRST ACCEPTING THIS LEADERSHIP JOB AND NOW.

1 My work and/or life situation has changed to leave less time.

2 I've realized more clearly the magnitude of the task.

3 I feel that the magnitude of the task actually has increased.

4 The support system I anticipated for the work isn't as strong as I hoped it would be.

5 Other:

B. WHAT ARE SOME OF THE GROUP'S OPTIONS NOW, IN REGARD TO THE WORK OF LEADERSHIP?

1 We can cut the job down or eliminate some parts of it.

2 We can keep the job pretty much as is, but do more delegating or job-sharing with other volunteers.

3 We can do more delegation/job sharing, but with paid staff (if there are any).

4 Other options for dealing with the leadership work:

C. ONCE THE GROUP HAS DONE WHAT IT CAN WITH RE-DESIGN OF THE WORK OF LEADERSHIP, WHAT ARE MY OPTIONS AS AN OFFICER OR LEADER OF THE GROUP?

1 Re-design or reduce other parts of my life so the work will fit better into my life.

2 Withdraw entirely from the work, resign, in hopes another person can be found who will be in a better position to handle the job effectively. (How do I feel about this?)

3 Take the job or job-share, but for a shorter tenure, e.g., six months instead of a year.

4 Recognize that enough changes have been made in the job (via B above) so I can now take it as is.

5 Other:

D. HOW CAN THE ORGANIZATION BEST PREVENT RECURRENCE OF THIS PROBLEM?

(Open-ended)

This anticipates the responses B1, B2, and B3 about limiting or sharing the work, which are various ways of saying: "Help! Less Work, Please!" Generally, though, A4 ("the support system I anticipated for the work isn't as strong as hoped") is what it's all about—recognizing the need for a truly strong support system for volunteer leaders.

Section C of the Burnout Prevention Checklist is ultimately the leader's responsibility for decision making, although we may hope the entire preceding process has made that decision clearer, and more likely to result in benefits both for the leader and the group.

Finally, allowing open-ended response to Section D allows open-ended *discussion*. I only hope one of the suggestions will be regular repetition of this Leadership Burnout Prevention Process.

4 BECOMING INCLUSIVE

A long time ago, I'm told, the words "volunteer" and "welcome" were closely related. They still are, as an issue: who to include (vs. exclude) in our groups, and how to do this. It's a special concern for all-volunteer groups, since they tend to lack formal rules and structures for deciding who's in, who's out, and who does what. The result often looks to the outsider like a small "insider" clique. The insider, on the other hand, feels overburdened, martyred and lonely. From any viewpoint, anemia of the membership is a chronic ailment of all-volunteer groups, always serious and sometimes fatal.

By contrast, the case for healthy inclusiveness goes like this: When we include more people...

- we are more likely to be truly representative of our cause or mission and less vulnerable to the charge of elitism or snobbery.
- we have more members to distribute work among (via the Work Assignment Grid).
- other things being equal, we have more clout for advocacy and more access to money and other resources.

Unfortunately, some groups get much of their sense of identity and power from being exclusive rather than inclusive. Membership barriers which keep certain people outside, make people inside feel more important. There is even a certain inevitability about this, as Ellis and Noyes' note in their classic history of volunteerism, *By the People:*

> *Another characteristic of volunteerism past and present is that it is often exclusionary. Self-help and religiously affiliated groups, in particular, are inherently limited in membership and who is served. This is an argument in favor of government involvement in the provision of basic services. Only the government is mandated to be nondiscriminatory and all-inclusive; it is the right of volunteer groups to focus on a narrower constituency.*[1]

Criteria for Membership

Numerous bases, acknowledged or not, have been used for selectivity in membership: religion, social class, financial capability, ethnic background, age, race, competency, education, level of interest, etc. Some of these "reasons" have more validity than others. Thus, the advanced bowlers' club probably need not concentrate on recruiting people who don't bowl. Even the beginners' bowling club can avoid folks with a well-documented disinterest in bowling. Ordinarily, why should a neighborhood organization on the south side of town recruit members from a different neighborhood on the north side of town? What obligation does the Harvard Alumni Association have to recruit Yale-ies, or vice versa?

Other cases are not quite as clear. For example, should the Norwegian-American Friendship Association (I made up the name, I think) recruit at least a few Americans who aren't of Norwegian descent? Are there any circumstances in which a woman's support group should actively welcome men?

And what of money as an entrance requirement? The conference and membership fees asked by national volunteer resource organizations effectively exclude many hands-on staff leaders of volunteer programs. The costs of flagship national conferences for volunteer coordinators—$1,000 or more on the average—probably exclude 95% plus of the career volunteer leadership field, on a financial basis. And what of the country club with stratospheric membership fees, and nearly eternal waiting lists? Does a group have a right to make exclusiveness itself, on any basis, its main product?

The question of whom to target for membership recruiting pretty much comes down to the question of how much diversity your group is willing to accept, and on what basis. Focusing your recruitment on certain target audiences is most reasonable when:

- It is based on realistic capability of access and interest. The Civic Club of Denver should not be expected to recruit intentionally in Melbourne, Australia or even in Salt Lake City.

- It is applied positively to outreach rather than negatively for "keep out" purposes. The women's support group is on stronger grounds actively seeking women members than in deliberately devising barriers to exclude men.

- Membership criteria do not exclude people who could contribute to a mission with broad social significance. A religious group building homes for low-income people could be on shaky grounds refusing the volunteer services of an agnostic contractor.

- You are honest about it. Spare me your inclusive rhetoric when you are actually uncomfortable with my beliefs because they diverge from yours. Don't solicit my money or participation if I can never fully belong to your group.

Now, try listing the things your group does which make it easier to belong and the things that are qualifications, or hurdles, or barriers which make it harder to belong. You may be surprised at how exclusive you really are, and be prompted to ask if the barriers are "justified" in any of the ways just described.

Attracting New Members

The point in all this is that membership size, diversity, and strength should not be weakened by *unjustified* limitations on admittance. The first step in attracting new members is to become aware of such limits and eliminate them.

On the other hand, hanging out the "Everybody Welcome" sign may sound nice but is, for one thing, very impractical. No group can actually afford to outreach actively to everybody. Nor should they be asked to. Rather, we should target *relevant* people who buy into our mission/purpose, can help implement it, and can access our activities or programs.

How do we do this? This chapter thus far has mentioned two things:

- become aware of and confront *unjustified* exclusiveness; and

- be suspicious of mere rhetoric, however eloquent. Look at what your group *does*, not what it says.

This book has also made some other points so far:

- It's much easier to involve people if you have a real mission/philosophy and can communicate it clearly.

- People will be attracted by the prospect of genuine input in setting project goals and by a good track record in achieving goals.

- Try to think of your group, and also present it, as a *vehicle* within which the prospective member can help to achieve some desired things she or he couldn't achieve alone (and which also happen to be important to the group).

- Offer *maximum choice*, within the framework of your mission, in range of job content, style, setting and locale. "Our way is the only way" is the ultimate turn-off. "Do it *your* way" is more respectful and effective.

- The most attractive message/style is: "Tell us the things you like to do and do pretty well, and we'll find a way to use these talents on behalf of our group's goals." Next most attractive is: "Here are the (volunteer) jobs we have, but *how* you get the work accomplished is up to you." This challenges the conventional wisdom of cast-in-stone job descriptions.

Finally, in the remaining chapters of this book you'll find these other suggestions for attracting active members:

- Rarely do people want to cast their lot with a fly-by-night roller-coaster of an organization. Maintaining continuity, even on a bare bones budget, is important.

- A gratifying number of people enjoy networking—the process as well as the outcomes. The effective all-volunteer group does a lot of internal networking, and does it well.

The quality of the group itself—vital, caring, responsive—is your main incentive for bringing in new members. No amount of slick recruiting technique can disguise a lousy group for long. The word gets around, even in a large city. So beware of spending more than a fraction of your time on recruiting technique, per se, in isolation from the building of the group.

That said, here are a few process points in recruiting:

- Be conscious of *levels* of participation. Moving people from inactive to active membership, for example, might be easier and more productive than moving people from non-membership into token participation.

- Remember that a good member retained may be worth two or more recruited. Don't get so fascinated with bringing people in the front door that you forget to clean the living room!

- Watch your language—adapt it to the people you're talking to. Some people have a negative image of the word "volunteer" and don't like to be "recruited" either. But they'll "pitch in" or "help out."

- Make recruiting *everyone's* responsibility, not just the overwhelming burden of a lonely membership chair, president or volunteer coordinator.

Recruitment Techniques

The most effective recruiting technique by far (*if* you have a group worth belonging to) is word of mouth, also called "one person tells another" or "each-one-reach-one." You can pump this process by being sure each member understands that bringing in a good new person or two each year is an important responsibility for very member. Then be sure to reward or recognize members who do so, e.g., "Headhunter of the Year" or, even better, "Hearthunter." Some groups have a social each year to which each member brings a friend or two who is a good prospect. Just keep in mind that one-to-one recruitment that relies on current members talking to their friends may not bring you much diversity, if that's your goal. People tend to be friends with others who look like they do and have similar backgrounds, education, income levels, etc.

On one hand, diversity (in everything) is not always an end unto itself, as when a group is designed to accommodate similarity of interest (gardening), similarity in values (environmentalism, religious beliefs), or similarity in problem being confronted (self-help groups). But where diversity in at least some respects is wanted, try some active one-to-one outreach to people your current members *don't* know yet. It may open lots of new doors.

Here are a few suggestions. Within each-one-reach-one, ask each "recruiter" (that's everyone concerned) to try to bring in two new people each year as prospects: one friend or colleague who is "a person much like you who you think will be good for our group"; the other should be "a person who will be equally good for the group, whom you know pretty well, but who is nevertheless quite different from you."

