



Everyone Ready[®]

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Turning Single Days of Service into Longer Volunteer Involvement

By Steve McCurley

Self-Instruction Guide
for Individuals and Teams



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Ask the Trainer
Online

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IDEAL AUDIENCE FOR THIS GUIDE

- Volunteer managers with responsibility for volunteer development practices.
- Front-line supervisors or leaders of volunteers, especially those who may be used to the “old” way of working with volunteers or who may have expectations based on former volunteer engagement practices.
- Agency decision-makers who allocate resources and design program procedures.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this Guide and discussing its content, participants will be able to:

- Accommodate short-term volunteering within traditional volunteer management
- Develop a system for encouraging incremental commitment
- Think differently about volunteer involvement

HOW TO USE THESE SELF-INSTRUCTION GUIDES

Everyone Ready® selects a several-page chapter, excerpt, or article from a respected source, often fresh material just published or newly revised, to become the “Featured Reading” on the chosen topic for each Self-Instruction Guide.

Read or complete each section of the Guide *in the sequence presented*. The order of the elements matters to the success of the learning experience. First, you will find preparatory information that sets the topic into context and a pre-reading self-assessment. Then the Featured Reading(s) are presented.

The Additional Perspectives following the Featured Reading(s) updates and expands the original writing and has been developed specifically for *Everyone Ready* participants. In addition, further resources, ways to test your understanding, and a post-reading self-assessment are included.

Recommendation: Consider forming a study group or learning team so that you benefit from the synergy of discussing the material with others in your program. Sharing your ideas aloud reinforces the learning and lays the groundwork for actually implementing many of the ideas developed.

PRE-READING ASSESSMENT

Before reading this guide, see if you can describe your current patterns of involving volunteers. If you don't have recent statistics, give your best estimate.

A. Approximate percentages of volunteer roles in your agency in each of the following categories:

- | | % |
|--|-------|
| 1. One-time [once a year] | _____ |
| 2. Recurring Occasional [three or four times a year] | _____ |
| 3. Short-Term [less than six months] | _____ |
| 4. Long-Term [one year or longer] | _____ |
| 5. Other | _____ |
| | 100% |

B. How many different types of volunteer roles are performed in your agency? [Another way to answer this is to determine how many different volunteer position descriptions you have or how many different titles for volunteer positions.]

C. How many of your volunteer opportunities are “projects” rather than ongoing “positions”?

D. What kinds of volunteer positions exist in which the volunteer can move upward in responsibility and commitment?

E. What percentage of last year's total volunteers volunteered with your organization for each length of time listed below?

- | | % |
|---|-------|
| 1. One-shot activity (one day or weekend) | _____ |
| 2. Less than 6 Months | _____ |
| 3. 6 Months to less than 1 Year | _____ |
| 4. 1 Year to less than 5 Years | _____ |
| 5. 5 Years to less than 10 Years | _____ |
| 6. 10 Years + | _____ |
| | 100% |

F. What percentage of volunteers are in the following age categories?

- | | % |
|-------------------|-------|
| a. Under 14 years | _____ |
| b. 14 to 17 years | _____ |
| c. 18 to 25 years | _____ |
| d. 26 to 44 years | _____ |
| e. 44 to 64 years | _____ |
| f. 65+ years | _____ |
| | 100% |

UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

Volunteer involvement has to fit into the lifestyles of people. What we ask volunteers to do and how long we expect them to serve cannot conflict with their other obligations in life. As with other discretionary activities, volunteering must work *for* and not *against* the volunteer.

