



Everyone Ready®

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ready for volunteers

FROM ENERGIZE

Online Seminar Discussion Guide

New Approaches to Volunteer Recruitment

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Getting the Most from the Online Seminar

We hope that **organizational members** will view the Online Seminar in groups followed by a discussion on the content as it relates to your organization. One significant outcome may be the identification of procedures, tasks or skills that a unit, branch, etc., may want to discuss at length at a future time. *Make sure to view the next page for **ideas on building an in-house workshop around this seminar.***

Individual members can also benefit by gathering a small group of individuals from your organization and share what you have learned after taking the seminar. Use the discussion questions below to lead the way.

Discussion Questions

To begin your reflection on this seminar, consider the following:

- For which positions have we been most successful in recruiting volunteers? Why might this be? Is it something about the work itself or how we did the recruitment?
- Now the opposite: Which positions have posed the most difficulties in recruiting volunteers? Why?
- What were the last two things we did to recruit anyone – specific outreach that can be identified and described – and what were the results? [Note: *If you find this hard to answer, maybe the problem is that you are not actually doing recruitment.*] How could we have been more successful?
- Whom do we want most to recruit as volunteers (gender, age, race, education, or any other characteristic)? Are the assignments currently available attractive to such people? Do we offer enough flexibility to meet these target groups' needs?
- What skills or expertise do we most want to find and are we looking in the right places?
- Are we using our own Web site effectively to recruit volunteers? If a stranger came to our homepage, would s/he discover the volunteer opportunities we have available right now – and be able to express interest online?

Discussion Questions *(continued)*

- Are we registering our volunteer opportunities on any online directory or search site? Has this been successful for us? What could we do to improve our results from online recruitment?
- How comfortable do we feel with social networking opportunities online and how might we learn more about these?
- What new ideas did we get from the seminar? Anything unusual or creative?

Ideas for Building an On-site Workshop around this Seminar

One way to tailor each online seminar for your organization is to incorporate it into a longer workshop session during which participants can view the seminar together. Here are some additional ideas for building a longer workshop around this topic.

1. Before showing the presentation, ask learners to share their experiences as volunteer recruiters. What works and what doesn't for them? What do they like or dislike? Also, ask: "Think about volunteering you do personally. How were *you* recruited by this other organization?" What might your organization learn from these outside experiences?
2. Since the seminar gives **seven recommended steps** to successful recruitment, a very productive session can be held by stopping the presentation at the end of *each step* (note that there is more than one step in each of the three parts of the seminar) and allowing the group to **do** the task just outlined. Specifically:
 - a. Discuss why someone might want to do volunteering with your organization, or why not.
 - b. Consider which social, cultural, and economic trends are indeed affecting your community.
 - c. Assess the attractiveness of the volunteer positions for which you need to recruit.
 - d. Brainstorm places to look for volunteers for each different position.
 - e. Match a technique to the most likely sources.
 - f. Develop a realistic timeline for going out and doing the recruitment.
 - g. Envision how an applicant would be welcomed into the organization.
3. Gather together all the volunteer recruitment materials you can find that have been used in the past (or currently) by your organization – brochures, flyers, videos, etc. After viewing the presentation, do a critique of each item.
4. Gather together all the volunteer recruitment materials you can find *from other organizations* and critique those. Be sure to do some searching on online registry sites such as www.volunteermatch.org to see how other similar organizations (or others in your own community) describe their available opportunities. What can you learn from these outside efforts?
5. Project a computer screen onto a large projection screen and together look at various Web sites, discussing how each presents volunteering:

- a. Start with your own site and look at it the way a new visitor might. What does it say about volunteering with you?
- b. Go to some of the online volunteer opportunity registries (see <http://www.energizeinc.com/prof/volop.html> for a long list) and do a “search” by your location. Compare the posts from neighboring organizations to how you describe your open assignments.
- c. Go to a social media site such as Facebook and do a search on “volunteering” to see what comes up. Do the same on YouTube and Twitter.

What might your organization learn to do (or avoid!) from this surfing experience?
Designate someone to record the discussion for later strategy sessions.

6. *If time permits:* Using the “Proximity Chart” from the handout packet, take a 45-minute break and have participants actually go out and walk around the block or drive in a circle, writing down what they see. Then reconvene and assess what you found as a potential treasure trove of resources (for volunteer recruitment and other things).