



**PROVOL**

**Volunteer Management  
Made Easy Series:**

**How To find The Ideal  
Volunteers:  
Target Your Recruiting**

**RECRUIT**

**The *Volunteer Management made Easy Series* is dedicated to all of the hardworking, underpaid and underappreciated Volunteer Managers (Coordinators, Administrators, Directors, etc.) who toil in the belief that what they do is a *professional* occupation that makes a difference in our society.**

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# **How To Find The Ideal Volunteers: Target Your Recruiting**

**Jim Bottorf  
Judy Bottorf  
Maggie King**

**PROVOL, Mesa, AZ  
1994**

## Foreword

Volunteerism and volunteer management are undergoing rapid and far-reaching changes as we approach the 21st Century. We are advised to "change the paradigm:" the way we perceive volunteers, and the way we act based on that perception. It is clear that yesterday's volunteer management methods are inappropriate for successfully meeting tomorrow's challenges.

More and more volunteers are drawn from the ranks of full-time workers, men are volunteering in record numbers, youth volunteerism is at an all-time high and will increase even more dramatically as secondary schools and colleges respond to the opportunities presented in the National and Community Service Trust Act. Moreover, it is now recognized that an effective volunteer program must reflect an agency-wide philosophy and commitment to the mission of volunteerism.

In addition, volunteers must be perceived as unpaid employees within our agencies, with many of the same rights and responsibilities of paid staff. This necessarily entails a change in the way we have traditionally viewed volunteer roles. Now, it is becoming ever more obvious that volunteers should be integrated into the core of our agencies. This means involving them in program planning as well as implementation of assigned duties. In any case, volunteer managers will be required to adapt their programs and ways of thinking to meet these changes, and many other changes that will become evident in the near future.

In this new series of booklets by PROVOL, *Volunteer Management Made Easy*, we offer practical information for volunteer managers to create and maintain effective volunteer programs that are responsive to today's demands and also meet the challenges of tomorrow. This booklet, *How To Find The Ideal Volunteers: Target Your Recruiting*, is the second of a four step process in basic volunteer management which we have labeled the "4R's:" Research, Recruit, Retain, Recognize. There is a booklet for each of these. Other publications in the series go beyond the basics to include a variety of specific volunteer management concerns.

In the *Volunteer Management Made Easy Series*, we offer a program of action that will result in the establishment of a team working to meet the goals and objectives of your agencies, and to provide the valuable community services for which those agencies were created. This team will consist of you the volunteer manager, administration and staff, volunteers, and the ultimate consumers of agency services.

By providing a practical method for creating and maintaining successful programs, we believe that the *Volunteer Management Made Easy Series* will enable volunteer managers to meet staff, volunteer, and community needs in a timely, effective, and enduring fashion.

Jim Botdorf  
Judy Botdorf  
Maggie King

## Prologue: Lights that Shine

**"When we permit one's light to shine, however small,  
we chase the darkling shadows from us all."**

James E. Bottorf

When President Bush instituted the Points of Light campaign it was to recognize the contributions of individuals and groups across the nation. Since its inception, we have witnessed lights shining brightly in all the far corners of our nation, from village to metropolis, from farm to factory, from South to North, issuing forth from torches held by tiny fingers or large and gnarled hands. In a world that sometimes seems to celebrate darkness, these lights beckon us toward the safe shores of community and help us to avoid the rocks and shoals of isolation and alienation.

Yet, as we know, light will not shine in a vacuum; it needs substance and structure to transform its latent energy into a focused beam. Too often, when we look to our communities, such substance and structure seem to be lacking and entire neighborhoods appear only dimly through the shroud of night. The litany of unmet social needs which seems to permit only the feeblest trickle of insubstantial light is long, and growing, and turns inward upon those whose hearts grow in darkness.

If this was, in fact, the defining characteristic of our lives, who could blame us for a desire to narrow our vision to the smallest pinpoint which sees nothing of the plight of others, the triumphant struggle to keep the candle burning in a gale of cynicism. Fortunately, this is not our defining characteristic. In every community we find those whose energy strikes sparks from every surface of our lives, enriching and ennobling us in the process.

This is where you come in. Laboring in a profession that still has not received the professional status it deserves, volunteer coordinators transform the latent energy of our volunteers into coherent and focused patterns of light that bring into bright relief the incredible array of skills and talents that we apply to the most stubborn of our social ills. You are the catalysts that encourage, focus, and channel this energy. When you recruit properly for identified agency needs, you provide a conduit which permits these volunteer lights to shine and "chase the darkling shadows" from our lives.

## INTRODUCTION: The Typical Volunteer

Recruiting volunteers is not a particularly difficult task. Recruiting the right volunteers is. A well-planned, efficient volunteer program depends upon our selecting the right volunteer for the right job almost all of the time. It requires a good match between volunteer skills, talents, and energies, and our agency needs. But who are the right volunteers, and where can we find them?

In years past, we thought we had easy answers to these questions: volunteers were predominantly women, usually not in the work force, or retirees, who could be called upon to do all the busywork chores that tended to drive us crazy. We had firm perceptions about who the typical volunteers were and we felt that we could have them show up at our convenience to do whatever we had in store for them at that time. We tended to recruit them through a well-refined sense of guilt that we could apply when needed, and didn't feel it necessary to worry about what *they* were getting out of their volunteer experiences.

All too often we felt that volunteers were capable of performing only the most menial work that would require little or no training, and that they should not be involved in planning or structuring their volunteer work experiences. (That this perception is still around was evidenced by a volunteer coordinator in Chandler, Arizona, last year when he said, "It's okay to have volunteers come in and clean the place and pull weeds and stuff, but we certainly wouldn't involve them in anything to do with policy making.") And then we wondered why there was such a high turnover rate among volunteers! We found that the easy answers were, for the most part, wrong answers.

The truth is that there is no "typical" volunteer who we can order about at will and to whom we can always consign the least desirable work. In fact, a transformation has taken place in volunteerism, a transformation that volunteer coordinators must be aware of when recruiting volunteers for their agencies. "This transformation is to a modern American volunteer who is more typically working one or more jobs, juggling career and family, is starved for time, living with stress, and thinks carefully before selecting any volunteer assignments; a volunteer that is as likely to be male as female, non-white as white, poor as wealthy or single as married."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Sue Vineyard. *Megatrends & Volunteerism: Mapping the Future of Volunteer Programs*. Heritage Arts Publishing, Downers Grove, IL, 1993, pg. 3. This book presents an excellent discussion of the changing nature of volunteerism and our need as volunteer coordinators to recognize and adapt to this change.

# PROVOL

PROFESSIONAL VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT  
TRAINING AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Once you've read this book, you'll want the first one in the series, **Everything You Need To Do Before You Recruit**. Just fill out the order form below and send it, along with your check for \$7 (plus \$1 for shipping and handling) to: PROVOL, 1055 W. Guadalupe, Suite 252, Mesa, AZ 85210.

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Consider just four of the volunteers with whom we have worked in the past and you'll get an idea of their diversity in backgrounds, skills, and abilities to contribute.<sup>2</sup>

Harry is severely mentally-challenged. An adult in his early twenties, he has been retarded since birth. His paid employment is in a sheltered workshop making promotional items for a large woolen clothing manufacturer. His skills and abilities are very limited, but he is not without knowledge or skills. Harry helps out at a local food bank. His volunteer job matches his physical strength with the agency's need for loading and unloading, warehousing, and moving food supplies. He has an incredible persistence toward getting the job done. He is very task oriented.

Brice suffers from multiple sclerosis, is in his mid-thirties, and is confined to a wheelchair. He has very limited use of his body and has extreme difficulty communicating orally. But he also has a keen intellect and a strong curiosity. Brice was appointed chairman of a countywide working committee that examines and evaluates accessibility in public facilities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. His committee's actions have resulted in great improvements in meeting accessibility requirements in county buildings and in the local university. These buildings are now much more user-friendly for individuals with disabilities.