- As society changes we must adjust our volunteer involvement practices accordingly. The volunteers of today do not live under the same conditions of the volunteers of twenty years ago; therefore, management of volunteers today must move beyond management of volunteers twenty years ago.
- One of the key factors affecting everyone today is the increasing value of time. Most individuals feel as though they do not have enough time and are accordingly very protective of what time they have. This means that recruiting volunteers for long-term commitments is much tougher than it has ever been.
- People are more willing to form relationships with organizations with which they are familiar. This may mean that organizations need to develop “test” volunteer experiences, which will allow people to “get a taste” of what the volunteering experience will be like and whether the organization is one that they will be willing to support in more substantial ways.
- Many volunteer positions require a long-term commitment to be successful. These include activities such as mentoring that require the development of relationships, and leadership positions that require a familiarity with system and organization. Filling these positions in the future will involve more work than many organizations are accustomed to expending. Rather than simply expecting every volunteer to fit the mold of long-term volunteering (as needed by the organization), it will be necessary to create an environment in which volunteers evolve their commitment over time (as they see the value of their efforts).

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT AS YOU READ

- How are you accustomed to involving volunteers? Do you have a program built around the involvement of long-term volunteers? Are most of your volunteer positions designed like paid positions or do you have opportunities that are much shorter in duration and have well-defined ending points?
- Are you relying on older volunteers for the majority of your volunteer positions? Are you having difficulty recruiting younger volunteers? Is your overall volunteer population becoming older and older?
- If you were asked to become a volunteer in your program, how would you personally evaluate that position in terms of its potential impact on your own life? How much time would it really take? What other activities would you have to give up to volunteer?
- How do you develop and nurture volunteers? Do you leave much of this up to them or do you consciously work with volunteers to encourage their further participation?

Featured Reading

FEATURED READING

Excerpted from *Keeping Volunteers: A Guide to Retention* by Steve McCurley and Rick Lynch, © 2005, Fat Cat Publications. Updated for this Guide, 2011.

Turning Single Days of Service into Longer Volunteer Involvement

The Shift to Short-Term Volunteering

The trend in English-speaking countries is away from volunteers making long-term commitments. Instead, they are more likely to want a term of service, sometimes as short as one day, with a defined end-point.

A study in Canada (Handy and Srinivasan, 2003) found that 81% of volunteer managers reported an increase in short-term volunteers; 63% reported an increase of volunteers requesting an assignment of less than three months. In a companion study in 2004, Handy, *et. al.* found that 80% of reporting hospitals had an increase in volunteers who serve for three months to a year.

In a study of volunteers over age 45, AARP (2003) found that 48% only volunteer from time to time, for a specific project or activity. A similar study of AARP members in Delaware (AARP, 2001) found that 33% of them volunteer occasionally during the year for special projects, 28% volunteer a regular time each month and, in addition, volunteer extra hours for special projects, and 19% usually spend about the same amount of time volunteering each month. Younger members (age 50-59) are more likely than older volunteers to volunteer occasionally during the year.

Overall, in the US, the Corporation for National and Community Service's research (2005) found the following pattern of volunteering:

	Youth	Adults
Regular, ongoing	39%	55%
Occasional	35%	23%
Episodic	27%	22%

A 2003 survey by the Points of Light Foundation (Cihlar, 2004) found that its constituent groups rated "*more people interested in short/episodic opportunities*" as the number one trend facing volunteering.

The exact nature of the tendency toward episodic volunteering is a bit fuzzy. It does not necessarily mean restricting volunteering to one-day events. The Taproot Foundation noted in 2007:

When asked to elaborate on preferred time commitments, respondents expressed a strong preference for finite (versus on-going) engagements to allow for flexibility for other activities. This preference was not directed towards the length of the engagement, but rather a clearly scoped beginning and end.

The simplistic rationale for episodic volunteering is that it allows people to cope with the increasing time demands of their life by reducing their volunteer commitments. This is actually not true, since volunteers are still volunteering for the same number of organizations and still contributing about the same amount of volunteer time each year. Episodic volunteering instead seems to stem from a desire by volunteers not to feel trapped in an ongoing volunteer commitment that they cannot easily get out of and whose length they cannot control.