To approach relatively untapped pools of prospective members, all-volunteer groups may need to borrow some of the techniques being applied successfully in agency-related volunteer programs. Use of the media and the Internet, bulletin board flyers, speeches to civic groups—all of these outreach strategies inform new people that your organization is actively seeking new participants.

For at least some all-volunteer groups, a viable recruiting source might be the people you are trying to impact (who would be called "clients" in an agency program)—or those whom you have been successful in helping. This might be a satisfied sector of a performing arts group audience or someone whose house the volunteer fire department just saved.

The more "talking up" your members can do about the organization, the more likely new people will hear about it and join in the enthusiasm. But remember, the greatest recruiting lure is the purpose of the group itself.

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[1]Susan J. Ellis and Katherine H. Noyes, *By the People: A History of Americans as Volunteers*, revised edition (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1990), p. 358. (Third edition to be published 2003.)

5 CONTINUITY ON A BARE BONES BUDGET

The "Great Paper Chase" is a true story. It began at the end of the semi-annual board meeting of a statewide all-volunteer group. With our good wishes, the incoming President had just left for her home in another part of the state. About three minutes later the retiring President suddenly said: "Good grief! She hasn't got the files and records!" So we grabbed a hefty box of same, raced for the car, and chased the new President down the road, at speeds I'd rather not recall. Finally, we caught her, frantically signaled her to pullover, and transferred the group records. Thus began my thinking about Bargain Basement Offices.

A frequent cause of ineffectiveness in all-volunteer organizations is low to very-low financial resources. This usually means there are no paid staff to provide continuity of effort. Instead, as we have been discussing, work which would otherwise be done or at least monitored by one person must be distributed among several to many part-time volunteers. Characteristically, these volunteers have a major share of time and motivational investment elsewhere, in their paid workplace, home and family, other volunteer groups, etc. Therefore, individual volunteers frequently fail to "do their piece" of an action plan, or fail to do it on time, or fail to do it properly, and this has a ripple effect on later stages of implementation dependent on this earlier stage. The ripple effect becomes a tidal wave drowning goals and morale.

One way of dealing with the situation, as we have already discussed, is to use the Work Assignment Grid. Another way is to develop a prototype or basic capability for continuity, on a very low budget. We're talking here of financial resources in the $2,500-$5,000 a year range (in 2003 dollars), based on the assumption that major donations would not figure dominantly in a grassroots volunteer association's development.

Many entirely volunteer groups mistakenly see only two alternatives: their current situation, with no paid staff at all (which is unsatisfactory); or a fully-staffed operation (which is unaffordable).

The "bare bones office" is an intermediate option, which is just beginning to be understood and exploited. The following are some suggestions which, at minor cost, can produce major improvements in goal achievement, membership, etc.

Finding a Home Base

First, do not let the group's address move with the president or secretary each time there is a new one. Get a post office box (and keep it), if possible, at some location likely to continue to be conveniently accessible.

Try to find some organization with an office which has enough stake in what you are doing, and enough potential benefit from it, that they will give you a corner somewhere. In that corner, place a small desk and file cabinet which might be donated or purchased cheaply second-hand. Ditto a typewriter or computer. Most office supplies you'd have to purchase or get donated anyhow, whether you have an office or not.

Copy machines are expensive new and used ones are sometimes of uncertain performance, so you'll want access to one at your office, or via a reasonably close and inexpensive copying center.

The set-up will be better if you have access to a local phone. Be deliriously happy if there's an 800-number phone even partially available to you.

Try to get a small sign with your group's name on it.

For all this, you might, if it is financially feasible, offer to contribute something to the host organization towards rent, utilities, phone. Even a nominal amount may be greatly appreciated.

Note: Rent-an-address or rent-a-closet space is also a possibility but tends to be more expensive than expansive (little space for files, visitors, etc.). Donated space of your own is fine, but rare, and office equipment doesn't usually come along with it. Space shared with another compatible non-staffed group is a good possibility for any of the office space models discussed here. Try working through your local Volunteer Center to find possible space partners.

Staff on a Gratuity

Thus far, we've fixed it so people can find you (by mail and maybe by phone, too) while at the same time you can find the files and records of the organization. We also have a consistent staging area for mailings, newsletter preparation, and other vital functions. What we don't have is a person to "hold the fort" on a more or less continuous basis. A single volunteer can hardly ever afford the time; the organization usually can't afford the money to hire people who have the time.

Or so it seems. Yet, somewhere between totally paid and totally unpaid is a largely unexplored area variously identifiable as token-paid, stipended, gratuity-appreciated, or the like. This is a "sweetener" rather than a salary, typically in the $75-150 a month range. Along with it, we can offer the widest possible assortment of in-kind incentives—for example, discounts and other special privileges that tend to go along with meaningful memberships. Someday, our person may even hope for a parking space!

A sweetener of, say, $100 a month is no more than a percentage of what a full-time paid executive secretary or administrator can command. But the leverage which locks this person into regularity of office presence is far more than a percent. This is due to the powerful symbolic significance many attach to being paid in any fashion. Beyond that, many retired people have a fairly close cap on how much money they can make before it begins to cut into their pension or Social Security benefits. For a person trying to break into the job market, there is the promise of growth in salary and stature, as the organization grows.

Often, the financial value to the person hired maybe that of a welcome "extra," perhaps a modest shopping spree or other small fling now and then, a topping off of the vacation fund, or maybe just a little lubrication for a squeaky-tight budget. In all these ways, a little extra can mean a lot.

The caution here is to discontinue token-pay in favor of full pay as soon as finances permit.

Don't call it "token payment." Call it "fee for service," "honorarium," "gratuity" (as in gratitude), "stipend," or what you will. For tax records, my present understanding is that this is considered a contract for services, but to be absolutely sure of current law, you should consult a volunteer attorney or accountant.

The person hired would probably work about 10 to 20 hours a week if at all possible. The work role is somewhere in the area of executive secretary, office manager or administrator, with elements of volunteer coordinator, monitor, and back-up thrown in:

- As an office manager, the stipended staff person (or the volunteers s/he recruits and supervises) would keep files, records and membership lists up to date, do mailings and the like.

- As a volunteer coordinator, the person augments time and functional coverage of the office by actively recruiting and supporting the work of volunteers. There is a qualitative improvement in the effectiveness of such staff-coordinated volunteers over volunteers trying to cover the office alone.

- As a monitor, the office manager can continuously check on volunteer performance in implementing the organization's action plans or Work Assignment Grids; remind people, when necessary, of lagging timeframes; and, where performance gaps do occur, at least signal this promptly to the responsible leadership person. This is far less damaging than discovering the dereliction at the next board meeting, six months hence.

- As back-up, our proto-staff person can occasionally plug crucial performance gaps left by WAG participants. This should not be done frequently or regularly; there isn't enough time, and it might encourage too much relaxation on the part of WAG volunteers. In any case, the overall coordinator role is usually hardest to fill in Work Assignment Grids, and this is where our stipended staff person can help us greatly.

For as little as $2,500 a year, the bargain basement office can make a million dollars worth of difference in an organization—or what seems like it.

If you don't have the money now, it's a goal worth shooting for in individual solicitation, voluntary supplements to membership fees, small grants, etc. Once the proto-organization is in place, it's likely to earn its own way through the kind of increased effectiveness which attracts and holds more members, and enhances other revenues as well. It is nice to have a "real" office address, even for a small grant application. The prestige of having an office doesn't have a precise dollar value, but can be considerable.

The Secretariat Model

A major alternative to the do-it-yourself option is the purchase of "secretariat" or association management services, in which you negotiate with a firm or qualified individual to perform a fairly broad set of basic administrative functions. Professionally operated association management services are efficient and take a lot of details off your shoulders. However, this option will usually cost more, since the service provider ordinarily has to make some profit. Also, you will not have a space that is really your own, nor will you have ongoing detailed control of administrative functions, once the basic contract with the association management person or firm is negotiated.

Because of the expense, the purchase of secretariat services seems most appropriate for all-volunteer associations of regional or wider scope. It is especially well suited to a geographically dispersed group.

The President of a national organization for volunteer leaders and volunteers kindly shared these thoughts on their experience with association management/ secretariat services. These comments were written in 1988 after two years' of their secretariat arrangement, at about $5,000 per year. I happened to be a member of this national association and, from that more limited perspective, agree with the President's perceptions.

> *[Secretariat service] is probably the best solution for an organization such as ours, needing but not able to afford full-time staff. We also considered "piggybacking" with another association, but feared losing our unique identity.*
>
> *It is probably highly dependent on the individual(s) primarily responsible for your organization in the secretariat. We are fortunate to have someone as responsible as [secretariat person]. He is knowledgeable, has good judgement, and feels free to discuss problems that may arise. One way to assess whether or not the secretariat is serving members or others is in the feedback given by those who request services.*
>
> *It is useful to choose as secretariat an organization that is knowledgeable about your particular field. There are management associations that provide membership services for a wide range of clients, but my preference remains to stay with someone who can answer questions, knows your concerns and can knowledgeably suggest changes.*
>
> *We made a number of changes in the contract with [the secretariat] for the second year. Those reflected the realities of the amount of money we had to spend; the services that [the secretariat] felt they could realistically provide; and a re-evaluation after a year of experience. I'd recommend an original minimum of a two-year commitment of both parties, with an escape provision if there are serious problems. It took the first year to discover what works or doesn't, the communication needed, etc. It was a shake-down time.*

It's probably preferable to contract with an organization, rather than an individual. Although this is not universally true, dependency on one person may cause interruptions in services due to vacations, illness, or other commitments. In addition, if the secretariat is used as the telephone number of the organization, it is important to have someone to answer during normal business hours.