Ann is more than eighty years old. A tall, frail widow, she maintains her own house, drives competently, and is able to get around quite well. She has a wide circle of friends of all ages, and is an active member of several civic organizations. She was the daughter of a long-time local elected official. Despite her advanced years, Ann continues to volunteer her services to candidates who meet her exacting standards, and offers them a wealth of knowledge as well as willing hands. In her region of the country, local politics without Ann is unthinkable.

Kathy is a single woman in her late twenties. She is a disk jockey for a popular local radio station. She also volunteers in a program to assist stranded motorists in her community. Slight of build, she draws stares from passing drivers when she climbs out of the motorist service truck to help someone change a flat tire, jump-start a dead battery, push a disabled vehicle out of the roadway, or use a "slim Jim" to unlock a car with the keys inside. Because of her celebrity, she is a natural for doing public service announcements in behalf of the police department's volunteer program.

These four are examples of who volunteers today. They are typical only in the sense that they challenge our perceptions

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<sup>2</sup>These four individuals are real volunteers. We have, however, changed their names in the interest of confidentiality.



of who can do what. They are part of the more than 90 million Americans who volunteer their services each year.<sup>3</sup> These ninety million people are as diverse as we can imagine. We can no longer dictate volunteer roles to them, or recruit them by the "shotgun" methods we used in the past.

Keeping abreast of the transformation taking place, and integrating the knowledge it provides into our programs, is one of the primary considerations of modern volunteer coordinators. Adhering to outdated perceptions of the typical volunteer would have excluded the four individuals we've discussed from offering their services to various agencies. Fortunately, they were recruited by volunteer coordinators who were able to look beyond the apparent limitations to the abilities these volunteers possess.

This is ultimately what volunteer recruiting is all about: finding skilled individuals, regardless of age or background, to fill specified needs within our agencies. It is not based upon outdated perceptions of the volunteer role, but is well grounded in a needs-driven process. It is a process of recruiting for skills and talents necessary to meet our agencies' needs in a timely and effective manner.

Volunteer recruitment, done properly, is a means of finding, screening, and placing those individuals in our communities who are "ideal" for our agencies. What makes it work is that we have a clear understanding of our agency needs and recognize that we will be recruiting volunteers for specific jobs just as if they were paid employees we are hiring.

The point of all this is that when we cast off any preconceptions about the typical volunteer, we are able to enrich our programs from a very diverse volunteer pool in our communities. Moreover, by looking at a broad range of volunteer activities, aside from just menial tasks, we can structure our programs to achieve the maximum benefit for our agencies *and* for the volunteers we recruit. In this regard, remember that volunteers, as unpaid employees, are entitled to certain rights and a clear understanding of their responsibilities. See Figure 1 for a statement of volunteer rights.

When we move beyond thinking that all volunteers are alike, we need to recognize that volunteer recruitment is a process of seeking skills for specific agency needs. Keep in mind that volunteers have certain rights. Then we can focus our recruiting efforts on finding the exact volunteers to meet our agency requirements. Not only will we achieve a good match between volunteers and our agencies, but our volunteer programs will be viewed as professional assets within those agencies.

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<sup>3</sup>Virginia Hodgkinson, Murray Weitzman, Christopher Toppe, Stephen Noga. *Nonprofit Almanac: Dimensions of the Independent Sector*. Jossey-Bass Publishers. San Francisco, 1992.

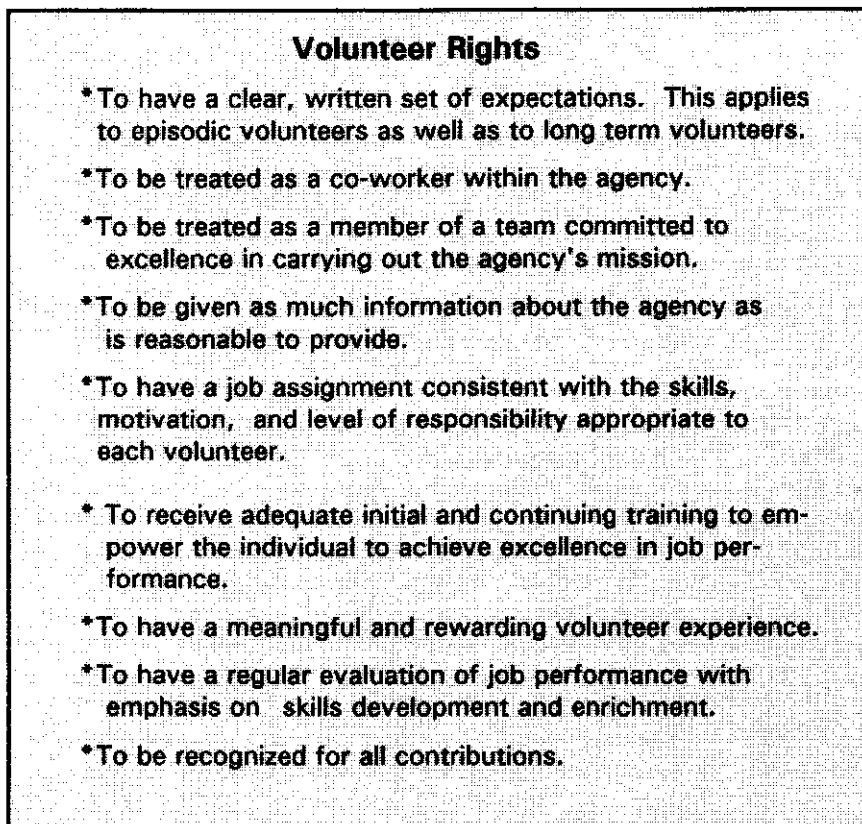


Figure 1: Volunteer Rights

## **BEFORE YOU RECRUIT: Doing Your Homework**

Before you actually start marketing your program to attract volunteers, there is much to be done. In many cases, often stemming from pressure to increase volunteer numbers, the importance of early preparation before recruiting may not be fully appreciated. "Often when volunteer programs encounter difficulties and tensions, the problem stems from what has and has not been done in the preparatory stages."<sup>4</sup> Ultimate program failure to meet agency expectations commonly arises from inadequate preparation at this stage.

We will continue to emphasize that program success results from a match between agency needs and volunteer skills. *The key element here is to clearly identify what those needs are, both for yourself, and for staff members who will supervise volunteers.* In our previous booklet, *Everything You Need To Do Before You Begin To Recruit*,<sup>5</sup> we offer a comprehensive process for

<sup>4</sup> *Volunteers: How to Find them, How to Keep Them.* Vancouver Volunteer Center, Vancouver, Canada, 1990, pg. 14.

<sup>5</sup> Jim Bottorf, Judy Bottorf, Maggie King. *Everything You need To Do Before You Begin To Recruit.* PROVOL, Mesa, Arizona, 1994.

determining your agency's needs before designing a recruitment plan.

Two of the authors were volunteers with an agency dedicated to feeding the homeless. Certainly this agency had a good cause, and its efforts generated positive media coverage. However, the agency failed to do adequate preparation before recruiting. Consequently, volunteers would show up at the work site for preparing the food and try to determine who should do what. Even though we always seemed to muddle through and prepare the food on time, there were too many volunteers with little or nothing to do, too much milling about, and too little direction. Because this state of affairs continued with no relief in sight, volunteers began dropping from the program, despite sticking with it for months out of a sense of the importance of the agency's mission. After nearly two years the authors also withdrew. Here is a case where an agency had almost everything going for it: a positive, well-received mission, good press, stable funding, a good recruitment program through local churches. If they had just done the necessary preparation before recruiting, volunteers could have been used more effectively, turnover would have been minimized, and service delivery would have been improved. The lack of agency preparation diminished what should have been a meaningful experience by volunteers, and actually threatened the agency's mission to provide food for as many homeless persons as possible.

To summarize, the process begins with an external survey of other agencies like yours to find out how they use volunteers. This information is presented to your administration to gain their support for your program. Next is an internal survey taken from staff members about what their needs are. From this information, develop volunteer request forms in conjunction with staff members, then use these volunteer request forms to develop a set of job descriptions. This process fosters staff support for the volunteer role and helps to minimize friction between staff members and agency volunteers.

