Everyone Ready®

An online volunteer management staff development plan

FROM ENERGIZE

Slide Views for Notes

Bridging the Gap between Volunteers and Employees

Trainer: Steve McCurley

Presented March 2010

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Audio
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Bridging the Gap between Volunteers and Employees

Online Seminar – Part 1 of 3

With Steve McCurley

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Bridging the Gap between Volunteers and Employees

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Your Trainer

Steve McCurley

- Writer
- Trainer
- With Rick Lynch, author of *Volunteer Management*

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What We'll Cover

Part 1: Systems

- Gaining perspective on employee and volunteer relations
- Strengthening systems which foster staff's involvement with volunteers

Part 2: Knowledge

- Building knowledge required for staff and volunteers to work effectively together

Part 3: Motivation

- Creating motivation for staff to work enthusiastically with volunteers

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Goal: Strong Working Relationships

Establishing good working relationships

- More of a struggle to mesh with certain personalities
- Challenging whether you partner with staff or volunteers

But staff/volunteer relationships have a special dynamic

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Which Perspective Fits You?

- Staff member who supervises or partners with volunteers
- Volunteer program manager
- Volunteer who leads other volunteers
- Agency decision maker
- Volunteer who works with staff

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From the Agency's Perspective

No matter your role:

- Need to forge strong working relationships

Common commitment:

- All share common commitment to agency mission
- All play a role in furthering the mission

Common understanding is required:

- Clear expectations and guidelines
- Consistent, reliable, welcoming environment for all

Peter Romanofsky Article

"Today, volunteers… staff not only social welfare agencies, but also schools, hospitals and drug rehabilitation centers…."

"Professionals continue to alienate nonprofessionals…."

"…deep friction between the two groups."

Publication date: 1973
Topic: adoption agencies in the 1920's!

More Complex than It Seems

Nobody opposes the *concept* of "volunteer involvement"

- But, do line staff and management put in into practice?

On the front lines, where staff and volunteer interact each day:

- If relationship is tense
  - Frustrated staffers make volunteers feel unwanted
  - Volunteers find reasons to leave

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What's the Real Problem?

It goes beyond individual personalities

- Too often, staff and volunteers have been left on their own to define how to work together

Concept Versus Reality

90%
Volunteers are either "extremely crucial" or "crucial"

79%
Do NOT train staff to work with volunteers

Source: "Hands for Nature" study of environmental groups in Ontario, 2003

What's the Cause?

Who is causing friction?

- Organizational systems?
- Individuals?

Before you decide, imagine:

- You are the new Director of Computer Operations
- Current # of computers in agency: 0
- Goal: A computer in use on every desk

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First Assignment

Plan	Introduce	Maintain

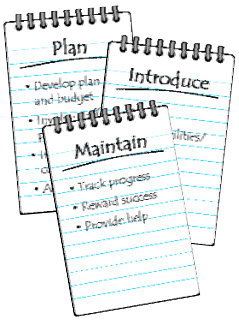
"Before" List

Plan	Introduce	Maintain
• Develop plan and budget • Involve staff in planning • Inventory computer needs • Assess staff skills	• Train • Adjust facilities/ logistics	• Track progress • Reward success • Provide help

See the Parallels?

Universal approach

- Introducing computers
- Helping employees and volunteers work together
- Any other organizational initiative



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Look at It this Way.....

Another way to think about volunteers:

"…a tool to extend the ability of the organization (and its staff) to do work."

Volunteers are more complex (for now)

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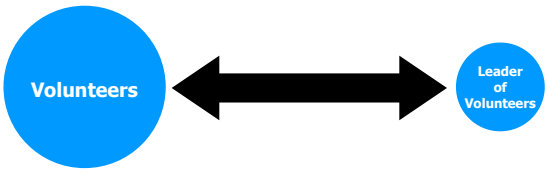
Historical Perspective



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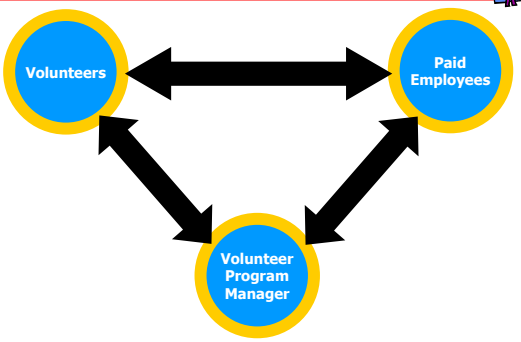
Today's Perspective