Having a secretariat provides a stable address and telephone number for the association.

Depending on what services are in the contract, members of the Board of Directors should be prepared to take on more responsibilities than if they had a full-time staff.

There are limitations to the secretariat concept. You are contracted for specific services, and if new ideas, problems, or projects arise, it's not as easy as assigning them to a regular staff. This means you become more conservative in commitments, although hopefully never in dreams!

It is, however, infinitely better than having no staff and no secretariat.

I suppose that the bottom line is that if an association can find someone they respect and trust, as we have done, I'd say go for it!

6 FEASIBLE FUNDRAISING

Certain rigidities bleed entirely volunteer groups of time and money. This happens partly because many members as *individuals* have a bigger budget than any volunteer *group* to which they belong. They are thus prone to "project" onto the group's budget, perks and amenities they take for granted as individuals, but which the group cannot really afford.

Whatever the source of profligacy, this chapter urges not spending money unnecessarily, or time either. To be sure, lecturing all-volunteer groups on frugality may seem strange—we rarely use two paper clips when one will do! Wasted paper clips aren't usually the problem, though, or most anything of a concrete, visible sort. What might be a problem is "resource leakage" in the area of ritual, habit, and prestige—doing it because it's always been done that way.

Resource Leakage

Ritual and Recognition

Some ritual and recognition is valuable, even necessary, in an entirely volunteer group. But how much? Some years ago, new on the board of a largely volunteer national organization, I was greeted by the news that the organization was several hundred thousand dollars in debt! Severe economies needed urgent implementation. Among the cuts not made by the board, was the sending of a chauffeured limousine to meet the chairperson at the airport! I am not making this up—the board preferred the risk of bankruptcy to loss of this public-image perk.

I expect most non-staffed volunteer groups have already given up chauffeured limousines, though we may still overspend on more common image and ritual" items and activities. Include here, expensive volunteer recognition items. This "platinum plaque" syndrome strikes groups in which the reward of members becomes a major, if unacknowledged, goal of the group. Expense often exceeds sincerity here; tradition overwhelms performance; and attention is diverted from what the group is supposed to be all about.

There is another way, however. The distinguished psychologist who volunteered his services to our program had an office wall crowded with impressive plaques,diplomas and trophies. In a central place of special honor was our volunteer recognition certificate. As the volunteer coordinator, I happened to know its objective worth as about ten cents! So did he, I'm sure, but he also knew we meant it for far more than its pawnshop redemption value. And so, if your group is spending more than, say, 10% of total budget on ritual and recognition, you are spending too much (unless, of course, the purpose of the group is ritual).

Training and Consultation

The promo touted a two-day workshop for—I remember the phrase well—"grassroots community groups." The registration fee was $500! Were they kidding? Unfortunately, they were not. By contrast, Scheier's rule states that spending more than $15 as a fee for a local brown-bagging workshop means paying partly for prestige, scenery, or a gourmet lunch. Scheier's law is somewhat extreme. Yet, in a recent study,[1] seventy volunteer leaders, asked to imagine an ideal resource situation and process in support of their work, produced as a major theme: affordable quality training. Volunteer leadership training is today a major industry capable of offering options which do link affordability with quality. Indeed, you may be able to get a lot of this kind of help free, via networking (see Chapter 7). So don't spend big money just because expensive training has always been assumed as essential in the past, or simply to be seen at a popular workshop conducted by a famous trainer.

Boards

Boards, along with *workshops*—and especially workshops ON boards—may be seen someday as a major obsession of the late twentieth century. There are more workshops and books on this subject than just about any other. All-volunteer groups often invest huge amounts of time, talent and money trying to get their boards to work, without getting much work from their boards. Conventional wisdom and powerful tradition blind us to frequent fact: in terms of "energy in"/"energy out," boards are often losers.

The good news is that many and probably most all-volunteer groups are not legally mandated to have a board (if they are not incorporated). They *could* get stubborn enough to reject kneejerk conformity as a basis for developing and maintaining a dinosaur, when a tiger is what they want. In a recent article, my co-author and I put it this way: We "...are free to entertain the ultimate sacrilege of not having a board and of finding less formal, more effective ways in which the organization can do what it needs to do to accomplish its mission and to meet the needs of its constituents."[2] We went on to indicate how basic needs of an organization and its members (for which it is often assumed you need a board) can often be met as well or better *without* a board.

These needs include cultivation and maintenance of a common vision (as we have already discussed), companionship in the cause (somebody to talk to now and then), representation of constituencies, tapping into volunteer staff capabilities of members, access to door-opening clout, and coordination of the group's activities and projects. Much of this work must be done via individuals, and to be sure, even the worst board has a few positive and productive individuals. However, this justifies the individuals, not the board.

When a board is geographically dispersed, travel and lodging expenses can be enormous for annual and other meetings; I've seen them reach 80-85% of a group's total budget! A self-disciplined, process-wise board can sometimes use far less expensive conference calls in lieu of fly-ins. The Internet is providing even more low-cost options for distance learning and for real-time online interaction. Further savings are possible if out-of-town board members stay in the homes of host-community members, whenever face-to-face meetings are absolutely necessary.

Indeed, I wonder if it's time to re-examine what gets us into the fly-in or drive-in situation in the first place? Beyond the prestige of it, do we absolutely require board geographical representation even on a board with regional or national responsibilities? Many people in an organization's headquarters community will have lived all over, and will be able to represent in some fashion the perspectives of other locales. Moreover, in our era of mass communication, national and global perspective can be found in almost any county or community the group is headquartered in. It is more a matter of attitude and information than location.

So, be skeptical about conventional wisdom. You may sometimes find a policy board is everything the textbooks say it should be. At other times, you'll discover the job can be done with far less time and money drain, using individuals and/or informal advisory networks, and/or with very low investment in an honorary board.

Fundraising in New Terms

Even in fundraising, enslavement to conventional wisdom can end up as pain-without-payoff. At any rate, it may cost you a lot more than the effort is worth. When a struggling all-volunteer group discusses major fundraising, two concepts often kick in automatically: we need to write a grant, and/or we need to have (another?) big fundraising event.

Frequently these concepts should be *kicked out*—as soon as possible!

Example: a colleague of mine returned from a week-long seminar on grantwriting, thrilled by the quality of material and presentation. Back home in reality, she spent so much time trying to hold her precarious organization together, she had neither time nor energy for the sophisticated grantwriting the seminar taught her. Meanwhile, board members continued with good intentions and nil production, and non-board members failed to write successful grants. The group folded.

Beyond all this, larger grants tend to require a showing of organizational capability, the lack of which prompted you to write the proposal in the first place! As for really small grant requests, many foundations, especially larger ones, won't be bothered looking at them. In any event, there may be far more efficient ways to get that kind of money (keep reading). Avoid the grantwriting reflex.

Another common reflex is the big fundraising event. There's nothing wrong with the *God-forbid-it-should-rain* annual fundraiser except God forbid it should rain. And don't forget increasingly fierce competition (God forbid there should be ten other events the same day!). Finally, there's a real chance the enormous effort involved could overstrain the organization.

Here then are some first thoughts towards a more "appropriate technology" of fundraising for all-volunteer groups; specifically, a fundraising process which is efficient, consistent with mission, does not overly drain leadership/membership time, and does not assume levels of sophistication and resources which are unlikely to exist. The goal is minimum deviation from "what comes naturally" to individuals or the organization in nature and intensity of effort. The following fundraising strategies offer something almost every member/volunteer/supporter can do—everyone doing a little bit, instead of a sacrificial few trying to do a whole lot.

The two strategies described here are "time tithing" and "cause-related advertising," or "co-promotion." In both, the individual member is able to convert a modest investment of volunteer time and "natural" behavior into money. The money does not come out of his or her pocket; it comes out of time and choices—which can be a whole lot less painful.

Time Tithing: The Benefit Brigade

"Time tithing" extends the concept of "benefit performances" by entertainers to all kinds of services for which a person might be paid; for example, conducting a workshop, washing cars, typing, doing chores, or professional services of any type. But instead of keeping the money for themselves, time tithers have the amount, sometimes minus expenses, sent *directly* to the organization they wish to support. In other words, they convert volunteer time directly into money for the benefit of their organization. (A key consideration for the benefiting organization is that these services be of good quality.)

Advantages to the time tither include being able to contribute to the group without making a direct monetary donation. In fact, the amount "raised" may be substantially more than that individual might be able to give outright in cash. It therefore allows people with little cash to make contributions more equivalent to those with deep pockets.

In the United States, if the check is sent by the tither's customer directly to the recipient group, and this group does not provide services or products to the donor, the amount donated need not be declared on the tither's income tax. By prior arrangement, the tither may divide the money and keep at least some of it (but that latter amount would be taxable to the tither).

As a fundraising strategy, time tithing has a number of advantages for the low-budget, non-staffed group. These include:

- Time tithing gives people something relatively easy they can do to support you, unlike writing a grant or organizing an ambitious fundraising event.
- You probably already have a core group of potential time tithers on which to build, in your key members, volunteers, dollar donors and board.
- You can build this core group steadily and easily, person by person, or group by group. You're not faced with periodic crises demanding severe extra time and effort drains.
- Once the time-tithed dollar flow gets established, it will tend to produce a relatively steady flow of funds you can pretty much count on rather than, say, a relatively risky once-a-year infusion of money from a fundraising event.
- Time tithers are quite likely to become even stronger stakeholders in the group through their contributions.

The donee group reaps all these benefits without enormous investment of time, effort, skill, equipment, or money. This is, in sum, doable dollar development for the struggling all-volunteer group. The Center for Creative Community, which I founded as an almost entirely volunteer group, earned more than half its total revenue via time tithing for the first six years of its existence.