Featured Reading

Accommodating Short-term Volunteering within Traditional Volunteer Management

Recruiting volunteers for a short-term event is a relatively commonplace and relatively easy practice these days. On practically any given weekend there are a variety of available volunteer activities that basically require the commitment of a few hours, often spent with friends, ranging from building houses to cleaning up parks to the various “a-thons” that permeate the landscape. There are even volunteer organizations that specialize in organizing these activities and targeting recruitment to those interested in short-term volunteering.

The only problem, of course, is that operating a sustained volunteer effort off of these one-shot events is a difficult, if not impossible, task. Most organizations need volunteers who are actively involved more often than once a year and who are willing to come back once the fun event is over and do the hard work that really needs to be done. In particular, they need volunteers who are willing to accept responsibility and perform leadership functions.

Fraser and Gottlieb (2001) note the difficulty faced by many organizations in accomplishing this:

The point seems to be that any volunteer work requiring a long-term commitment to administrative responsibilities, practical chores, or any activities other than direct contact with clients seems to be shunned by volunteers, perhaps because the work has a job-like character and perhaps because the rewards are not as direct and palpable as direct client service.

The most common reason given for not wishing to make a long-term commitment is “I don’t have the time.” In many cases, this is simply a polite way of expressing the following substantive concerns:

- Is what I will get out of donating the time worth the time it will take?
- How much hassle will be involved?
- Can I trust that you’ll deliver what you promise?

These are difficult questions to answer effectively when the volunteer has no existing relationship with you and thus little reason to believe your answers.

Developing a System for Encouraging Incremental Commitment

Here are some tips for approaching this situation. We’ll warn you up front that they require a planned and organized effort, and that you’ll have to invest a lot of work before you earn your reward, but we think you’ll find it well worth your time. Ours is a three-step process to landing the volunteers that you really need, not just the ones who show up to get the free T-shirt.

2012 Days of Service

<i>Martin Luther King, Jr. Day</i>	January 16, 2012
<i>Random Acts of Kindness Week</i>	February 13-19, 2012
<i>National Volunteer Week</i>	April 15-21, 2012
<i>Global Youth Service Day</i>	April 20-22, 2012
<i>Join Hands Day</i>	May 5, 2012
<i>National Day of Service and Remembrance</i>	September 11, 2012
<i>Make a Difference Day</i>	October 27, 2012
<i>National Family Volunteer Day</i>	November 17, 2012

Featured Reading

1. Organize Attractor Events and Positions

An *attractor event* is designed to engage the attention and short-term involvement of larger numbers of volunteers. Large events are perfect for encouraging previously uninvolved people to consider volunteering. As an example of their effectiveness, UK Sport (2002) in an evaluation of the XVII Commonwealth Games discovered that 24% of those who came forward to volunteer had no previous volunteer experience whatsoever, but were attracted by the size, scope, timeframe and excitement of the event.

Are you free 27th - 31st December?

We need volunteers to support children & adults with disabilities to get involved in sports, music, art, drama and more on our fun Christmas project in North London

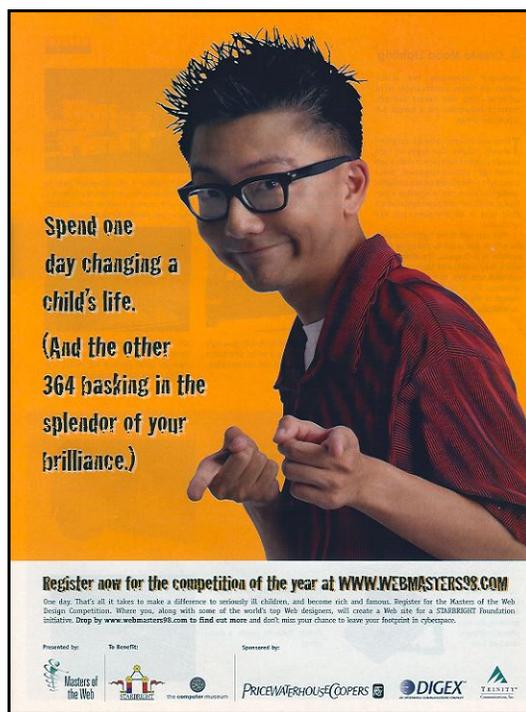
No experience needed just enthusiasm and energy!
Male volunteers especially welcome
You'll receive training & loads of support.