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Evolving Relationships

In today's world:

- Increasing need for staff to work effectively with volunteers
- Staff may have more contact with volunteers than Volunteer Program Manager does
- Again, just like the growth process with computers

Bottom Line

Staff need to:

- Understand their own roles regarding work with volunteers
- Be competent in that role
- See the relationship between:
  - Their own success in working with volunteers
  - Their own professional advancement

Quick Self-Assessment

1. **% of your time working with volunteers directly:**

   _____

2. **% of your time working with paid employees to prepare them to work with volunteers:**

   _____

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Foundational Steps

- Volunteer involvement policy
- Research on staff knowledge/attitudes about involving volunteers
- Staff input on how volunteers might help
- Staff training on how to work with volunteers
- Monitoring of staff/volunteer relationships
- Staff involvement in volunteer management process
- Feedback/recognition for staff on success in dealing with volunteers

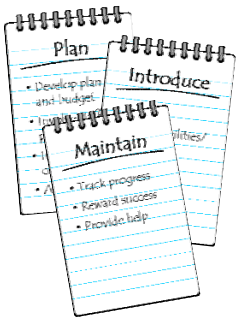
Homework

Anyone can take the initiative

Consider:
Which items could you apply to your organization's volunteer involvement effort?

Review:
Feasibility of ideas in the trainer's handouts

Create an organizational framework for *both* volunteers and paid staff



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Bridging the Gap between Volunteers and Employees

Online Seminar – Part 2 of 3

With Steve McCurley

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What Staff Needs to Know

Staff must be able to work with and supervise efforts of volunteers

Must know:

- What they want volunteers to do
- How to establish and maintain good working relationships
- How supervising volunteers is different from supervising paid staff

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Defining Volunteer Tasks

Knowledge Area 1:

Determine the tasks and assignments that volunteers will perform

Approach 1

Link volunteer work to the organization's mission

Ask:

- Where are our greatest difficulties in delivering services?
- What are the biggest unmet needs of our clients?
- Where do we have problems reaching new populations?

Approach 2

Link work of volunteers to directly assisting staff

Ask:

- On what tasks do you currently spend time?
- Which of these are best suited to your interests and skills?
- Which are not so well suited?

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Approach 3

Link work of volunteers to staff wishes and dreams

Ask staff:

- What have you always wanted to do, but never had enough time or help?
- What more would you need to do in order to be recognized for giving really excellent service?

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Control Questions

Which of the tasks on your list could realistically be given to volunteers?

- Time
- Risks/safety
- Degree of responsibility

What would you need to do to support a volunteer for this assignment?

- Training
- Supervision
- Supplies/space

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Don't Overlook the Obvious

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Building a Working Relationship

Knowledge Area 2:

Establishing a working relationship with volunteers

Building a Working Relationship

Supervising volunteers is a complicated topic

In this short seminar:

- Concentrate on "how to begin" a working relationship with a volunteer

Shortcut: What Do You Need to Clarify?

Imagine a first meeting with a volunteer

- What things must you clarify?
- What information must be shared?
- What tone do you want to set?

Consider your answers before moving on.

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Answers

Each volunteer situation is unique, but these answers are generic:

- Roles and responsibilities
- Priorities and timeframes
- Boundaries and rules
- Decision-making processes
- Communication style and frequency
- Checkpoints

What about Tone?

What tone do you want to set?

- It's often a hard question to answer
- Consider establishing a tone that includes:
  - Mutual responsibility
  - Respect
  - Support

One Question that Always Works

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Other Ways to Build Understanding

You don't need to meet face-to-face

- Consider other ways to ensure that you and your volunteer share a common understanding

How do I build a relationship with off-site volunteers?

Remember that some volunteers do not require "supervision"

- Frame the relationship as "liaisoning" or "partnering"

Building a Working Relationship

Knowledge Area 3:

Understand how supervising volunteers is different from supervising employees

Difference in Tasks

Scope

- Smaller, better-defined tasks

Timeframe

- Tasks sized to fit a limited schedule
- Duration and availability limits

Roles

- Who does what
- Fit in conjunction with others

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Difference in Time

Volunteers usually work fewer hours

To get the full benefit of volunteer time:

- Prepare
  - Be ready with what the volunteer needs to minimize wasted time
- Communicate
  - There is an information gap
  - *What did I learn today because I was in the office that a volunteer ought to be informed about?*

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Difference in Temperament

Is the volunteer:

- Under-motivated?
- Over-motivated?
- Other-motivated?