As part of the internal survey, try to determine the level of responsibility that staff members think should be applied to the volunteer jobs you identified by assessing needs. Categorize each potential volunteer job as "high, medium, or low" responsibility. Then do a task analysis to determine the predominant motivating factor that is appropriate for each volunteer position.

For example, if you have identified an agency need for a receptionist, then you will seek a volunteer who is motivated by a need to *affiliate*. Note this on the job description. For data entry, micro-filming, or other tasks that require precision and productivity, an individual motivated by an *achievement* need should be recruited. Finally, for a committee chairperson, someone to take charge of planning an event, or training other

volunteers, for example, look for an individual motivated by a need to exercise *power*.<sup>6</sup>

Sue Vineyard uses the example of a pilot to demonstrate how an understanding of the motivators is especially useful. "When we understand what motivates people, we can predict behavior, success, and appropriate recognition."<sup>7</sup> In her example, the *power*-motivated person learned how to fly an airplane so he could teach others to fly. The *achievement*-oriented person learned to fly so he could enter races, and the *affiliation*-oriented person learned to fly so he could take friends for rides in his airplane.

### Job Descriptions

The set of job descriptions represents a formalized statement of your agency's needs, a listing of volunteer skills and qualifications for which you will develop a recruiting program. Take these job descriptions back to the staff members for review and make any necessary revisions.

Your final job description should define specifically what you will ask the volunteer to do for your agency. It is a positive written statement for the volunteer and for the staff member who will be supervising that volunteer position.

Include the job title, of course, but do not include the word "volunteer" in the title. Include the person to whom the volunteer is accountable. List the specific duties required, the time commitment (nationally, volunteers contribute an average of about 4 hours per week although there is a wide variation in this figure), qualifications required to perform the job, and list the skills, education, and experience of the volunteer. Since the job description is the final, formal statement of an agency need, make it as comprehensive as possible. A job description that includes too much is preferable to one that includes too little.

Also list any training requirements for the volunteer job and specify who is to provide the training. Do this for all potential volunteer positions, even those positions calling for episodic or periodic volunteers. Classify your volunteer positions as "long-term, episodic, or periodic."

#### Long-Term, Episodic, Periodic

*Long-term volunteers* are those individuals whose skills will be required on a frequent and ongoing basis. A receptionist would be an example of a long-term volunteer.

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<sup>6</sup> See David McLelland and John Atkinson, in George Litwin and Robert Stringer, *Motivation and Organizational Climate*. Harvard Univ. Press, 1968.

<sup>7</sup> Sue Vineyard, *Beyond Pins, Plaques, and Pins: Creative Ways to Recognize Volunteers*. VMSystems/Heritage Arts Publishing, Downers Grove, Il., 2nd ed., 1989, pg. 12.

*Episodic volunteers* are those individuals you would recruit for a single episode such as a fund-raiser, a recognition banquet during National Volunteer Week, or the National Day of Caring. *Periodic volunteers* would be recruited for an event that recurs several times throughout the year, but each time remains nearly identical to previous occurrences. Getting kids off to camp, for example, for Camp Fire Boys and Girls, would be an example where periodic volunteers could be utilized. This is an event that recurs periodically throughout the summer.

But, regardless of the type of volunteer position, it is imperative that you create a job description for each position that you identified when talking with staff members.

List all of the required job skills and functions as specifically as possible, and *recruit for these identified needs*. This may seem to be unnecessary for episodic volunteers, in particular, because we tend to have them show up for an event and then try to figure out what to do with them.

As a result, we end up with a group of people standing around, wasting their time, and failing to adequately deliver the services we expect from them. This is not good for our agency at the time of the event, or in the future when we again try to recruit volunteers.

When we were asked to organize the volunteer effort for an international orphanage society, we reviewed the proposed activities with the event sponsors, broke these down into as many functions as we reasonably could, and then we used these as a basis for writing job descriptions. In short, we identified agency needs that related to the event, and used them to create a plan for recruiting volunteers. We were unable to meet with any of the volunteers who would be supervisors, and with only a few of the activity volunteers. Consequently, we had all volunteers check in at a volunteer booth when they arrived at the event location and gave each one a job description, a map of the park showing activity sites, and instructions for conducting their activities. In addition, job descriptions and activity instructions were posted at each work site. In this manner we were able to provide a clear set of expectations to each of the volunteers, including supervisors, provide a written form of training and orientation, and, ultimately, have a successful event that used volunteers effectively. This event now attracts most of the same volunteers each year because we created job descriptions and recruited for clearly identified agency needs.

## **FOCUS ON YOUR TARGET: Why Are You Recruiting?**

The next step is to focus your recruitment effort on those groups of individuals in your community who are most likely to possess the skills for which your program is looking. Begin this process by asking yourself **why** you are recruiting. Then

continue to ask that question over and over while your recruiting effort proceeds. We cannot overemphasize that your reason for recruiting is to meet specified agency needs. See Figure 2 for an overview of the recruitment process.

When we get caught up in the excitement of the recruiting process it is easy to overlook this basic fact and start *stockpiling* volunteers for whom we have no immediate use, or assigning volunteers to inappropriate positions. In either case, we are not utilizing these volunteers effectively, and they are not likely to have a positive experience.

We all love those volunteers who are self-recruited, the ones who just walk in the front door and ask how they can help. They are wonderful people and we cherish their generous spirit. That makes it all the harder to be selective. But selective we must be.

If that walk-in doesn't have the background or skills to meet a specific agency need without a very extensive training program to meet minimum requirements, then perhaps it's best to refer that person to an agency more appropriate to the volunteer's present knowledge and skills. This affords the volunteer a better opportunity for a meaningful experience, and it keeps you from spinning your wheels trying to place a volunteer who just doesn't fit within your program.

When we were conducting a training seminar for volunteer coordinators in Texas, one participant, brand new to the field, asked, didn't she "have to accept every volunteer who came into the center." She was stunned to find out that it was just not good volunteer management practice to do this. What she had been doing was accepting all walk-ins and handing them a list of volunteer job openings for them to select from. This is a relatively common occurrence, especially for people new to the field. What happens in this situation is the placement of volunteers within your agency without regard to job needs and volunteer skills. This will almost inevitably lead to poor job performance by volunteers, conflict between staff and volunteers, high volunteer turnover, slow program growth, and a generally unfavorable perception of your volunteer program by staff administration, and volunteers. That's why we continue to emphasize that recruiting is not just an open door for all potential volunteers, but a targeted effort to recruit volunteer skills to meet agency needs.

So, the first step is to remember **why you are recruiting**. It is always much easier for you, and easier on your program, when you recruit the right volunteers for agency needs. In other words, it is easier to recruit the right volunteers than to dismiss them later because volunteer skills and agency needs do not match up.

