how to effectively utilize volunteers

We make a living by what we get; we make a life by what we give. ~Winston Churchill

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world; it’s the only thing that ever has. ~Margaret Mead

Paul Revere earned his living as a silversmith. But what do we remember him for? His volunteer work. All revolutions start with volunteers. ~Susan J. Ellis

The Golden Rule of Volunteer Management:
Their niceness will let you recruit a volunteer, but only your competence will let you keep them...
~Points of Light Foundation

Source: 2001, Independent Sector, Giving and Volunteering in the U.S

Websites
- Points of Light (www.pointsoflight.org)
- Volunteer Resource (www.volunteerresource.org)
- Energize, Inc. (www.energizeinc.com)
- Network for Good (www.networkforgood.com)
- Independent Sector (www.independentsector.org)
- Association for Volunteer Administration (www.avaintl.org)

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Volunteer Management Best Practices

Work closely with university and your organization HQ to send a consistent message. Your job will become much easier if you don't have to stand alone.

“Quarterback” your team by involving them in their proper roles. Be specific with the responsibilities of each team member.

Set clear, written expectations and hold your volunteers to those agreed upon expectations.

Hold regular (quarterly) meetings to allow for checking in and additional perspective.

Look for training opportunities within and outside of your organization for you and your team to attend together.

Recognize your volunteers for the sacrifices they make.

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Undergraduate Support TEAM

Where do I fit in?

The Undergraduate Support TEAM structure gives a chapter or colony the greatest chance for success.

Mission, Vision, Goals

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volunteer recruitment
who wants to be a volunteer?! 

Q: How many people volunteered in the United States last year?
A: 64.5 million (29% of the population)

Q: What percentage of all women volunteer?
A: A third of all women volunteer

Q: What percentage of all men volunteer?
A: One quarter all of men volunteer.

Q: What age group is most likely to volunteer?
A: Age groups in order of volunteer rate:
   1. 35 – 44 (34%)
   2. 45 – 54 (33%)
   3. 55 – 64 (30%)
   4. Teens (29%)
   5. 65+ (24%)
   6. 20 – 30 (20%)

Q: True or False. Parents with children under the age of 18 are less likely to volunteer. 
A: False. Parents with children under 18 are more likely to volunteer (36.9%) than parents without children of that age (23.2%).

Q: True or False. Married people volunteer at a higher rate than non-married people.
A: True. Married people volunteer at a rate of 33.9% while never married people volunteer at a rate of 23.2%. People of other marital statuses volunteered at a rate of 22.9%.

Q: How many hours on average do volunteers spend volunteering?
A: Volunteers spend an average of 52 hours per year volunteering.


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Convey the right message.

What does each of the following statements imply? How could they be reworded to encourage a potential volunteer?

1. “Hi Dave. We’ve been going through all the positions. We have all of them filled except Risk Management Advisor and you’ll never guess whose name came up!”

2. “I’ll call Susan. She owes me a favor.”

3. “I have five advisory positions to fill. How would you like to be Financial Advisor?”

4. “You’ve only been out of school for two years, so you will really be able to relate to this group of undergrads.”

5. “Good idea—I will call all of my fraternity brothers in the area. I know they will do this for me.”

6. “We’ll make you Chapter Counselor. There is a great Chapter President this year. She’ll be able to do most things by herself.”

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The 31-minute lunch/coffee.

5 minutes  Small-talk (family, career, sports, etc. – research beforehand if possible)
5 minutes  Ask about undergrad experience
5 minutes  Explain your organization’s dedication to supporting its member chapters and how volunteers are supported
2 minutes  Mention recent successes of your organization on a national/international level
5 minutes  Honest chapter status update
5 minutes  Function of an advisory team
2 minutes  Advisory team training and support: cover training and resources available
2 minutes  Honest time commitment expectation (6-8 hrs/month)

If you sense interest and the person is qualified…ASK!!