Project runs 27th-31st Dec, training starts Sun 23rd or Sat 29th Nov.
Call 0208 801 7432, email projects@kithandkids.org.uk,
or visit www.kithandkids.org.uk
We'd love to hear from you!

Attractor events can be organized around a clean-up (park, home, nonprofit agency), around community education (a mall show or a corporate fair), an “a-thon” fundraiser, an educational or outreach event, or any other activity which meets the following requirements:

- it can involve groups of people in a variety of volunteer tasks and projects
- many volunteer positions don't require any substantial training or preparation
- the work is fun and exciting and allows people to work with others
- the activity is photogenic, thus attracting attention

The event itself should also accomplish something worthwhile, although this isn't our primary aim. In addition, the event should allow all those who participate (volunteers and the general public) to get an introduction to the cause, clientele and operation of your agency, with a particular highlighting of the contributions made by volunteers to the work of the organization. This introduction can be provided via print, demonstrations, or whatever method seems to work in your setting. The key is that current volunteers should be a prominent part of the event. These volunteers should be encouraged to tell the new participants about the other types of volunteer work they are participating in with the charity.



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(And the other 364 basking in the splendor of your brilliance.)

Register now for the competition of the year at WWW.WEBMASTERS98.COM

One day. That's all it takes to make a difference to seriously ill children, and become rich and famous. Register for the Masters of the Web Design Competition. Where you, along with some of the world's top Web designers, will create a Web site for a STARBUCKS Foundation initiative. Drop by www.webmasters98.com to find out more and don't miss your chance to save your fingertips in cyberspace.

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Attractor positions can also accomplish the desired goal of getting prospective volunteers to “test the waters” in the organization.

Designing good attractor positions can be viewed as similar to developing assignments that might be handled by a consultant. They should have the following characteristics:

1. They have a definite goal or result in mind, often a definite product.
2. They have a defined timeframe, usually fairly short.

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3. They may require a particular expertise or ability.
4. They can be “owned” by the volunteer, in the sense that the responsibility for accomplishment will be clearly bestowed on the volunteer.
5. It will be clear whether the work is done successfully or not.
6. They should directly relate in some way to the talents of the volunteers or to a group or activity that the volunteer cares about.

The key phrases to remember in developing these events are “hands on,” “fun,” “immediate engagement” and “immediate gratification.”

One of the ways to market attractor events in a way that meets the needs of time-poor parents is to make the event a “family volunteering” opportunity. Instead of forcing parents to take time away from their children or pay for babysitting services, ask them to bring the children along to participate in the event. Along with making the lives of the parents easier, it’s also a great way to change the demographics of your volunteer program – especially if you ask grandparents to involve their grandchildren.

For more extensive volunteer opportunities that are not event-based but are still time-limited you might try referring to the work as a “consulting project” rather than a “position.” The difference in terminology can make a difference in response.

All of these are intended to make the prospective volunteer more likely to take the test drive, to try volunteering with an organization with which they are not already familiar. As in the case of fundraising, this first “yes” is the most difficult.

2. Scout for the More Engaged

During the event, current volunteers should be assigned to work among groups of newcomers. These volunteers are in addition to those mentioned above who will also participate by telling their stories. These “scout” volunteers should be recruited for the part and one of them may provide oversight for several teams or work areas. Part of their assignment is to help manage the work to be done during the event, but another part of their assignment involves “scouting” those who are attending, looking for those who show the most interest and potential.

Scouts can do a better job if they themselves are volunteers, not paid employees – it’s the peer relationship thing.