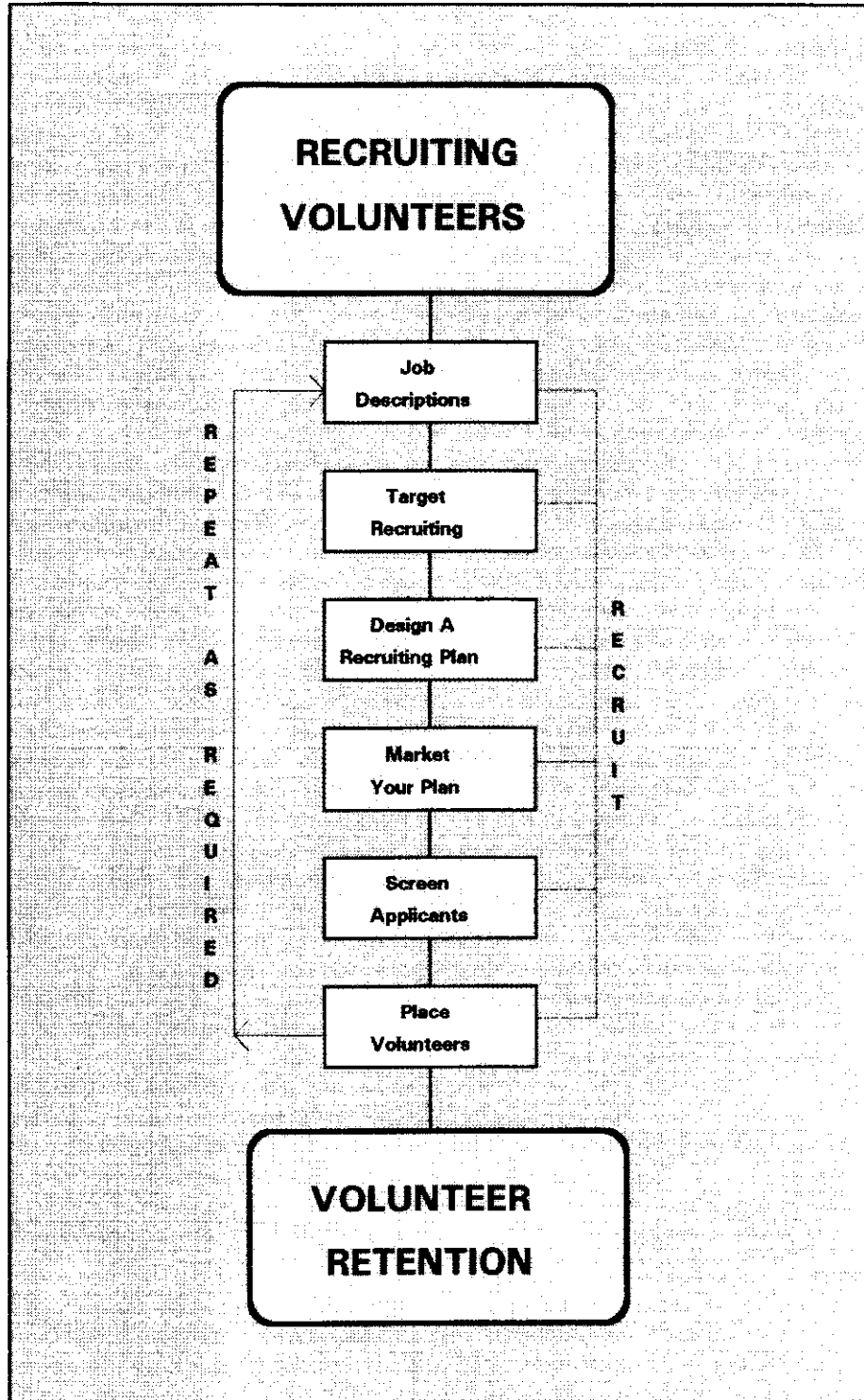


Figure 2: Volunteer Recruitment Process

## Who Volunteers?

Next, you will want to ponder the question, "Who volunteers?" Now, this is not to revert to the old "typical volunteer" problem. It is to determine which groups in your community are likely to be fruitful in supplying skilled volunteers for your program. The simple fact is that individuals from all walks of life can, and do, offer their services as volunteers. Men, women, and children of all ages from all economic sectors in all regions of the country are volunteers. Your task is to determine the best sources of volunteers within your community. Here is a list of demographic and occupational groups from which volunteers are frequently recruited. It is not meant to be inclusive, but suggestive. You will have to develop a list that represents groups in your own community.

College Students	Professionals	Homemakers
Senior Citizens	Working Women	Working Men
Church Members	Teachers	Parents
Civic Grp. Members	Fraternities	Sororities
Business Persons	Clergymen	Physicians
Secretaries	Proprietors	Waiters
Cooks/Chefs	Farmers	Counselors
Law Enforcement	Accountants	Therapists
Records Clerks	Fraternal Grps.	Teenagers
Issue-Oriented	Newcomers	Bi-Linguals
Career Changers	Agency Clients	Employees
Employee Relatives	Believers in Cause	Unemployed
Patients	Former Clients	Minorities
Self-Help Groups	Re-entry Workers	Families
Corp. Executives	Friends of Vols.	Low-Income

The list could go on and on, but you get the picture. For as many groups as can be listed, there are potential volunteers to be recruited from them.

### Check with Volunteer Center

In many metropolitan areas an annual statistical abstract is published, usually by the region's most widely circulated newspaper. If this is the case for you, look there for information on the demographics of volunteers in your area. If you are brand new to volunteer management, remember to check with your nearest Volunteer Center and DOVIA (Directors of Volunteers in Agencies) for additional information on who volunteers in your area.

Telephone other agencies like yours and find out where they've located volunteers. Once you've done this, do some brainstorming about which groups in your community seem likely to help you meet your volunteer needs. Remember to be creative. List these groups on newsprint or a flip chart. Then add the ideas from other agencies to your list.



After this has been accomplished, you should have a sizable list of community groups from which to select your most appropriate sources for volunteers. Notice that while we have *broadened* our focus about who volunteers, we have, at the same time, *narrowed* our search from the entire "universe" of potential volunteers to those who are "prospects."<sup>8</sup> Although there are more than ninety million volunteers in the United States, and at times it seems that your agency wants you to recruit them all, a highly selective approach that will work best for you.

### Why Do They Volunteer?

The reasons people volunteer are almost as numerous as there are volunteers. But there are a number of common reasons given by individuals who do volunteer, and a clear understanding of these by volunteer coordinators will help to further narrow the recruiting target and enable you to get the ideal volunteers for your agency. We do not mean to imply that volunteers are not motivated by a genuine desire to be helpful within their communities. On the contrary, this is the most fundamental reason of them all. But, volunteers also seek to fulfill a variety of personal needs through their volunteer activities.

Here is a list of some of the most frequently cited personal reasons for volunteering. The list is also not meant to be inclusive, but suggestive. You could probably add a number of reasons to the list from your own experiences.

- To gain experience from the volunteer job that will enhance the general employability of the volunteer. In short, resume-building.
- To gain employment with your agency.
- To learn new skills or to practice existing skills.
- To apply current skills in a new setting.
- To find new associations that may lead to friendships.
- To develop or enhance feelings of esteem and self-worth.
- To be recognized for skills, talents, and abilities.
- To add a spiritually meaningful dimension to their lives. In fact, few volunteers stay on the job for any extended period without such a meaningful experience.

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<sup>8</sup> Jay Conrad Levinson. *Guerrilla Marketing: Secrets for Making Big Profits From Your Small Business*. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1984. This, and the author's *Guerrilla Marketing Attack*, offer many insights for the volunteer coordinator conducting a recruiting campaign.

- To gain academic credit from schools and colleges that have service-learning components in their curricula. This will become more evident as the National and Community Service Trust Act gains momentum.
- To demonstrate competence & maturity, to parents, peers.
- To find a useful means of spending time when not in the labor force.
- To assist agency in delivering social services for which the volunteer is also a recipient. For example, many homeless persons assist with food preparation and distribution.
- To effect social change by working for a cause or issue.
- To effect a transition in their lives. "This refers to such situations as handicapped people getting out and into the community, people coming through a bereavement, working people retiring, newcomers to a community or to the country building knowledge and contacts in their new homes...."<sup>9</sup>
- In almost every single case, because they were asked.

### Where to Find Volunteers

Now we've got to determine where to find the volunteers from among the community demographic groups we have identified. Again, we'll admonish you to be creative. As an example, when the Tucson (Arizona) Aids Project identified an agency target for physically active senior citizens with large blocs of weekday time available, it directed the marketing effort toward local golf courses and tennis courts during the day. Typically, during business hours there is a preponderance of retired and active seniors at the golf courses and tennis clubs.

The environmental education coordinator for the USDA Forest Service in Tucson conducts an annual "cowboy breakfast" in a national forest. Those who attend have already shown an interest in the environmental goals of the agency and, from these individuals, the agency is able to recruit some of the volunteers it needs.

Where you can find volunteers for the jobs you have identified is limited only by your imagination and willingness to be daring in your recruiting effort. "Imagination is needed because the horizons of volunteerism are always expanding and challenging recruiters to discover new possibilities. And daring is needed to reach out to new people and to find new ways of communicating with them. Jolt yourself out of your normal way

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<sup>9</sup> *Volunteers: How to find Them, How to Keep Them.* Vancouver Volunteer Center, Vancouver, Canada, 1990, pg. 59.

of looking at things and peek sideways, up and down, underneath, behind and all around to find new ideas."<sup>10</sup> Refer to the groups you listed when you considered **who** volunteers. In many cases, thinking about who volunteers leads you to an understanding of where to find them. Again, here is a suggestive list of where to find volunteer sources. Think of how many more you can add to this list.