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volunteer retention
creating an environment to keep good volunteers

Help volunteers get off to a positive start.

- Have your administrative executive send a personal note of welcome.
- Learn and know volunteers’ names and life details!
- Introduce volunteers to other volunteers and chapter members they will be working with.
- Provide an orientation and training session (with a job description and printed manual).
- Invite others to introduce themselves and send personal notes of congratulations on joining the team.
- Present volunteers with a pin, certificate or other token of appreciation.
- Obtain photos of volunteers and hang them in the chapter house or post to a web site so that undergraduates know and greet volunteers.
- Be sure volunteers’ first tasks are positive and encouraging experiences as you ease them into the role.
- Make sure that assignments and meetings begin and end on time.
- Be as flexible with volunteer schedules as possible.
- Give volunteers clear expectations.

Recognize volunteers often.

- Present volunteers with a pin, certificate or other token of appreciation for years of service.
- Remember important volunteer life events (i.e. birthdays, anniversaries) with e-cards, handwritten notes or cards.
- Design a volunteer of the week/month/year program.
- Profile volunteers in your organization’s publications.
- Create a volunteer hall of fame.
- Produce a newsletter or email update just for volunteers.
- Encourage undergraduates to write random thank-you’s and hold events to recognize volunteers.
- Encourage undergraduates to invite volunteers to chapter events.
- Present volunteers with inspirational books.
- Create an “beyond the call of duty” award.
- Have executive board members call to thank volunteers and gain feedback on the organization’s volunteer program.
- Have the board of directors issue a letter of commendation.
- Include photos in promotional literature.
- Chart the value dollar of volunteers’ contributions to date. (The Independent Sector deemed the dollar value of a volunteer hour at $17.55 for 2004. http://www.independentsector.org/media/20050324_time_value.html)
- Name volunteer awards for past volunteer leaders who provided exemplary service.
- Invite volunteers to attend a group event (movie, sporting event, concert, art exhibit, etc.).
"There are two types of relationship I feel are important to foster. The obvious one is having a role with the chapter as a group – being at meetings and selected events for support and guidance. The other is harder and more time consuming, but can be the key – personal relationships. Spending a little extra time, one-on-one with each of the guys really builds the trust that is necessary to lead."

-- Rob Winn, Furman '91
Chapter Counselor, Pennsylvania

Host a cookout/brotherhood event at your house
Dropping emails now and then to check in
Include your spouse/family in chapter functions
Be reliable and consistent
Attend athletic events
Raising money to send actives to leadership opportunities
Meet with each executive officer at least once a semester
Talk about chapter and non-chapter related issues
Participate in sporting events with the chapter/colony
Meet with parents when they are in town
Spend time with the chapter when it is not "scheduled"
Participate in philanthropic events
Know all members and pledges names

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OTHER IDEAS:

Take your respective undergraduate out for lunch.

Attend and support positive chapter events (intramural events, philanthropies, parents weekends, executive meetings, etc . . . )

Effectively listen . . . ask “how members are doing” and be willing to take the time and listen.

Email the men regularly.

Announce events and opportunities the men could take advantage of in the community.

Building rapport means harmonizing your behaviors and actions with others. In matching behaviors, you are naturally putting the other person at ease. The three steps below are actions you can take to improve your rapport-building skills:

Step 1: Find Common Ground. Common ground could be a shared interest or hobby, a shared understanding of a purpose or process, or shared commitment and enthusiasm for accomplishing a goal.

Step 2: Encourage open, authentic communication. Sharing your own thoughts, feelings, and rationale demonstrates your desire to communicate candidly. Acknowledge when a mentee "opens up" and let him or her know you appreciate the risk involved in doing so.

Step 3: Do what you say and say what you mean. Inconsistency in your thoughts, words, or actions can create a strong sense of distrust that can ultimately destroy any rapport that exists in a relationship. If you can't keep your promises, discuss and develop mutually agreeable alternatives.

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