These scouts should be encouraged to do the following:

- establish personal contact with each of the volunteers with whom they are working
- give the newcomers a sense of “welcome” and appreciation
- get the names and contact information of those attending, so that they can be thanked afterwards
- ensure that each new volunteer gets some basic information about the program and about its involvement of volunteers, and receives a briefing on the cause of the organization and its work in furthering that cause

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Particular elements to look for in volunteers with a potential for further development are:

- people having a lot of fun
- people who seem to like organizing others
- people who indicate interest in the cause
- people who seem to have some personal connection to the cause
- people feeling a sense of real satisfaction

Special attention should be paid to locating those who are “in charge” of already-established groups of volunteers (such as workplace teams, school groups, social clubs and the like), since these are likely to be personality types who enjoy being leaders and doing additional work.

Scouts should make notes about those they think have the potential for development and a debriefing should be held following the event. The debriefing should discuss who might be receptive to further involvement, what types of volunteer work they have shown interest in, and how they will best be drawn further into the organization.

If the context of the work is not in a group event, then whoever is supervising the work of the individual volunteer should perform the functions above.

3. Nurture Additional Involvement

The process of cultivating those whose potential has been identified will vary depending upon your circumstances, but here are some possible avenues to explore:

1. If the event is a recurring one, you can increase involvement by offering additional work within the context of the event. This might include asking them to provide feedback about the event, offering them a promotion within the activity or group with whom they served in the past year, or asking them to participate in helping organize and operate an upcoming event. This invitation should be offered by the scout volunteer who has developed a personal relationship with the newcomer and it should be based on being impressed with the quality of the work done by the potential volunteer. *The offer should be phrased in terms of being a continuation of the work that has already been done rather than as an entirely new task or activity.*
2. The volunteer should receive some sign of promotion with the agency, such as an official title that indicates their new status, access to materials or equipment, a business card or some other items that create an official link with the organization.
3. While the volunteer is doing additional work on the event, he or she should receive a further indoctrination about the agency and its work. This should include information about the work of the agency and about the variety of volunteer positions that are available within it. Some of this information should be things that are not generally known, since this will give the volunteer a sense that they are receiving “insider” information about the organization and its work, information not generally available to others.
4. The types of volunteer work available should represent an ascending scale of complexity and responsibility. It should include short and easy work, and then have a staircase of more difficult positions. One way to accomplish this is to have the volunteer assist other volunteers in “higher” positions. The volunteer should be exposed to current volunteers in these positions, who are given an opportunity to talk about their work and why they enjoy it. These discussions will serve as a low-pressure recruitment effort. From time to time, these current volunteers can

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increase the pressure by asking the potential volunteer to “help them out” on something they are working on. This work should be something that will give the potential volunteer exposure to what the volunteers are doing without requiring a big commitment.

5. The volunteer should have latitude in selecting the type of volunteer work she or he wants to do. This element of “choice” is of critical importance in fostering interest in additional volunteering. It greatly helps, by the way, to have a wide variety of volunteer positions available, since offering options increases your chance of resonating with the potential volunteer.
6. The potential volunteer should also be introduced to staff and volunteers at the agency. Becoming friends with others in the organization can serve as an anchor that holds the connection of the volunteer to the agency.
7. While this exposure process is occurring, further scouting of the interests and reactions of the potential volunteer should be undertaken. This scouting should fine-tune the effort to discover the type of motivations and possible volunteer position that would be most appealing to the potential volunteer.

Not all volunteers will choose to rise all the way to the top, but this process of “controlled promotion” will allow the volunteer to feel in control and make it more likely that some will in fact continue their upward movement. Eventually you will have “grown” a new generation of leaders.

Thinking Differently about Volunteer Involvement

For many organizations, volunteer involvement has been treated as an “either/or” proposition. Individuals were either in the system or not in the system. The new reality of volunteer involvement is a bit more complex – volunteers may display various levels of commitment and involvement, moving in and out of the system and participating in different ways at different times. Organizations wanting increased levels of involvement will have to work to persuade and groom volunteers for greater levels of participation.