Schools	Churches	Civic Groups
Senior Centers	Neighborhood Assn.	Health Clubs
Colleges	Professional Assns.	Office Bldgs.
Chamber of Comm.	Labor Unions	ARC's
Medical Society	Volunteer Ctrs.	Athletic Team
Youth Orgs.	Rec. Facilities	Bar Assn.
Employment Office	Nursing Homes	Supermarkets

### Take Careful Aim

Throughout our discussion, we have continued to narrow the focus of your search for volunteers. When you first talked with staff about their job functions, you found out what they needed in terms of volunteer assistance. You further narrowed the search when you and staff completed volunteer request forms, and you developed job descriptions from these. Then you asked several questions about **why** you are recruiting, **who** volunteers, and **where** to find volunteers. Now it's just a matter of getting more specific about our targeted volunteer population.

Let's say, for example, that you've identified a need for a receptionist for your agency for three days a week. This position requires someone who would meet and greet the public, take phone calls, deliver messages to appropriate staff, and any other job functions you've identified. Now when you consider "**who**" you have criteria for narrowing your search. Who will be available to you during business hours when you need assistance?

A local organization identified a need for volunteers to assist with regular mass mailings. Unfortunately, the "mass" part of this included more than 50,000 items to be mailed within a short period of time. Volunteers were to collate materials, stuff envelopes, and affix address labels. The agency felt that one or two people could be rounded up who would spend all day, every day, until the task was accomplished. Moreover, the agency wanted volunteers only during traditional business hours. This was not a very realistic expectation since a higher percentage of volunteers is employed in full-time jobs than ever before. This agency had great difficulty recruiting and keeping volunteers. "Who volunteers" is often influenced by the job conditions that we impose on potential volunteers. The volunteer coordinator in this agency needed to become much more aware of the changing nature of volunteerism and how that impacts recruiting efforts. Why not schedule the job for weekends?

<sup>10</sup> *Volunteers: How to Find them, How to Keep Them*. Vancouver Volunteer Center, Vancouver, Canada, 1990, pp. 61, 62.

Also, what is the likelihood that you can find someone willing to give three days to your agency each week? It is likely that you will need several volunteers to fill this position, so take that into consideration when designing your recruiting plan. Remember that you'll be recruiting from a group of people who also lead very busy lives themselves. With this consideration in mind, it becomes not just a question of who volunteers, but a question of who would best meet your needs for each volunteer job.

When you have defined who you are looking for in terms of volunteer skills, ask yourself again **where** is the best place you can find them. Then determine whether any of your job descriptions have requirements that can be made more flexible. For example, if you have indicated on a job description that you need a volunteer for four hours a week, is it possible for that volunteer job to be performed after business hours, in the evening or on weekends. In some cases, you will have to adapt your program to meet volunteer requirements if you are going to be successful in recruiting and retaining the volunteers you need for your agency.

### **Hitting the Target: How to Reach Potential Volunteers**

Thus far in our discussion, we have been dealing with **who** volunteers, and **where** we can find them. Now it is time to take careful aim and determine **how** we can get in touch with those people we want in our program. Here again, the choice of methods will be dictated, in part, by the job description. Let's say, for example, that your agency has identified a need for volunteers to speak to civic and fraternal organizations. This is a very specific and narrow target.

Where can you find these individuals who have public speaking skills? Check with local public speaking organizations such as Toastmasters for example; your local college or university offers courses in public speaking, check with those instructors and see if you can't "make your pitch" before class on a given day. Ministers in the community might be induced to speak on your behalf. In this case, the method you would use to reach these people would be personal contact.

Or, you might have a need for painting or remodeling within your agency. If you are on a tight budget like most agencies that use volunteers, why not use them for this as well. Where are you most likely to find painters? Check with painting contractors, paint suppliers, home repair stores. Here you can post flyers in some locations, with permission of course, to recruit the volunteer skills you need. Just as you were creative when trying to locate volunteers, be equally creative in choosing

methods to reach them. Whatever methods you choose, here are some tips that will be helpful to you.

### **Be Specific**

First, be specific. In our training seminars on recruiting, we always ask for volunteers without giving them any information. Then, after some difficulty in getting a few people to volunteer, we ask the others why they did not come forward. The most common response is that members of the audience just didn't know what to expect, how long it would take, would we embarrass them, etc. Potential volunteers want to know ahead of time what you want them for, for how long, and how frequently.

### **Arouse Interest**

Make your appeal to volunteers as interesting as possible. Maybe you have a celebrity living in your community; will this person make public service announcements for your agency? Perhaps your agency need addresses a community concern such as drug and alcohol abuse by teenagers. If so, think how your attention is caught by DARE, or MADD, then see what you can do in a similar fashion to gain attention for your program.

### **Use A Positive Approach**

As we indicated earlier, the "good old days" when we could recruit volunteers by making them feel guilty or ashamed are long past. Certainly you should "sell" your agency's mission, but do it in a positive way. Don't talk about the number of kids who will starve if your food drive is not successful. Instead, talk about how much help has been given in the past and how many can be fed for so little. In spite of the multitudes of individuals who volunteer, there is intense competition for them, and being positive in your approach enhances the perception of a meaningful volunteer experience.

### **Be Creative**

We continue to emphasize this point because it's a good thing to integrate into your thinking. Think beyond the usual kinds of volunteer jobs and the usual kinds of volunteers and you'll be surprised at the results. How difficult do you think it might be to find volunteers to shovel manure and clean out stables? Police departments with mounted patrols have little difficulty in finding and keeping volunteers who do just this.

### **Remember Value Exchange**

Refer back to the list of the most common reasons why people volunteer. Remember, regardless of the specific reason a particular individual donates services, he or she wants something

of value in exchange. That value exchange may reside in the sense of purpose volunteers gain from their activities with your agency. Or, it may be the result of recognition of their contributions, positive acceptance of their roles by staff, the end result of what they do, enhanced service delivery, or myriad other factors. Targeted recruitment helps promote a sense of value exchange from the very beginning.

**Be Responsive**

If there is a concern in your community about a particular issue or problem that falls within your agency's mission, then by all means add that to your catalog of potential volunteer positions. Analyze the issue just as you would a special event (i.e., think in terms of functional components of the problem) and create a set of job descriptions that will identify skills needed to bring about a solution. Volunteers you recruit to help with this issue or problem will forge a partnership between your agency and the larger community of which it is a part.

**Think Corporate**

When you are brainstorming about where to find volunteers, don't overlook major corporations located in your area. Many corporations recognize that they can help with a variety of community problems and consider volunteerism to be a part of their corporate philosophy. These corporations can be a fertile source of volunteers for special events, and for volunteer jobs that can be performed outside traditional business hours. Corporations receive many requests for assistance each year, so if you contact them, be clear about what you are requesting--potential volunteers for your agency.

**Recruitment Plan**

We've done a lot of work up to this point getting ready to do our actual recruiting. Now it's time to develop a relatively formal plan of action to insure that we've targeted relevant segments of our community, and to recruit the exact volunteers we need. See Figure 3 for an example of a recruitment plan.

	Who	What	Where	When	How	How Much
1						
2						
3						
4						

Figure 3: Recruitment Plan Format

"Who," of course, refers to your target group for a particular volunteer position. Assume that you need volunteers for cleaning up the local park in the near future. Given the nature of volunteerism today, that probably means a weekend should be set aside for the activity. If the work requires strenuous activity, then you've probably targeted high school students for the cleanup. "What" is obviously the volunteer position. "Where" is the location of the park, and "when" refers to the time and date of the proposed activity. "How" refers to the methods you will use to reach your target, the high school students. And, finally, "how much" represents the dollar cost to your agency for the various methods used, and any dollar cost to the volunteer for the activity, if any.