Variations

I've defined time tithing activities as those services for which an individual normally could be paid. I did this not just for purposes of simplification, but also because this seems to be an under-exploited area of funding enterprise. However, I certainly do not recommend refusing money from related sources. These include:

- Time tithing by a *group* contributor; for example, a group conducts a benefit workshop, with the proceeds going to *your* group.

- Money and services contributed for which one would normally *not* be paid; for example for each mile walked in a marathon.

- Money received for products rather than services; for example, the bake sale or things you contribute for sale at a benefit auction.

The last two are important but somewhat different than time tithing as defined here. In any case, they are well explored in other publications and workshops.

There is one more form of fundraising related to time tithing worth consideration. This is when, for example, an all-volunteer group that provides free job counseling for low-income people earns a little extra visibility as well as money by doing the same thing *for a fee* for middle-income folks. When such fundraising activities relate to the group's overall purposes, your "presence" in the community is enhanced. Only be sure you're clear on criteria for who pays and who doesn't. Also, be sensitive to the lure of doing so much for-fee counseling that you begin to neglect the no-fee counseling that is the group's main purpose.

Cause-related Advertising

The second appropriate technology for fundraising is called cause-related advertising or co-promotion. Here, the volunteer's time-to-money conversion is a kind of benevolently directed consumership: purchasing goods or services from a business which has agreed to give your group a percentage of proceeds.

Co-promotion is essentially the opposite of a boycott (called by one women's group a "girlcott"!) In a boycott you ask your friends and supporters not to patronize a certain business because you don't like what they are doing or have done. In co-promotion, you urge your friends and supporters to make a special effort to patronize a business because you do like them. The reason you like them is because they are giving your group a share of their business proceeds. Your constituency becomes their customers.

Cause-related advertising can have the following advantages:

- It converts a resource you already have—your friends, supporters, clients, etc.—into money.

- It does this with relative ease, little time drain, once the system is properly set up. You'll be asking a relatively small thing of a lot of people rather than a large thing of just a few people—probably the same old worn-out fundraising folks.

- The process is *mutually* advantageous for the charitable group and the business, rather than one more case of begging on your part. You're sending them (new) customers in return for the money you get from them. Not to mention the excellent public relations they get.

Basic Steps in Setting Up a Co-Promotion Program

Believe it or not, business people also want to share your passion. In approaching a business partner, translate whatever may sound abstract and intellectual in what you do to the emotional language of "heart tugs." By all means, say something like: "We pursue affordable, appropriate housing options for elderly, low-income people," but also add something like this: "In many elderly households, fresh vegetables or social activities are sacrificed to pay the rent. Dental and eye care lose out to property taxes," etc.

Choose possible target businesses according to criteria such as:

1. The company is reputable, solid, and provides fair value of goods or services.
2. The company sells directly to consumers rather than to other companies.
3. The company depends on relatively high volume of moderately to low-priced sales rather than high-priced specialty operations in a limited consumer market.
4. More likely prospects are businesses in which there is keen competition to market services or products which do not obviously differ markedly from company to company, e.g., fast food restaurants, banks, auto dealers, and many others.
5. The company presently markets in the geographic area in which your constituency concentrates—or might like to extend its geographic area.
6. The business has a particular interest in attracting your main constituent groups as customers. For example, if you are a women's resource network, your target businesses might include a local women's clothing store. If you have a general constituency, aim for companies with a broader customer base such as a supermarket.
7. The company's purpose, style, or products do not conflict with the basic goals of your organization.
8. The business has some track record of social responsibility in the community.
9. Someone in your organization is a well-known good customer and/or friend or relation of the business under consideration.

The essential characteristics to look for are a reputable business selling fair-value products or services in a competitive market, e.g., a restaurant, a department store, a movie theater, a car dealership, etc. Naturally, they would need to be businesses sympathetic to your group's purposes.

I suggest, too, that the approach be made open-endedly at first. For example: "Look, if we could get you lots of new customers from among our members and friends, would you be willing to contribute something (tax deductible) to our cause on a kind of commission basis? We can work out the details later. There are lots of options, if you think the general idea is worth looking into."

Even if all or most of the above criteria are met, do not expect to hit a perfect percentage of willing businesses with a relatively new concept such as this. But to try the concept out, start with a list of twenty or so prospects. One idea might be to approach an entire small shopping center—all the better if your supporters have choices when they do their caring-buying.

As a next step, establish a list of your friends/supporters/clients who might be willing to patronize the targeted business. These are people who you think would be willing to give their trade to Business X rather than Business Y, if they knew Business X was giving a "commission" or something like it to your charitable organization. The assumption is that both are about equally good businesses with not much difference in convenience for your constituency-as-customers.

Select the method of implementing best adapted to your group and its co-promotion business partner. Most common is a percentage of revenues (usually about 10%) on a particular business day or week. Other possibilities include such things as one table at a restaurant that always gives a percentage of the billed amount to your group and has a sign on the table noting this. Finally, your group can sell coupons redeemable at the business for more than the face value you get for them. In all cases, though, your part of the co-promotion is to promote it assiduously with your members.

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[1]Nancy David and Ivan Scheier, "Proclaiming the Vision," in "DOVIA Exchange,"Vol. VIII, No. 3, August/September 1992 (Madrid, NM: Center for Creative Community).

[2]Jane Mallory Park and Ivan Scheier, "How NOT to have a Board. . .and Why," in the Spring 1992 issure of "Grapevine," VMSystems, Downers Grove, IL. (The crucial "NOT" was not in the title as published—though we sincerely meant it to be.)

7 SERIOUS NETWORKING WITHIN THE GROUP

Every good all-volunteer organization is also something of a self-help group, bonded by win-win interactions. Networks are the glue that holds the group together, and are also a major benefit of belonging to the group for individual members. Networking is also a crucial means of resource development for non-staffed volunteer groups.

The well-budgeted organization can expect to purchase many needed resources from outside the group: equipment, materials, staff support, consulting, training and other technical assistance services. In fact, in some circumstances, purchasing services from within the group may threaten conflict of interest, as when a board member is preferentially selected as a paid consultant to the organization.

By contrast, the all-volunteer low-budget group can only rarely buy what it needs from the outside. It might afford a modest outlay for secretariat services as already discussed. Then again, it might not. Usually the group must draw needed resources mostly from its own members, plus *their* contacts (which might reach outside the group). And so, while networking is a nice thing to do in a staffed organization, it's likely to be an absolute *necessity* for survival of an all-volunteer group. Leaders of all-volunteer groups must therefore be especially skilled in triggering and maintaining networks. In addition, *every individual member* should be equipped to be an effective network participant.

Networking was a popular workshop topic in the early and mid-eighties. During the popular period, I was responsible for a number of workshops and publications on the subject. I also spent the years 1982 to 1985 volunteering around North America mainly to try out network-building methods in real-life situations. Out of that experience grew the following outline for orienting all-volunteer groups to networking. Within this overall framework, there are a number of specific strategies and methods for strengthening networks in an all-volunteer group. A sampling of these methods is presented immediately following this chapter.

A *network* is an ongoing sharing connection in which all participants, and the group as a whole, benefit.

Properly designed and maintained, networks are a relatively inexpensive and effective way of mobilizing problem-solving resources (information, ideas, expertise, personal support, and materials). The basic ingredients of a successful network are *permission*, *attitude* and *simple rules*:

1. *Permission*. Set an atmosphere in which it's okay to admit needs, brag about resources, and seek connections without seeming "nosy," "flirty," or "aggressive."

2. *Network Attitude.* This means behaving according to a belief that everyone (and every organization) has something to give, and everyone needs something. Further, this means expecting that need-resource connections can be made in such a way that all participants come out ahead (win-win).

3. *Simple Rules.* These are vital to the success of a network. Though easy to observe, they are disastrous to neglect, much as is the North American custom of driving on the right side of the road. The networking exercises that follow this chapter demonstrate this principle.

Permission

We are probably all natural networkers; how else can one survive to adulthood? But society erects barriers to the kind of openness networking requires: the willingness to admit and identify your needs and to freely offer your strengths. Consider, for example, the conceivably sincere male stranger who walks up to a woman on the street and suggests they could do some great networking. What he will likely get resembles networking not at all! We need permission and some assurance of sincerity and safety before we let the barriers down. Here are some ways this can be done:

- Make networking the avowed purpose of a meeting, workshop, etc. That helps to make it okay.

- Reinforce networking, mutual support—whatever name is used—as an overall principle or purpose of the group, the church, self-help group, service club, local association of volunteer coordinators, etc.

- All the better if networking is presented as a technique, a method. Some people, otherwise too shy to open up, may be more comfortable if it's phrased as "skill-building."

- Add to this ambiance, protection via the kinds of simple rules shown in the network methods following this chapter.

- It may help to keep the "network practice groups" small at first. The "Guided Conversation" exercise on pages 54 and 55, for example, usually involves only two people.

To repeat, we don't usually have to teach people to network; *we only have to make it safe and legitimate for them to do so.*

This is especially true if it takes courage to reach out and share when conditions are harsh. If we want more networking in our groups, neighborhoods, and communities, we have to prepare more and more safe places of this sort. Apropos of that, I'm often asked: how can you network unless you first build trust? I usually ask in return: how can you build trust unless you first network? The advantage you have in an all-volunteer group is that people already share some commonality of interest and purpose and, in smaller groups, often already know one another. The permission-with-protection approaches just described can build on this.

Cultivating a "Network Attitude"

By "network attitude" is meant this faith: everyone has something to give; everyone also needs something, and win-win connections can readily be made between these needs and gifts.

No one is so poor, uneducated, or client-stereotyped, that they don't have something valuable to offer. And no one is so rich, educated, or successful that they don't need something.