DeMarco (1998) in a study of current volunteers in Ontario determined that “*Many past [volunteer] activities were project based or time limited. These were ‘test runs’ which allowed for a taste of volunteering within a limited commitment and likely paved the way for their current more serious commitment.*” In the UK, Community Service Volunteers reported in 2004 that more than 60% of volunteers who participated in Make a Difference Day activities were still volunteering.

The theory behind the process outlined above is relatively simple:

- People are more likely to “test the waters” if offered small commitments.
- People will proceed at their own speed through the levels of involvement; some will stop along the way.
- When properly nurtured and cultivated, some people will keep progressing up the levels.
- When you attempt to force people into too much, too soon, they will resolve the problem by leaving.

The involvement of short-term volunteers is more dependent upon what *we* do than upon what they do – they’ll be volunteering someplace. The only issue is whether it’s with us or with someone else. This nurturing system requires more work than we’re used to expending – it requires an investment before we reap any return. That return, however, will be a new generation of committed volunteers – who have learned to trust and value their volunteer relationship.

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As an example of how you can take a much broader perspective about involving volunteers consider the scale that New York Cares uses in working with its event-based volunteers:

- **Level One: Shoppers** – Individuals who call for information and/or attend an orientation session, but do not sign up for an event or project.
- **Level Two: Episodic Contributors** – Volunteers who participate in only one project annually.
- **Level Three: Short-term Contributors** – Volunteers who complete two to four projects per year for only one year and/or become Site Captains for an annual event.
- **Level Four: Reliable Regulars** – Volunteers who complete five or more projects for more than one year.
- **Level Five: Fully Engaged Volunteers** – Volunteers who participate in five or more projects per year for more than one year, become Team Leaders and/or assume other leadership roles such as serving as a Site Captain, assisting in volunteer orientation by joining New York Cares' Speakers Bureau, or serving on an organizational fundraising or steering committee.
- **Level Six: Committed Leaders** – Volunteers who have committed to more than one year serving as a Team Leader, Site Captain, Speakers Bureau or committee member and/or helping to cultivate contacts/donors.

Within this pattern of styles some volunteers tend to remain within a single style and others change styles over the years, typically by moving to higher levels of responsibility. Some may move to lesser roles, often in reaction to changes in their own life style or situation.

ADDITIONAL PERSPECTIVES

Here are some final things to consider as you go about your effort to attract and involve volunteers with a short-term perspective.

Prepare Staff and Current Volunteers

Some organizations have encountered difficulties in adjusting to new types of volunteers, particularly when several types have been mixed together. As an example, long-term volunteers may well view short-term volunteers as “uncaring” or uncommitted to the organization. The lack of willingness of short-term volunteers to sacrifice their own lives to the interests of the cause may be met with a lack of understanding or even outright hostility by the long-term volunteer. Organizations have also encountered difficulties because their staff members have equally difficult times adjusting to populations with whom they are not accustomed.

As in all changes in organizational operations, make sure that you spend time working with those within the organization who will be impacted by the changes, even though they are not the “target” of the change. Two good ways to do this are by involving them in planning the change and by educating them on how to deal with it.

Subdividing Larger Tasks

While many volunteer positions may initially look as though they are too large or complex for a short-term focus, remember that you can sub-divide volunteer positions in a number of ways that make them both smaller and shorter. For instance, you might remove some of the discrete tasks from an ongoing volunteer relationship and assign them to short-termers. Most positions have elements that are finite in nature and could be assigned as a complete but time-limited task to be done by a short-termer. For example, mentoring a child is an ongoing activity, but some of the work involved – such as taking the child to one particular event – could be given to one or more volunteers as short-term tasks. Long-term volunteers don’t have to do everything if parts of the jobs can be shared with short-termers. The long-termer can often act as the supervisor of the short-termer in this case.