What we've done here is to list each volunteer position, one through four in the illustration, and then put in writing who we're targeting to do the activity, what the activity is, where it will be performed, when it will be performed, how we will reach our targeted audience, and how much it will cost the agency for the marketing method selected.

The example given, park cleanup, is just a simple task, but the recruitment plan can work for any or all of your potential volunteer jobs, regardless of the nature of the agency need previously identified.

Categories in the plan are pretty much self-explanatory with the exception of "How." A marketing plan is required to determine the actual methods you will use to reach your targeted groups. Again, here is a partial list of the ways in which you can reach potential volunteers.

Public Service Announcements	Classified/Display Ads
Posters, Brochures, Flyers	Videotape Presentations
Newspapers, Magazines	Radio, Television
Bulletin Board Notices	Storefront Displays
Volunteer/Career Fairs	Newsletters (Yours)
Notices in Utility Bills	Telephone Campaign
Public Speaking	Direct Mail
Newsletters (Theirs)	DOVIA Newsletter

### Marketing Plan

In order to develop an efficient recruiting plan, it is necessary to determine ahead of time how you plan to market your volunteer openings to targeted groups. We've found it useful to employ Nancy McDuff's example of the "4P's of Marketing" to recruit volunteers.<sup>11</sup>

This doesn't require an advanced degree in marketing. Quite frankly, we're not marketing our program in the fullest

<sup>11</sup> Nancy McDuff, "Advertising and Promoting Volunteer Opportunities," *Voluntary Action Leadership*, 1986.

sense of the word here, but using selected marketing techniques for a limited purpose. This marketing plan to reach your selected target groups consists of *product*, *promotion*, *placement*, and *price*.

Product	Promotion	Placement	Price

Figure 4: Marketing Plan Format

### Quality First

Do everything in your power to insure that yours is a quality program. This requires adequate training for staff, volunteers, and board members, when appropriate. "Think quality from the moment your phone rings to the follow-up after service delivery"<sup>12</sup> All too often, agencies think of their clients as the only direct service recipients. Your clients also include the community in which your agency operates (the city or neighborhood), and the professional community of which your agency is a part. Your future volunteers are among these clients, and they respond poorly to a program of poor quality.

### Product

The *product* is both the program and the benefit you are selling. Your agency's cause is an integral part of the product, as is the excellence which potential volunteers perceive about your agency. Remember that people are motivated by different things. The more benefits you can realistically identify, the better chance you have of selling your agency's mission, and the better chance you have for recruiting and retaining volunteers. It is the product that encourages volunteers to walk in the front door in the first place; once they're there, it's up to you to keep them.

### Promotion

*Promotion* includes the techniques and strategies you use to reach your potential audience. Global marketing is not appropriate in today's climate of volunteerism. Just as you targeted your potential volunteer groups, target the promotional method you will use to reach them. But, at the same time, make

<sup>12</sup> Jay Conrad Levinson, *Guerrilla Marketing*, op. cit.



sure you select the most appropriate way to reach volunteers in that group. Don't overlook empty storefronts; telephone the realtor whose notice is posted in the windows, and see if you can't place posters in these locations.

### Placement

*Placement* is deciding where the marketing activities will be most effective in reaching your targeted audience. It includes the physical location of such things as posters, signs, or billboards, and your media selection for radio, television, newspapers, and magazines. Here, too, exercise care that you are selecting a location or medium that will reach the particular audience you have targeted.

### Price

What will it cost to develop a marketing plan for your agency and stick with it? Be realistic, develop a marketing strategy that is within your agency's budget. Remember, there are a multitude of ways to get your message out. Some are costly, such as buying radio and television time, or buying advertising space in a newspaper or magazine. Other methods might incur some production costs but are relatively inexpensive or completely free. Posters, signs, newsletters, public service announcements in the electronic media, public service programs on radio or television which feature community organizations, talks before civic and fraternal groups, volunteer fairs at local colleges, and a host of other promotional methods can be quite effective in reaching your targeted audiences.

When one of the authors was working for a volunteer center, she targeted senior citizens for her volunteer promotion event. She was advised that a particular radio station would be a good avenue for reaching her targeted audience. So, she created a public service announcement that the station agreed to broadcast. On her way home that evening, she tuned in that station on the car radio and nearly drove off the freeway; she was hearing a "pillow talk" broadcast. This, as it turned out, was the station's primary programming and was a local favorite of gang members in the metropolitan area. She pulled the PSA from the station as soon as she could, but the damage was done. In spite of her efforts to reach her target by other means, who would you guess showed up at the appointed time and place. Some senior citizens, early of course, and a large number of young males in multi-colored vans, lowered cars, and a variety of trucks, all with bass boosters blasting. It was only the nimble footwork of our colleague that prevented a total fiasco, but it was a close call. Make sure that the method you select to reach your targeted audience is an appropriate one for that group.

## Screening Volunteers

To this point we have focused on identifying needs within your agency and then targeting your recruiting efforts to reach the most likely groups from which you can select your volunteers. You've done everything right and many individuals called you or came into your agency looking to help.

What do you do next? The answer, obviously, is to screen volunteer applicants to insure a good match between volunteer skills and aptitudes, and your agency needs. The first step in this process is to develop a comprehensive volunteer application. Figure 5 is an example of a volunteer application that suggests the kinds of information you will need to assess a candidate and make a decision.

You will want enough information from the application and the interview to be able to make a decision about the agency fit of the applicant and to match volunteer skills with job requirements. Perhaps your agency offers services to children, or is involved in law enforcement. In that case you may require a notice concerning background checks of applicants, the possibility of polygraphs, or other special considerations. We do urge you, however, to review your volunteer application with your agency's legal counsel to insure that the information you're asking for is legally appropriate.

### Check References

And, of course, check the references. Many times volunteer coordinators, usually because of the time involved, do not fully check the references of volunteer applicants. "They are, after all, volunteers, aren't they?" Yes, they are volunteers, but if we are to treat them with the same consideration as we do paid staff, then for the good of our agency and for the volunteers themselves, it is just good practice to check their references.

Depending on your circumstances, a simple phone call to those listed as references may suffice. Many volunteer coordinators have developed reference check forms that they mail to persons listed. This can be less time-consuming than phone calls, but may yield less information. Given the time, and other constraints, unique to your organization, only you can make the determination of which method is best for you. Moreover, most volunteer applicants will be pleasantly surprised to learn that your application and screening process is sufficiently detailed to insure that you are treating them as seriously as you would employees.

In your initial discussion with volunteer applicants, be sure to let them know about how long it will take, after you receive completed applications, before you can schedule an interview with them. At this time you can also let them know about how long the interview will take, and about any other special

requirements you may have for that position, including a second interview with the staff member who will be supervising them.

**Volunteer Application**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Soc. Sec. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Married? Y N  
(optional)

Driver's License No. & Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_

License Currently Valid? Y N I Have Transportation: Y N

Phone No.: Home \_\_\_\_\_ Work \_\_\_\_\_

Please list and explain any other names you have used: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

List any languages, other than English, you speak fluently: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

List any special skills, training, hobbies, or interests that may be useful to this agency: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

List schools, colleges attended, highest grade completed, major course of study: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Volunteer Experience: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Days available for work: Su M Tu W Th F Sa

Preferred Hours Per Day: \_\_\_\_\_

Work Experience (most recent first):

Employer	Address	Supervisor	Duties	From/To
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

I heard about the volunteer program through: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Do you require any special accommodations in order to perform a volunteer job and, if so, what are they? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I understand that falsifying information on the application or during the interview is cause for immediate dismissal from the program.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Figure 5: Volunteer Application

## Interviewing

An interview is a "conversation with a purpose." That purpose is to find out information about the applicant, his/her skills, interests, reasons for choosing your agency, and a host of other pertinent items. Interviewing involves an exchange of information; it is an extension of the application. The initial interview is usually conducted by the volunteer coordinator in order to match qualifications and skills with the job description you've created.

If you are not going to be directly supervising that volunteer's job activities, then a second interview should be scheduled with the supervising staff member. This is vitally important to insure that staff feel they are an integral part of the selection process. As a result, they look at volunteers as *their* unpaid employees, not as individuals selected by someone else and thrust upon them. This is an important factor in minimizing conflict between volunteers and staff.