Since our society tends to segregate "designated helpers" and "designated helpees," this network attitude must usually be nurtured and developed slowly, against powerful cultural currents. Straight lecture is probably the least effective way to inculcate network-positive attitudes. The most effective way is through practice of network exercises such as the ones that follow. Experience is by far the best teacher.

Humor helps, too. As an example, see the two cartoons on the following pages. When I use these with groups, the response I expect—which is not always the one I get—for the three-woman cartoon is: "We can't leave the last woman in that hole!" (in the last frame) "Go get a rope and come back," say some, or "get a hose, flood the hole, and throw her a life preserver," said one person (I am not making this up!).

As for the two donkeys, winning entries for captions have included:

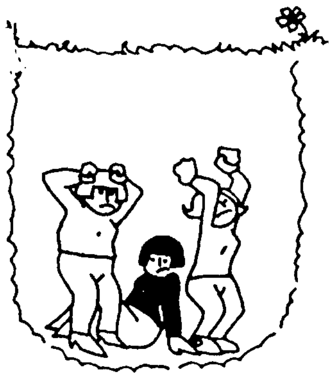
"Cooperating is better than competition."

"Pull together or we'll get pulled apart."

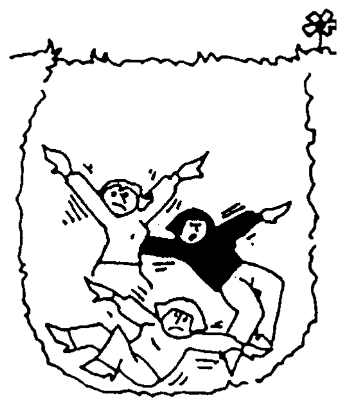
"If you're going to be an ass about it, we'll all starve!"

Finally, caricature of what not to do can enhance our appreciation of network attitude. Here is an example, contributed by Connie Hyatt of the Oregon State Department of Human Resources. Her network-averse types are oriented somewhat towards volunteer programs in agencies, rather than all-volunteer groups. But the overall relevance is crystal clear.

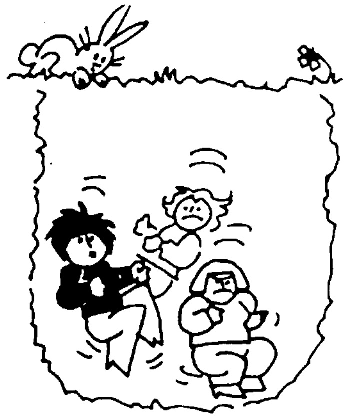
> **"Turf Ogre"**: A person with insecurities who needs to control. Turf Ogres can be found dominating meetings, identifying (other's) successful projects by the pronoun we, hiding names of volunteers, never mentioning funding sources, looking after #1, and in general being difficult. Turf Ogres fear the "pirating away" of volunteers more than any other calamity they can imagine. They encounter great difficulty dealing with volunteers who do not see themselves as slaves.



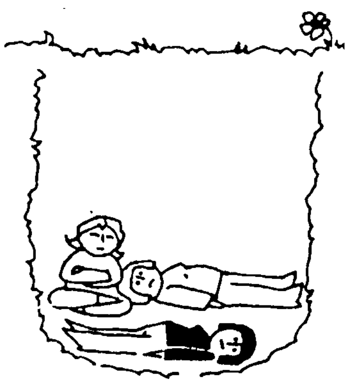
Once upon a time, there were some people stuck in a pit. . .



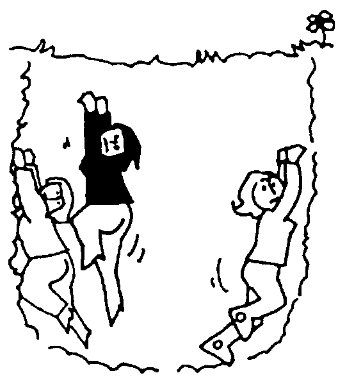
They tried to fly out by flapping their arms. . .



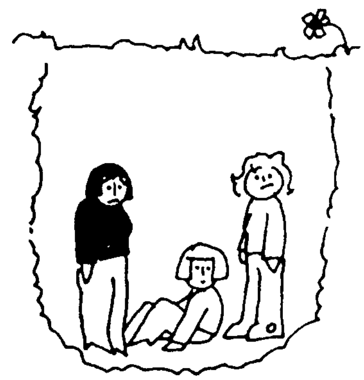
They tried jumping. . .



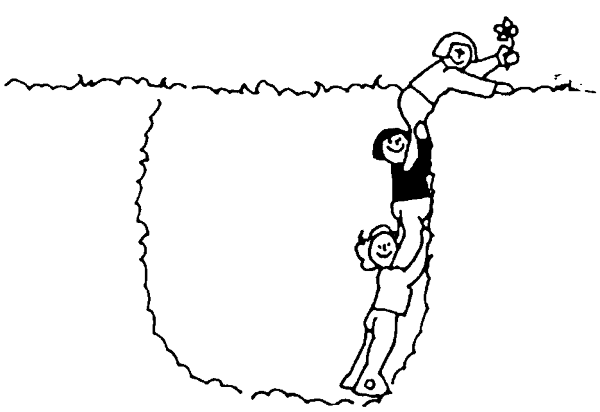
They tried meditation and levitation. . .



They even tried climbing the walls. . .

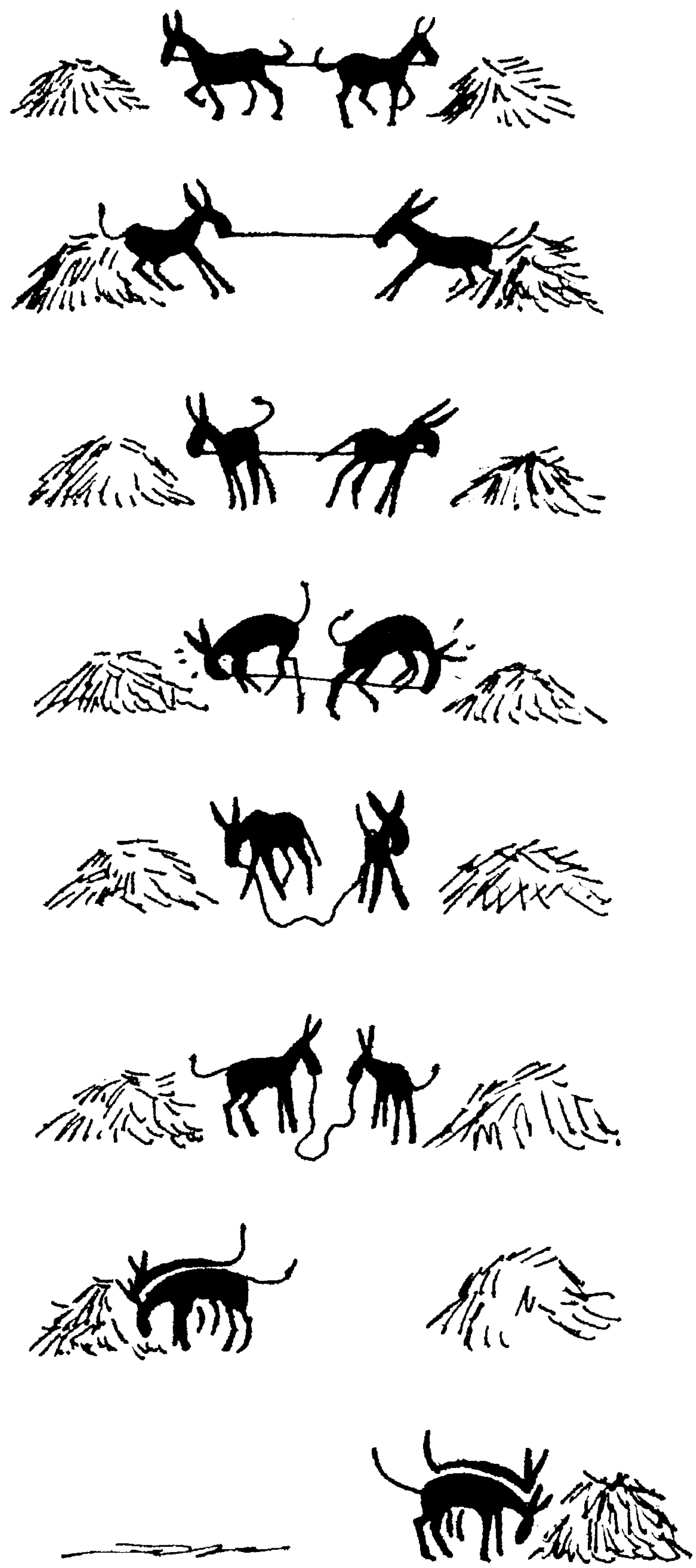


This went on for years and years until they had tried everything except helping each other out. . .



So they helped each other out!

[Source and date unknown; attributed to National Council of Jewish Women]



[Source and date unknown]

"Co-Opter": A person with a silky smile and an overly agreeable nature. Co-opting is a very effective way to neutralize the competition. Co-opters want to own people and are, in general, immature, insecure and lacking in a sense of professionalism. A Co-Opter "assimilates" the competition by including them as members, making their activity a part of her/his newsletter, making sure that the competition is always invited to recognition events and receives a reward if possible. In these ways a Co-opter will destroy the competition's ability to relate to anybody else. Co-Opters encounter great difficulty with networks, democracy, the vote, adults, etc. (Watch out you don't wake up and find yourself in their network, never knowing how it happened.)