Some of these discrete tasks could be assigned as “benchmarks” that help the client progress toward a larger goal. For example, if a program is working with new immigrants to help them assimilate to a new community, we might assign a long-term volunteer to work with them over a period of time. Assimilation, however, might have many smaller tasks all of which contribute to eventually becoming a part of the community – finding a place to live, getting a driver’s license, preparing for employment, learning about the community, etc. Each of these tasks could be done as a short-term activity by other volunteers.

It is true that some of these ideas may require you to do complete screening of the short-termer, such as a background check, as well as providing some training. Don’t assume you’ll get resistance to this. In fact, some volunteers may welcome being prepared to handle various, episodic tasks, provided they do not have to commit from the start to an ongoing assignment.

Sabbaticals

One of my favorite ways to construct short-term tasks is to build them around “sabbaticals” or “vacations” for long-term volunteers. In this case the short-term volunteer assumes much of the full assignment but does so for a defined and limited time period – only while the long-term volunteer is

taking a break. This is a good way to help out long-termers who are feeling a bit overwhelmed, while providing a great introduction for a short-term volunteer.

A variation on this is recruiting short-termers to be part of a volunteer “rescue” squad who only step in if another volunteer is encountering difficulties.

Keep in Touch

Even though short-term volunteers may have successfully completed their assignments, it is important not to forget them. Maintain communication with them, keeping them informed of events and happenings, especially those that relate to the task or project they were involved with. This constant flow of information will act as a quiet form of recruitment, inviting them to reconsider another assignment.

ASK THE TRAINER SPECIFIC QUESTIONS



Trainer Steve McCurley

Discussion Board

Ask the Trainer Questions Specific to Your Situation

When?

During the entire time this Guide is featured on your *Everyone Ready* Main Page, trainer Steve McCurley will be ready to answer any questions that you post on the Discussion Board, accessed via the left column of the *Everyone Ready* Main Page.

Many *Everyone Ready* participants ask “But, how does all this relate to *my* situation?”

The Discussion Board is your chance to ask specific questions related to your organization and to connect with others that may be having similar experiences.

How Does the Discussion Board Work?

1. Look for the trainer’s photo in the Featured Topic area of the *Everyone Ready* Main page and select “Join the Discussion” underneath.
2. Indicate whether or not you would like to receive notifications about new questions and answers posted to the Discussion Board.
3. The Discussion Board window will appear.
4. Select a “thread” (a particular topic) to read and respond to, or start a new thread (if you have a completely different issue to discuss).
5. Follow the directions on the screen to post a response or question.
6. The trainer will respond via the Discussion Board within 48 hours. If you’ve signed up to receive notifications, you’ll get a direct e-mail with the answer, and your exchange will also be posted to the Discussion Board for the benefit of all participants (you will be given the option to keep the posting anonymous).

STUDY QUESTIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL OR TEAM USE

I suggest discussing the following questions with a small group in your office or contemplating them yourself as a stepping stone toward improving how you engage volunteers who fit into the current trend of preferring short-term assignments.

1. What do you actually know about the patterns of volunteering within your organization? Do you know how long volunteers tend to serve? Do you know the age patterns of current volunteers and whether these are becoming broader or narrower? How can you develop a system for tracking volunteering patterns?
2. What kinds of short-term volunteer tasks would benefit your organization? Are there facilities that need repair or renovation? Do clients have need for special services – educational or entertainment – that could be provided in short visits? Are there research projects that staff have always wanted done but lacked time or expertise to do?
3. Do the practices of your organization support the involvement of short-term volunteers or work against it? Are most volunteer positions open-ended rather than having definite completion points? Does your volunteer recognition only award hours and years of service rather than provide an opportunity for recognizing those who will serve for a short period?
4. What kind of volunteer positions could you create to allow a “career ladder” for volunteers? These could include mentor or trainer positions, shadow positions that assist other volunteer leaders, special task forces, emeritus status, etc.

TRY-THIS EXERCISE

Name that Volunteer Position!