### Conversation Skills

Clearly, an interviewer should be able to converse easily with strangers. If your experience in this area is limited, then practice interviewing with co-workers, family members, and friends until you feel comfortable discussing volunteer positions with them. Also, many staff members who will be supervising volunteers have little or no interviewing skills, so you may have to train staff in this regard.

Ask open-ended questions during the interview. Our rule of thumb is to avoid questions that can be answered with a "yes" or "no" or a few short words. For example, ask the applicant to tell you about his or her previous volunteer assignments. Ask, "What did you enjoy the most? What did you like the least?" Don't ask, "Did you like being a volunteer before? Was there anything you didn't like?"

The open-ended question encourages the applicant to expand on his/her background and provides far greater information than the simple yes-no question. Here are a few other examples of "Do Ask/Don't Ask" kinds of questions.

#### Do Ask

What kind of people do you work best with as co-workers? What types of people would you find it difficult to work with?

What would you consider to be the ideal

#### Don't Ask

Do you work well with others? Are you a good team player?

Do you want to work with

volunteer job for you? What kinds of things would you like to be doing?

us? Are you sure you know what you're getting yourself into?

What are your long-range goals?

Do you have any long-range goals?

Tell me about your family, okay?

Are you married?

### **Do Use**

Tell me more about that.

Please continue.

What more could you add?

### **Don't Use**

Anything else?

Is that it?

Anything more?

Obviously, these are not the only questions you'd ask during an interview. We've included them just as a reminder to avoid questions with quick and easy answers. Get as much information as you need for a proper placement if this applicant is someone you ultimately select for your program. You'll be more likely to get sufficient information by encouraging the applicant to talk about his or her activities and background. Open-ended questions help you accomplish this.

### **Listen Well**

Just as speaking skills should be practiced before interviewing volunteer applicants, you should also sharpen your listening skills through practice. Listen well and let the applicant do about 75% of the talking. This is how you're going to find out if this applicant is right for the position and for your agency. Allow about 15% of your interview time for questions and answers, and allow the remainder for you to provide information about the job, job description, time requirements, etc.

### **Observe & Identify**

During the interview you will want to identify the applicant's reasons for volunteering, and if the applicant is motivated primarily by power, achievement, or affiliation needs. You will also want to find out the interests, skills, time schedule, and any special needs the applicant may have.

Observe the applicant's attitudes, concerns, and personality traits. If the applicant is very shy, for example, and has difficulty conversing, you probably wouldn't consider that applicant for a public contact position. Conversely, if the applicant exudes confidence, and this is supported by his/her

application, perhaps this is the exact person you need to head up that recognition planning committee that you've had in mind.

### Determine Placement

From the application, and from the interview, you should have acquired enough information to determine the proper placement for this volunteer. **This is what all of our recruiting efforts were aimed at -- matching volunteer skills and agency needs.** Remember to match your perception of the applicant's predominant motivating factor (power, achievement, affiliation) with that included in your job description, and keep the appropriate responsibility level in mind when analyzing volunteer skills and interests.

Of course, the assumption is that this volunteer applicant is someone you would like to have within your agency. If not, it is okay to thank the applicant for his/her interest in your program, but indicate that your needs and the volunteer skills do not match up. At this point, you can do one of two things: (1) tell the applicant that you'll be in touch when a position opens up that more closely approximates his/her skills or (2), refer the applicant to another agency or to the Volunteer Center.

### Summary & Conclusions

We began our discussion by talking about the changing nature of volunteerism, and the implications of that change for recruiting volunteers. Then we talked about volunteer request forms and job descriptions. The set of job descriptions represented the formal statement of our agency's needs for volunteers to assist staff. Thus, we began with clear vision of what we needed before we began to develop a recruitment plan.

The old method of simply broadcasting a general appeal for volunteers was discarded in favor of a targeted recruitment plan that asked a series of questions about **who** volunteers, **why** they volunteer, **where** we can find these volunteers, **how** we can reach them, and **how much** it will cost. Based upon the answers to these questions, we used our job descriptions to devise a recruiting plan. Then we developed a marketing plan, which included considerations of **product, promotion, placement, and price.** Then we discussed the elements of an effective screening and placement process to insure a good agency/volunteer match.

Using this process to recruit volunteers based upon clearly identified needs yields a number of benefits to your program. In the first place, you will choose people who possess the skills and aptitudes to help carry out your agency's mission right from the start. In addition, you will use a process that helps to insure that

your volunteers will stay with your program for an extended period of time. You will also have minimized volunteer/staff conflict by involving staff members in the needs identification and volunteer selection processes.

Finally, by using this admittedly rigorous process for recruiting, you will have forged a team comprised of yourself, staff members, and volunteers for the effective delivery of necessary services within our communities. In the final analysis, this is what it's all about; excellence in volunteer administration through proper recruitment results in a better society for all of us.

## Questions & Answers

**Q.** You've talked about marketing. I'm the Volunteer Coordinator in the local office of a very large, international agency with a huge marketing budget. They hire well-known advertising agencies to help conduct the marketing effort. Do I really have to worry about marketing? It seems to be a waste of my time trying to do something we hired experts to do.

**A.** Yes, you do have to market your program. Large agencies, such as yours, primarily engage in institutional or public-image marketing and advertising. This can certainly create goodwill toward your agency in your community and make recruiting easier for you. But, remember that we are recruiting volunteers to fill specific agency needs, and targeted recruiting is the way to accomplish this. And, targeted recruiting requires specific program marketing by you to attract the exact volunteers you need.

**Q.** We don't have too many long-term volunteers in my agency. Mostly we do special events and use episodic volunteers for them. Do I really have to check references for these volunteers?

**A.** Good point. For most episodic volunteers who will be doing a quick in and out kind of activity, reference checks are probably not necessary. But, if you are using volunteers to plan and organize these events, even though they will be gone after the event is over, then do reference checks on those individuals who will be with your agency for more than a day or two. And, if you are using volunteers for special events that involve children, and the volunteers are not recruited from among the parents of these children, then reference checks might help to limit your agency's legal liability in the event of some untoward occurrence.

**Q.** I've just come from a DOVIA meeting where I saw a video presentation put on by a member agency to promote their program. This agency also uses slick brochures and other things that we just cannot afford. Our efforts seem meager and pathetic in comparison. Do you have anything for me besides sympathy?

A. Yes. It may well be that what you saw cost very little. You'd be surprised how much you can accomplish in spite of a limited budget. Either you, or a board member, should talk with local printers about in-kind contributions to your agency. We've had excellent videos produced, for only the cost of materials, by the communications departments of local colleges or universities.

Remember, as we've said, be creative and your efforts will be neither meager nor pathetic. We've also recruited volunteers who have photography, layout, and other skills we can use for future recruiting and marketing programs, skills we couldn't afford to buy. When you're determining agency needs for volunteers, don't forget to include the needs of your volunteer program also, and recruit for these needs, too.

Q. Look, I just don't buy all of this. You know, my job's on the line here. If I needed volunteers in a hurry, I'd go out and drag them in off the street if necessary. What do you have to say about that?

A. Several things. Lets face it, recruiting is a continuous process. No matter how successful your program, some of your volunteers will leave periodically. This may be due to changes in personal or employment circumstances, relocation, or whatever. But, there are agencies where volunteer turnover is both tremendous and catastrophic.

Targeted recruiting can help to minimize both of these effects. And, in the long run, your job security will be enhanced if you retain a core of dedicated, hardworking volunteers to help carry out your agency's mission. Look around you at the successful volunteer managers who've been on the job a long time. Chances are, they recruit specific skills to meet identified agency needs.

Q. Once again, I'm doing almost everything you talk about, but I just can't seem to keep the volunteers I want the most. What am I doing wrong?

A. Maybe nothing. If you've gone through the entire process, including proper screening and placement, the fault probably lies elsewhere. Some still resist the idea that volunteers are valuable and should be treated as such. Continue to emphasize that volunteers are recruited to enhance and expand staff capabilities, to help carry out the agency's mission. Perhaps staff training in supervisory and interviewing skills is necessary. If so, you can take the opportunity to talk about the value of volunteers during these training sessions. We've talked about marketing your program within the community, you may find it necessary to do the same *within your agency*.