"The Lone Arranger": A person with the "only I can do it" martyr syndrome. Lone Arrangers can be found working late, reassuring the world that only their agency is helping resolve a problem (mainly because they won't let anyone else help), heaving sighs of fatigue while volunteering to take on added tasks, suffering burnout while making sure that nobody can rescue them and generally seeking lots of sympathy. The word "delegation" is frightening to a Lone Arranger.[1]

People can be asked to give examples from their experience of these three anti-network types—and perhaps add some others as well (though three are quite enough!). We're not trying to advocate here that people such as these must be excluded entirely from our networks. Rather, we're trying to recognize that there is a little of each type in all of us and understanding this is the first step in improving our networking performance.

Finally, the "Code of Behavior for Networkers" on the next page is a humorous endorsement of pro-network attitudes.

Having Simple Rules

The first network-facilitation strategies I devised were elaborations of what I'd seen successful networkers actually doing. These elaborations didn't work, usually. Apparently people in real-life situations don't ordinarily need complex procedures for doing what comes naturally. What they need, it seems, are simple but powerful rules and principles. These are more like triggers for releasing mutual aid energy than channels for restricting it.

I rest my case on your experience with the following network exercises. And I wish you luck with your non-staffed volunteer group. Beyond luck, I wish you *understanding*, which means *success.*

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[1]Connie Hyatt, quoted in Susan Dryovage and Ivan Scheier, "The Bridge: A Guide for Networkers" (Boulder, CO: Yellowfire Press, 1981).

CODE OF BEHAVIOR...FOR NETWORKING

BE COWARDLY. Sure, there may be some deep rough problems between you. Stay away from them, in fact, avoid them like the plague. Go for the easier issues first and get some successes under your belt. Save the bravery for later, when everyone is feeling good about how well the cooperation is working.

BE SHORT-SIGHTED. It's not just that you want to load the dice for some sure successes early on. You also want those to be quick payoffs. People are probably wondering whether this try at network cooperation is ever going to work at all. In that frame of mind, they won't wait in line too long for the first positive results. So make the motivation happen fast.

BE A BUSYBODY. Be nosy about other people's business. At least, until you're sure you understand their strengths well enough to capitalize on them. Be just as sure to learn their no-no's so you can avoid their aversions.

BE SELFISH. Ask if there's something in it for you and be darn sure you get the right answers.

BE A SUCKER. Once you're sure there's something in it for you, worry a little about whether other people are getting their goodies from the network. Go ahead, be a bleeding heart.

BE DISTRUSTFUL. Look for performance, not promises, deeds not words.

...and above all

BE DISRESPECTFUL of the notion that all help has to be delivered down to us by highly trained specialists. Believe instead that ordinary people and groups can give each other a whole lot of real help, without always having to call in the outside experts.

Think you can measure up?

Maybe you can even add to the list, or turn it around to positive characteristics. Go ahead, be critical.

NETWORKING EXERCISES AND INITIATORS

The following is a small sample of methods for creating and strengthening networks. All were stolen from successful networkers observed over the years; I've only tried to impose analysis on what expresses itself more naturally and spontaneously in real life. As for the wonderful "style" one sees so often in the brilliant networker, I doubt this can ever be reduced to "steps" and I haven't even tried to.

Earlier versions of these exercises appeared in a series of Yellowfire Press publications, now out of print.

The following processes can be used as training exercises. As such, they are often incorporated illustratively with the general orientation described in Chapter 7. The methods can serve equally as "triggers" or initiators for actual networks. Only be sure to tell participants clearly—and up front—which use is intended.

Relatively simple and easy exercises tend to be placed earlier in this section. Otherwise, order of presentation has no particular significance.

"GUIDED CONVERSATION"

Background and Rules

This exercise is an easy introduction to the network process—easy in that it is relatively protective and non-threatening. It has been used with as few as six to eight people and as many as 100.

Here are instructions the process facilitator can use or adapt (presented in script form):

1. Please pair up with someone you don't know or don't know too well.

2. Listener. The challenge for the Listener is *to listen without interrupting*. This can be really hard to do but it is a very important part of the process.

3. Now I'll ask the Speaker to begin with a minute or so of good news about what you are doing.

4. (After about one minute) Now the Speaker should take a minute or so to talk about issues, concerns, or challenges in your work. (volunteer or paid employment)

5. (After another minute) Now try to complete this part of the process as soon as you can and then switch over. The person who was the Speaker becomes the Listener, while the Listener becomes the Speaker and repeats the previous process. That is, the new Speaker gives about one minute of good news followed immediately by about one minute of issues or concerns.

6. (After about two minutes more) Now, try to help each other with your issues, concerns, or challenges. You don't have to totally "solve" the problem; just a helpful hint or two will be fine. Thus, if your partner's concern is how to raise $2,000 to buy furniture for a shelter, you don't have to give them the money to qualify as a helper! You might, however, give them some excellent fresh leads on how and where to raise the money, whom to talk to, etc.

The facilitator should allow at least five minutes for step #6. You might still be told to mind your own business when you try to call "time"; people do get enthusiastic and committed to this stage of the process.

Comments and Discussion

A good way to begin the discussion is to ask how many people *either* gave *or* received some help with their issue/ concern during the process. Usually, at least two-thirds of the hands will go up, and the facilitator can further enhance the effect by asking any pairs who wish to do so, to share their helpful happenings from step 6. Discussion can highlight how much you can learn from a relative stranger by following a few simple rules. Among these the rule to "just listen" may be the hardest of all. Yet, it is crucial; the ability to listen carefully is an almost invariable characteristic of the successful networker.

Timeframe

Allow about 15 minutes for initial orientation and steps 1-6. Another 10-15 minutes is needed for comments and discussion.

Postscript

The process can be adapted for use by as many as 4 to 5 people in a set. Each of the 4 or 5 first give their good news. Then each gives their issues or concerns, followed by the healing interaction of step 6 as a discussion among the entire group.

"MIX 'N MATCH"

A Network Outreach Exercise

Background and Rules

This is an icebreaker and a way of illustrating experientially some basic points about successful networking.

The process is for groups of 15 to 150 or more, where many of the individuals do not know each other well or at all.

The exercise needs enough space for people to walk around comfortably, without having to navigate mazes.

It is desirable, but not absolutely necessary, for each participant to have several "network exchange slips." These are slips of paper or index cards with the ususal identifying information (name, telephone number, perhaps work title and address) plus these two headings followed by blank space: "what this exchange was all about" and "arrangements to meet again." The slips can be handed out for participants to complete totally or can be prepared beforehand with all the information except, of course, what will be put into the blank spaces during the exercise.

Here are the instructions, in script form for the facilitator to say to the group:

1. Get up and move around (or roll around in your wheelchair).

2. Your job is to meet ten new people in the next ten minutes (or 7 people in 7 minutes, or 5 in 5). These must be people you haven't previously met, or at least know only superficially.

3. Say hello, who you are, maybe a very brief bit on what you do or are interested in, add a smile or handshake if you wish. (It's okay if you occasionally find yourself in groups of three, but mainly this is supposed to be one-to-one.)

Network Exchange Slip

Name: ____

Telephone: (day) ____________________ (evening) ______________

E-mail: ____

Address: ____

WHAT THIS EXCHANGE WAS ALL ABOUT:

ARRANGEMENTS TO MEET AGAIN:

Network Exchange Slip

Name: ____

Telephone: (day) ____________________ (evening) ______________

E-mail: ____

Address: ____

WHAT THIS EXCHANGE WAS ALL ABOUT:

ARRANGEMENTS TO MEET AGAIN:

4. When an encounter suggests reasons you might want to get together again, fill out and exchange "network exchange slips." Or otherwise make definite arrangements to get together later. Too often in the enthusiam of a network contact, we forget to get identifying information and later lose the contact.This process usually generates a great deal of energy and excitement. The facilitator may find it challenging to calmthings down enough for follow-up discussion.

5. As a collective responsibility, try to see that no one is left standing alone, ungreeted, for more than twenty seconds.

Comments and Discussion

The facilitator can begin the discussion by sharing her or his observations of the process. For instance, were many people left ungreeted for more than twenty seconds? Did people continue to move out and meet new people, or did they tend to stick with people they had already met? The facilitator can also ask for group feedback on questions such as:

- How many new people did you meet?
- How many names can you remember?
- How many of these people did you arrange to meet again (or would have liked to do this)?

A main point of the exercise is the value of reaching out to include new people in your networking (including somewhat shy people). Yes, it's more comfortable to stick with a few trusted "known quantity" colleagues and friends. But it's not a good network strategy because even if these few people could meet all your network needs (unlikely), you're very likely to burn them out. The extra effort to engage with new people is also worth it for the fresh experience, talent, energy, and enthusiasm it brings to your networks. Moreover, very simple permissions and supportive processes such as MIX 'N MATCH can make it easier to reach out in this way. A successful network is not an exclusive club for the tried and trusted few. Reach out, don't leave out.

Timeframe

Allow 30 to 45 minutes for instructions, the exercise itself, and follow-up discussion.

"CONNECTIONS"

Background and Rules

Four or five people sit in a circle, preferably around a table or with some other writing surface available. Ordinarily, these would be people who do not know one another well, or at all. But the process they do).

1. Each person talks about herself/himself for a few minutes, while all the others listen. Reassure people that private or confidential material is neither expected nor wanted. The hope is, however, that your participants will include something special or unusual about themselves—an interest or hobby, a trip they've taken, something special that happened to them, etc. This could be something that even people they see frequently might not know.

2. After everyone has spoken, the group works on connections. Each person tries to complete the sentence:

   '"You ought to meet or be in touch with __________."

   for as many other people in the group as she or he can. The idea is to think of another person, not in the circle, who might have something to share and/or learn from this person, i.e., a "good contact," in terms of the special thing the person spoke about.

   Try to identify the connection as clearly as you can: name, phone number, address.

   The group as a whole tries to get at least one connection for every person in the circle, more than one if possible.