Recruiting short-term volunteers requires giving them an instant impression that the commitment they are being asked to assume is one within their timeframe. The word “position” itself implies a longer, more on-going commitment than many short-term volunteers will consider. So, imagine you were preparing an advertisement for a newspaper or radio announcement. What word(s) could you put in front of the following phrase to suggest that you are looking for a short-term volunteer commitment?

“_____” volunteers.

Get staff or volunteers to brainstorm responses. Some answers include:

- “Day of” volunteers
- “Just in time” volunteers
- “Flex-time” volunteers
- “Drop in” volunteers
- “Episodic” volunteers
- “One time” volunteers
- “Happy Hour” volunteers
- “A la carte” volunteers
- “Done-in-a-day” volunteers
- “One-off” volunteers

REFERENCES AND RESOURCES ON THIS SUBJECT

Other Relevant *Everyone Ready* Resources

Depending on the *Everyone Ready* membership level of your organization, you may have access to some or all of the following topics. To access, just go to the All Topics section of your Main Page (located on the right in the orange sidebar) and use the search/sort functions to get to a topic.

Designing Work for Today's Volunteers Online Seminar by Steve McCurley

Generations: Adapting to Volunteers of Different Ages Online Seminar by Peter Brinkerhoff

Keeping Volunteers Motivated (So They Stay!) Online Seminar by Betty Stallings (Note that in part 3 of the presentation, Betty provides additional ideas for encouraging single-day volunteers to expand their commitment.)

Strength in Numbers: Coordinating Volunteers in Groups Self-Instruction Guide by Connie Pirtle

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* Can be purchased using your *Everyone Ready* discount code in the Energize, Inc. online bookstore at www.energizeinc.com/bookstore. Your discount code, which you will need to enter upon checkout, can be found on your *Everyone Ready* Main Page.

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POST READING SELF-ASSESSMENT

1. I feel informed about the evidence supporting the trend toward short-term volunteering.
 yes no
2. I feel able to describe the basic elements of a planned system to nurture and develop volunteers from short-term to longer-term commitments.
 very able somewhat able unsure do not feel able
3. Here are three ideas I have for events or positions that we might use to attract short-term volunteers:
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
4. Here are two current volunteers who I think would be very good at being “scouts” to identify potential long-term volunteers:
 - a.
 - b.
5. Here are two positions that we could utilize to offer new volunteers an opportunity for intermediate advancement:
 - a.
 - b.

ABOUT THE TRAINER



Steve McCurley

Steve McCurley is an internationally-known trainer and speaker in the field of effective volunteer involvement. He is currently a partner in VM Systems, a management consulting firm specializing in helping organizations improve their utilization of volunteers.

He has served as a consultant on volunteer program development to AARP, the National Association of Partners in Education, the US Tennis Association, Special Olympics International, the National Park Service, the Points of Light Foundation and many other groups. He is the co-founder with Susan Ellis of *e-Volunteerism: The Electronic Journal of the Volunteer Community*. He is one of the founding faculty of the Institute on Advanced Volunteer Management, held in the United Kingdom each year. He is the

author of 14 books and more than 150 articles on volunteer involvement, including the bestselling basic texts, *Volunteer Management: Mobilizing All the Resources of the Community, 3rd Edition* and *Keeping Volunteers: A Guide to Retention*.

On the international front, Steve has done work in Canada, England, Ireland, the Caribbean, Australia, and South America. His writings have been translated into Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Ukrainian, Rumanian, Hebrew, Chinese and Korean, among other languages.

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Books by Steve available in the Energize Online Bookstore:*

- *Volunteer Management: Mobilizing All the Resources of the Community, 3rd Edition*
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Featured Reading

“Turning Single Days of Service into Longer Volunteer Involvement” from *Keeping Volunteers: A Guide to Retention* by Steve McCurley and Rick Lynch, © 2005, Fat Cat Publications (revised for this Guide, 2011).

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