## Case Study: Matching Volunteers with Needs

Some years ago, Jim Bottorf was managing the "mid state" campaign effort for a candidate for Governor of Illinois, Dan Walker. Jim identified a need for volunteers to speak in behalf of the candidate, other volunteers to participate in a door-to-door campaign effort, and still others to compare the candidate's statements with what was actually happening in the campaign. This last was to insure the continuing credibility of the candidate with volunteer workers and with the voters. Job descriptions were prepared for each of these positions, and a recruitment effort was launched.

This was not to be an easy campaign since Mr. Walker was not the choice of his party in the primary election. Mayor Richard Daley of Chicago was reputed to have sufficient power to get his choice of candidate elected regardless of other's efforts. And he was extremely powerful. The mission of the Walker organization? To get the him elected, of course. This was the daunting task facing potential volunteers.

Volunteer recruitment was targeted toward members of that political party who had voted in the last two primary and general elections and who were not officeholders in the party. Targeted volunteers were reached through a variety of methods. Public relations efforts were picked up by local newspapers, and by radio and television stations. Mr. Bottorf appeared on several radio call-in programs. When the opposing candidate held a press conference and rally at the local airport, flyers were placed on windshields of cars in the parking

lots. In addition, phone calls were made to members of the targeted group, and posters were placed in selected locations around town, including empty storefronts. And several letters to the editor were published.

As a result, a sufficient number of volunteers were recruited and interviewed to staff these positions. The actual cost of the recruiting effort was less than \$200.00, primarily for printing costs for posters and flyers. References were checked for those who would speak in behalf of the candidate, and for those who would insure the internal integrity of the campaign.

*Power-oriented* individuals were assigned to the campaign integrity team, *affiliators* filled the speaking positions, and *achievement-oriented* volunteers were assigned to the door-to-door effort. Campaign buttons were created that said, "Walker Squawker," "Walker Talker," and "Walker Walker," for these respective volunteer jobs. As a consequence, volunteers each felt like part of a team regarding their own volunteer activities.

We know this is not the typical situation facing most agencies throughout the country. But we have chosen it for precisely that reason: to demonstrate that even in the most unusual circumstances, you can get the volunteers you need through a targeted recruitment effort that first identifies needs, and recruits volunteer skills to meet those needs. No corners were cut; job descriptions were developed, appropriate references were checked, and creativity was at the forefront of recruiting efforts.

## Training & Consulting

PROVOL offers a variety of training and consulting options to help make your volunteer program more effective and professional. We will work directly with you or your agency to develop a program designed to meet your individual needs, or to assist you in improving your existing program. Whether you are a new volunteer coordinator or an experienced professional, we can help you to enhance program capabilities, structure new initiatives, and provide creative solutions to ongoing problems.

PROVOL currently offers workshops and customized training and consultation for non-profit agencies, municipal government units, police departments, military-based volunteer programs, educational institutions, and professional sports franchises. If you feel that your program has specialized needs, we can help you devise a plan to meet those needs. Contact us at PROVOL, 1055 W. Guadalupe, Suite 252, Mesa, AZ 85210 for additional information. Some of our seminar offerings are outlined below.

The "4R's" Seminar Series deals with four vital elements of the volunteer management process. These seminars are designed as free-standing modules that can be presented in half-day workshops, or combined in a package for a one-day or two-day workshop.

"Beyond the Basics" Seminars are also designed as modules that can be combined in a variety of ways to meet your needs for advanced volunteer management training. They offer what you have asked, effective training for program maintenance and expansion. Some seminars in this series are outlined here.

### Research

- Perform a Professional Needs Assessment
- Build Staff/Volunteer Support
- Gain Administrative Support
- Apply Levels of Responsibility & Motivation
- Write Effective Job Descriptions

### Improving Volunteer/Staff Relations

- Develops Concept of Vol. Coordinator as Consultant
- Creates Strategy to Gain Support In Your Agency
- Presents a Step-by-Step Process for Securing Staff Support
- Clarifies Roles and Responsibilities of Staff Members
- Demonstrates Key Elements of Necessary Staff Training

### Recruit

- Target Recruiting for Maximum Effectiveness
- Develop A Workable Recruitment Plan
- Match Volunteer Skills with Agency needs
- Create a Marketing Plan that Works

### Event/Project Planning

- Projects Big Enough to Matter, Small Enough to Win
- Build Partnerships and Get Community Involvement
- Identify Challenges and Methods for Overcoming Them
- Discover Key Components of Successful Projects/Events
- Establish Goals & Objectives: Simplified Plans that Work

### Retain

- Initiate Effective Orientation and Training Programs
- Improve Record Keeping
- Foster Positive Volunteer/Staff Relations
- Evaluation as a Part of Retention
- Reassign and Replace Volunteers

### How To Do Almost Anything With Almost Nothing

- Plan Recognition for Maximum Impact at Minimum Cost
- Gain Community Support for Underwriting Your Program
- Locate Resources, Sponsors, In-Kind Contributions
- Develop and Sustain Program/Community Partnerships
- Create Professional Displays at a Fraction of Cost
- Save Money on Printing and Mailing Costs

### Recognize

- Institute Formal and Informal Recognition Plans
- Design Creative Recognition Programs
- Use Evaluations as a Way of Saying, "Thanks, You're Doing Great!"
- Publish a Volunteer Newsletter
- Being Creative in Day-to-Day Recognition

### Marketing & Public Relations

- Develop Professional Newsletters that Attract Attention
- Create High Quality Displays on a Tight Budget
- Develop & Produce Quality Brochures to Sell Your Cause
- Create a Uniform Look for Your Agency's Publications
- Find & Use Marketing Resources Developed by the Pros.

## About the Authors

**Jim Bottorf** has comprehensive experience in volunteer management at the executive level. He has managed, trained, and used episodic volunteers extensively. He currently publishes and edits *Volunteer Administration in Law Enforcement*, has contributed numerous articles to it, and has also written a series of articles on volunteer management for *Arizona Human Services Magazine*. Jim has been a County Commissioner, Chairman of the Board for a 164 bed skilled nursing facility, Executive Director of an economic development agency, Chairman of the Board for a mental health agency, and a Director of a youth correctional facility. He has been a presenter at the local, state, and national levels with more than 20 years involvement with volunteers. He has been a college teacher for over 20 years. Jim received his education at Colorado State, the University of Oregon, Cornell, Penn State, and the University of Colorado.

**Judy Bottorf** is the Volunteer Coordinator for a metropolitan police department. Her program is acknowledged the finest in Arizona, and has gained national and international recognition. She has received inquiries from all over the United States, including the Capitol police force in Washington, D.C., and from Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. The program has been the subject of articles in four national publications, and her own article appeared in *Police Chief Magazine* in December, 1992. Judy has published in *Volunteer Administration in Law Enforcement*, and has become a recognized expert in the field. She has served on the Board of Directors of an international volunteer organization, and she has presented at the local, state, and national levels. She has been involved in all phases of volunteerism for over 15 years and received her education at Northern Arizona University, and at the University of Colorado.

**Maggie King** is the Volunteer Coordinator for a large metropolitan high school. She has been Director of Youth Programs for the Volunteer Center of Maricopa County (Phoenix, AZ) and for the San Diego United Way. She has taught in volunteer management courses at San Diego State University, and she has also served on a Youth Services Subcommittee for the Points of Light Foundation. She has written for *Volunteer Administration in Law Enforcement*. Her expertise in project/event planning and in youth involvement in volunteering are becoming recognized nationally. Maggie and Judy were co-founders of the Prescott (AZ) DOVIA, and served on the task force which created the Volunteer Center there. Maggie has also presented at the local, state, and national levels and has more than 15 years involvement in volunteerism. She received her education at Yavapai College, Arizona State University, and at the University of Colorado.

**The *Volunteer Management Made Easy* Series:**

***Everything You Need To Do  
Before You Begin To Recruit***

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Worked So Hard To Recruit***

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