3. Once people have thus practiced being connectors, they should know a fair amount about each other. Now have each person put his or her name at the top of a piece of paper (see next page). Pass the sheets around the circle, asking each person to write one thing s/he likes about every other person in the circle on the sheet with that person's name. When done, there should be a list of "affirmations" or "compliments" on each individual's sheet.

AFFIRMATION/COMPLIMENT COLLECTOR

Name: ______________________________

We like the following things about you:

Compliment:

Compliment:

Compliment:

Compliment:

Compliment:

Compliment:

Don’t sign your name to the compliment. You might even print it to preserve anonymity. Writing compliments down and giving them anonymously might make it easier and less embarrassing for people to give compliments, especially when they barely know the complimentee.

With five people in the circle, we would end up with four affirmation comments under each name. You *must* write a nice thing about *every* other person in the circle. And do try to avoid left-handed compliments such as: "You're looking so much better than you did last week," or "I really like the way you comb your hair over your bald spot," or "You were really wise to quit Weight-Watchers. It hardly ever works anyhow."

4. Now, one other person (say the person to your right) reads aloud all the compliments which have been paid you. We go around the circle until everyone's compliments have been read aloud to them, by another person in the circle. Take your time. Enjoy.

Comments and Discussion

The facilitator should be careful not to anticipate in the instructions to participants. That is, don't forewarn people that the connections and affirmation phases are coming, until it is actually time to begin them.

The first discussion point is that successful networking depends on linkage thinking. Instead of seeing himself/herself as always needing to be in the helping equation either as giver or taker, the connector is skilled and sensitive in identifying mutually beneficial linkages between two or more other people. This is a kind of matchmaking (though not usually in the romantic sense) which believes we can connect people to a lot more helping than we can provide for them directly.

The second point for discussion is that networks are more likely to be successful when people identify and emphasize one another's strengths rather than weaknesses. Accent the positive. When you're oriented to seeing strengths in others, you'll more frequently find them, and encourage them.

Timeframe

Allow at least 30 to 45 minutes. There's no reason why you can't have a number of circles in a room together, joining forces for the discussion phase.

"THE PARTICIPATION POSTER"

For "Common Interest Calls"

Background and Rules

This is a way of helping people in a group identify others with common interests. Usually it helps to set some limits on the overall subject areas to be chosen. For example: "today we will focus on issues that affect the quality of life in our neighborhood," or, "use this opportunity to find people who share your leisure time interests."

Each "Common Interest Caller" fills out the top part of a "Participation Poster" (see next page) and puts it up on the wall or on a table. Be sure there is plenty of room between different posters. It is also a good idea to scan all the posters at this point and group them at least roughly in terms of similarity of subject matter; for example, all the posters which have to do with fundraising, or all the posters that have to do with food/nutrition.

The entire group of people then circulates, preferably all in one direction; each signs up on as many posters as he or she wishes. (But remember, there are just so many things you have time to learn more about!) Where there is a choice between several participation posters in a similar subject area, the suggestion is to sign the one that seems closest to your own interest.

As it says on the poster, signing up does not mean any obligation to action; it signifies a willingness to learn about or discuss a topic of mutual concern.

If the posters are on a wall, be careful the ink doesn't come through and damage the wall!

Participation Poster

Forming Common Interest Clusters

Name of "Common Interest Caller": ______________________________

Address: ______________________________ Date: ______________

____

Telephone Number: day(   ) ______________ evening: (   ) ______________

E-mail: ____

I WOULD LIKE TO BE IN TOUCH WITH
SOMEONE ELSE WHO IS ALSO
INTERESTED IN
or
CONCERNED ABOUT:

(Put just **one** topic or subject here) ______________________________

Sign below if you are interested in being contacted about this. Signing below does not obligate you to participate, nor does it necessarily mean you are an expert in this area. Your sign-up may mean you want to learn more about this topic, have information to share on it, or both.

Name	Telephone Number	Day or eve.?	e-mail

Comments and Suggestions

If the group has a regular meeting place—office, church, meeting room, etc.—the participation posters can be left up for days or even weeks. Alternatively, the sign-up process can be completed immediately in an hour or even less. Participation posters can also be left up in high traffic pass-by places such as a shopping center. In such cases, they are often decorated quite attractively by their Callers.

After an agreed-upon interval, the Common Interest Caller should take the initiative in contacting people who signed her or his participation poster. Depending on interest and feasibility, the result may be telephone discussion, a face-to-face meeting, sitting at the same table at meetings of a larger group, planning for getting training or expert consulting help in the common interest area, publishing a common interest directory, etc.

Timeframe

At the low range of number of participants (15-20), about 45 minutes should be enough. At the high range, for about 100 participants, at least an hour and fifteen minutes should be allowed. Whatever group size, be sure to give people enough time to browse through the posters and sign on for whatever interests them.

"THE GLAD GIFT GAME"

(Except it's *real*)

This is the successor to what some readers may remember as the MINI-MAX game. The present version is even simpler and more versatile. Moreover, it has even more emphasis on what is offered *to* a network rather than on what is needed *from* it.

Background and Rules

The process works for as few as 6 to 8 participants and up to 250 to 300. Ideally, participants should be with people they don't know well or at all, grouped 6 to 8 in moveable chairs around tables. Each participant should be provided with, or make for her/himself, *eight* "Glad Gift cards," approximately 4" by 4" each. The card should have space for the participant's name and telephone number plus room for 15-25 words to summarize a "Glad Gift."

In preparation for the process define a Glad Gift as:

> "...something *fairly specific* you *like* to do, and *can* do pretty well, which *might* be of use to someone else."

Give several examples and get a few more from participants. Then, emphasize that this is "for real." No one should offer a Glad Gift unless completely prepared to give it, if asked.

Phase One: The Small-Circle Cycle

1. Put your name and full telephone number on each of your eight (8) Glad Gift cards.

2. Put a different Glad Gift of yours (from any aspect of your life) onto a card, on each of *five* (5) of the cards. Leave the other three (3) cards blank; they are your "wild cards."

   Remember, a Glad Gift is "...something *fairly specific* you *like* to do, and ca*n* do pretty well, which *might* be of use to someone else." Some examples are:

   "I'm good at and like brainstorming ideas for fundraising."

   "I'm a great gourmet cook."

   "I'm an excellent canoeing instructor and enjoy teaching others to canoe."

GLAD GIFT CARD

Name: ____________________ e-mail ____________________

Telephone: (day) ____________________ (evening) ____________________

Remember: A "Glad Gift" is something specific you like to do and do well which might be of use to someone else.

GLAD GIFT CARD

Name: ____________________ e-mail ____________________

Telephone: (day) ____________________ (evening) ____________________

Remember: A "Glad Gift" is something specific you like to do and do well which might be of use to someone else.

This is "for real." Don’t offer a Glad Gift unless you are completely prepared to give it, if asked.

3. At each table, whoever wants to can start off by reading his or her list of five Glad Gifts, one at a time.

4. Stop reading when anyone else at the table wants one of your Glad Gifts. At that point, give them the Glad Gift card. It will be up to them to get in touch with you so you can deliver your Glad Gift to them.

5. It now becomes the turn of the person who received the Glad Gift to start reading his/her Glad Gifts. And so the game continues.

6. If you read all your Glad Gifts and nobody wants any of them (boo hoo), anyone else can take a turn to start reading their Glad Gifts. You then listen a while to the kinds of gifts people are eager to get, then see if you can fill out your remaining three blank cards (wild cards) with Glad Gifts of that type.

7. Better luck next time you get a chance to read your Glad Gifts. But if *still* nobody wants any of your gifts the second time, *go to another group.*

If at any point in the process you sense a "need" for a Glad Gift you actually have but have not written down, write that Glad Gift down on one of your blank wild cards, and use it at will.

Phase One takes 20 to 30 minutes and you may choose to complete the process at this point; in fact, you'll have to end it here if you have only one table of 6 to 8 participants.

Phase Two: The Ambassador Cycle

One person from each table is that group's ambassador to other tables, to market their remaining Glad Gifts. The ambassador first familiarizes her/himself with the remaining Glad Gifts at his/her table, then circulates to other tables. She/he is empowered to offer the gifts to any other participant at any other table just as if she/he were the original owner of the Glad Gift. Ambassadors are instructed to return to their table once they have matched all the Glad Gifts they can at other tables.

The facilitator calls a halt to this phase when he/she sees that most or all ambassadors have returned to their home table.Depending largely on the number of tables, the ambassador cycle can take 5 to 20 minutes, at the end of which you can expect 80-90% of the Glad Gifts in the room to be used/matched!

Phase Three: The Auction Cycle
So far, the process has had a positive spin, in that it works from what people are willing to offer, rather than what they happen to need. It turns out, though, that as many and probably more needs are met with an offer-led as distinct from a need-initiated process. Still, there may be some important unmet needs remaining in the room at this point, some of them unusual to the point of exoticism. Therefore, in the auction cycle, individuals who wish to do so are invited to present a remaining difficult need to the entire room. Participants can offer Glad Gifts, as before, and also "Information Leading To's" or ILT's. In this third phase, an ILT doesn't commit you to do anything for the needful person; but it does provide a lead or hint which might help the person find assistance somewhere else (much as in the last phase of "Guided Conversation"). It is perfectly amazing how many unusual and difficult needs get some help in the auction cycle.

Comments and Discussion

The process itself is so instructive that little discussion of it is needed, usually. Such discussion as there is can emphasize how effective networking can be, leading from the positive (gifts) rather than leading from the negative (needs). Also, participants see that helping doesn't have to hurt (when based on Glad Gifts).

Timeframe

As noted, the Small-Circle cycle (Phase One) requires about 20-30 minutes, maybe a bit more, while the Ambassador cycle takes 5-20 minutes, depending on the total size of the group. The Auction cycle can go on nearly forever in large groups. For illustrative purposes, however, two or three examples of auctions usually suffice, and this can be done in 10-15 minutes.

Postscripts

In one variation of the Glad Gift Game process, participants can represent their group or organization rather than themselves as individuals. The main complications here are that the individual be certain of authorization to represent their group's Glad Gifts ("willingly shared resources") and check back with the group before finalizing any Glad Gift offer or exchange.

To assure that the process will run smoothly, particularly for larger groups, I suggest you first run a practice session with a smaller group.

Variations of this process have been around for approximately 20 years, so try to identify people in your group who have experienced the process and enlist their help in advance as co-facilitators.

"THE SUPPORT CIRCLE"

A Problem-Solving Network

Background and Rules

The Support Circle is designed to concentrate the total problem-solving energies of a group on one person's question/issue/problem or challenge. The image is of a magnifying glass focussing the sun's rays to start a flame....

PARTICIPANTS are 5 to 8 mature, self-disciplined, caring people. There are three roles, which rotate among all the participants:

The Conductor is the person whose question/issue is being concentrated on.

The Facilitator/Referee monitors time, and observance of process and rules.

The Consultants are all other participants.

TOPICS are the choice of the Conductor within a broad framework set in advance by the group, and with the following other provisos:

1. Not too technical, esoteric, or specialized for group, e.g., not "how to improve my three-dimensional chess game."

2. Ethical. "How to build a bomb in my cellar" is out.

3. At least potentially solvable, including manageable chunks of unmanageably large problems. No intrinsic riddles, please.

The SETTING should be quiet, relaxed, casual, comfortable and, often but not always, rural. The only equipment needed is scissors to cut the phone line. Casual clothes, of course.

Here are the rules:

1. Absolute confidentiality. This means don't even tell your best friend or most intimate acquaintance "in confidence." One exception: The Conductor may give explicit permission to pursue a carefully defined subject area outside the circle.2. The Conductor must define her or his question/issue as clearly as possible. However, note that the starting question may not be the best or final question.

3. Wherever possible, background on the Conductor and his/her question should be made available beforehand to participant-consultants

4. Every participant firmly commits to staying in the Circle until each participant's issue or question is fully addressed. The reasons are experiential as well as ethical—Consultants learn as much as Conductors.

The Process

1. (Done once only:) Each participant introduces himself/herself, emphasizing the resources and experience s/he can bring to bear on problems.

2. Conductor states and restates her/his issue or problem until Consultants agree it is clear, manageable, and explicit about any hidden assumptions—or until the Consultant has had enough. Try to spend no more than 5 to 10 minutes on this.

3. For up to 30 minutes thereafter, the Conductor *owns* the group's mind, spirit, and experience. The Facilitator allows no Consultant self-reference unless clearly relevant to the Conductor's issue. The Conductor is not required to respond immediately and should not evaluate input right away. S/he is, however, required to summarize suggestions thus far offered, any time a Consultant asks for this. S/he can also ask questions to clarify suggestions.

4. Conductor can call "overload" at any time during this half hour and take some time to mull the input. Remaining time can be used at some later point.

5. During the last five minutes of the 30-minute cycle (whether used at once or in sections), the Conductor reports back to the Consultants what s/he intends to do with their input, with some explanation on why some suggestions were given more priority than others. Many Conductors choose to thank their Consultants at this point.

6. After a short break, another participant takes his or her turn as Conductor, and Steps 2 to 5 above are repeated.

Comments and Suggestions

The Support Circle is an intense, powerful, and usually productive process. The chief danger is participants with abnormal needs for attention for themselves or their program. The Facilitator and, if necessary, the entire group, MUST deal with this.

Timeframe

At least two and one-half to three hours, if everyone is to have their turn. Regularly meeting Support Circles, however, are usually comfortable letting just one or two people "have the floor" each meeting, in which case 45 to 60 minutes will suffice.

AFTERWORD

When Everyone's A Volunteer is targeted primarily for use by volunteer leaders of all-volunteer groups. The book is also important reading for careerists (usually paid employees) who coordinate volunteer programs in agencies. Why? Among other things, these people are often also volunteer leaders of non-staffed groups in their "other lives." And, as professional careerists in volunteer administration, they may find this book useful in at least two respects: because all-volunteer groups are a relatively untapped source of voluntary help for agencies and because they represent a new career track for agency volunteer coordinators.

The proliferation of agency-related volunteer programs challenges our creativity in seeking new sources of volunteers. One such source is the group-as-volunteer, rather than the individual. The agency of the future may therefore do less to recruit and manage individuals as volunteers, and more to identify and negotiate cooperative effort with all-volunteer groups towards shared goals. In such a future, the agency volunteer coordinator will need a solid understanding of non-staffed volunteer groups in order to mobilize their participation effectively and, in return, strengthen them.

The talented, dedicated people who have chosen leadership of volunteers as a vocation need more career-track options. A promising one, now being studied, would be as a consultant and contract operator to a set of entirely volunteer groups. Part-time for each, on retainer or special contract, this "volunteer group consultant" could offer services such as: occasional on-call trouble shooting; technical assistance in planning or other program functions; and actual operation of certain "pieces" of the program, such as newsletter production, membership campaigns, or educational events.

For both careerists staffing agency volunteer programs and volunteer leaders of non-staffed volunteer groups, *When Everyone's A Volunteer* has explored seven special emphases which distinguish entirely volunteer groups from staffed volunteer programs. There is nothing magic about the number seven. Indeed, this book is designed to encourage dialogue towards development of additional special emphases.

Related, we have by no means discussed all the special challenges confronting all-volunteer groups. For example, what about the typically traumatic transition when groups hire their first paid staff person? Somewhere between dumping everything at once on this hapless helper and withholding everything must be a situation survivable by both the employee and the group. Generally we have not found the key to this situation yet, and we may need a new principle to deal with it. On the other hand, further evolution of our present seven emphases might suffice, especially the one on work distribution (Chapter 3).

Beyond the special emphases are some general principles. These apply to all-volunteer groups, but are not "special" to them, because they also apply far more broadly to just about any work or social situation. Among these (with which the all-volunteer group leader should be conversant) are such things as communication, public relations, conflict resolution, mediation, and—at least until the principles in this book are routinely understood and accepted—stress management.

RESOURCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

Specifically relevant references have been footnoted throughout this book. In other instances, the text represents updating and refinement of previously published work now out of print. Some additional books and useful Web sites are listed below. For the most updated source of material on volunteering, go to the Energize, Inc. Web site at:

www.energizeinc.com

Books

D'Amour, Cynthia. *How to Turn Generation Me into Active Members of Your Association*. Jump Start Books, 1999.

Ellis, Susan J. *The Volunteer Recruitment (and Membership Development) Book*, *3rd edition*. Energize, 2002.

McBee, Shar. *To Lead Is to Serve: How to Attract Volunteers and Keep Them.* Shar McBee, 1994.

Scheier, Ivan H. *Making Dreams Come True Without Money, Might or Miracles: A Guide for Dream-Chasers and Dream-Catchers*. Energize, 2000.

Turner, Nathan W. *Leading Small Groups: Basic Skills for Church and Community Organizations*. Judson Press, 1996

Web Sites

BoardSource
http://www.boardsource.org/
National center for information on nonprofit boards. Focused on larger organizations.

Dear Association Leader Archives
http://leipper.org/leadership/dal/index.html
Articles from past issues of this weekly bulletin for association officers.

Self-Help Sourcebook Online
http://mentalhelp.net/selfhelp/
All sorts of information for running a self-help group, including links to existing groups and tips for effective online support.

@Grass-Roots.org
http://www.grass-roots.org/index.shtml
Tells the stories of the most innovative grassroots programs in the United States and the local heroes who've found effective ways to build their communities

Online Archive of GrassrootsFundraising.org
http://www.grassrootsfundraising.org/index.html/advice/articles.html
Articles on ways small organizations can raise funds.

About Ivan H. Scheier:

Over the past forty-plus years, Ivan H. Scheier, PhD, has been a cutting-edge thinker in the field of volunteerism. After serving for ten years as a court psychologist in the Boulder County juvenile probation department, he became coordinator of volunteers in one of the few counties in the country that employed an organized volunteer program in their juvenile court system.

In the late 1960's Ivan and others involved in the volunteer effort formed a distinct nonprofit organization called The National Information Center on Volunteers in Courts. Volunteers in all forms of human services joined in the effort and ultimately the organization, headed by Ivan, changed its name to The National Information Center on Volunteerism.

Ivan left the world of large volunteer organizations to engage in independent consulting and training. He developed a small organization called the Center for Creative Community and offered mini-retreats for two to three people at a time at his small house in Santa Fe to help them refocus and to rejuvenate their volunteer spirit. Ultimately, he created VOLUNTAS, a larger- scale retreat/residence where people could come to heal, to rejuvenate and to dream. When VOLUNTAS closed in 1996, Ivan moved to STILLPOINT, a self-help retreat center in Truth or Consequences, New Mexico. He is currently a volunteer Reiki practitioner who teaches this skill to others—providing they, in turn, offer their services at no charge.

The numerous publications that Ivan has written include *When Everyone's a Volunteer: The Effective Functioning of All-Volunteer Groups*, and *Building Staff/Volunteer Relation*s, both published by Energize Inc. Ivan's latest book, *Making Dreams Come True without Money, Might or Miracles*, was published by Energize, Inc. in 2000. He is also Consulting Editor to *e-Volunteerism: The Electronic Journal of the Volunteer Community*.

Over 700 pages of Ivan's work has been archived as a Special Collection by Regis University in Denver and can be accessed at http://academic.regis.edu/volunteer/ivan.