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McCurley's Golden Rule

Treat volunteers the way you'd like to be treated.

If that doesn't work, ask them how they would like to be treated.

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What Volunteers Need to Know

- Volunteers also may not understand how to partner with employees
- Help them plan their side of the bridge-building conversation:
  - Roles and responsibilities
  - Priorities and timeframes
  - Boundaries and rules
  - Decision-making process
  - Communication style and frequency
  - Checkpoints

Helping Volunteers Interact

Volunteers and paid staff may operate under different timeframes

Help volunteers to understand the realities of organizational life

My volunteer made a good suggestion. Now she is furious at me and my staff because it takes a while to implement changes.

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What You Learned Too Late

A skilled volunteer decides to leave. She puts these comments on her exit interview questionnaire:

Each time I showed up for a shift, staff acted surprised (and not in a good way).

Eventually, someone grudgingly gave me an assignment to handle.

I'm not sure if they used my work, or just threw it away after my shift.

Do you think staff was trying to chase away this volunteer?

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Being Nice

- Staff mainly focused on their own tasks
- They expect someone else to interact with volunteers
- It really matters when staff act nicely
- Make volunteers feel welcome and comfortable

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Behavior Tips

These staff actions can make a volunteer feel welcome:

- Respect volunteer time and schedule constraints
- Have work and tools ready for the volunteer
- Welcome the volunteer; ask how things are going
- Invite the volunteer to meetings; keep them informed
- Hold the volunteer responsible for doing well; help them achieve success
- Most of all, smile and say “thank you”

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What’s Needed to Motivate?

- Staff member who supervises or partners with volunteers
- Volunteer program manager
- Volunteer who leads other volunteers
- Agency decision maker
- Volunteer who works with staff

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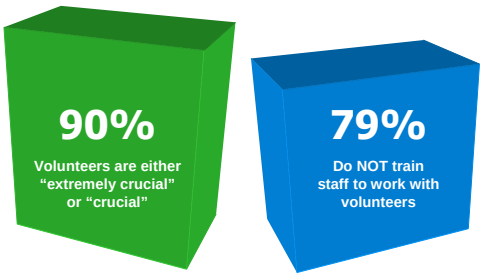
A Simple Theory

Staff will do:

- What they feel safe doing
- What they feel rewarded for doing

Remember this Study?

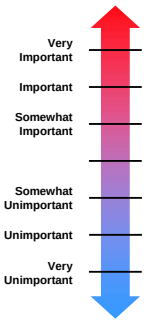


Source: "Hands for Nature" study of environmental groups in Ontario, 2003

Ask Yourself…

Imagine that you are a member of line staff.

How important are volunteers to the performance of your job?



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Policies

Sample Organizational Policies Related to the Volunteer Program

From *Volunteer Management* by Steve McCurley and Rick Lynch, 3rd edition, 2010

The following policies are intended for help in drafting organizational policies and procedures that may affect the volunteer program. They cover the role of the volunteer program within the organization, the role of volunteers as part of the organization team and protections and responsibilities of staff who work with volunteers. While all volunteer program managers should think about the issues raised by these standards, formal implementation may be a matter for the more experienced...

Role of the Volunteer Program

1.1 *Overall policy on use of volunteers*

The achievement of the goals of this organization is best served by the active participation of citizens of the community. To this end, the organization accepts and encourages the involvement of volunteers at all levels in the organization and within all appropriate programs and activities. All staff are encouraged to assist in the creation of meaningful and productive roles in which volunteers might serve and to assist in recruitment of volunteers from the community.

1.2 *Scope of volunteer involvement*

Volunteers may be involved in all programs and activities of the organization, and serve at all levels of skill and decision-making. Volunteers should not, however, be used to displace any paid employees from their positions.

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An Example

Policy 3.1

Identifying staff responsibility for volunteer management in position descriptions

Staff who have responsibility for managing volunteers will have this responsibility clearly identified in their position description, including how such responsibility will be evaluated in their performance assessment.

If working with volunteers is not a stated expectation and evaluated, why would staff want to do it?

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What You Can Do

- Omitting volunteer-related responsibilities is often unintentional
- But it does have consequences
- Raise awareness!
  - Discuss your job description with your supervisor
  - Raise related issues within the organization
  - Share this seminar

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An Observation

- We develop policies for volunteers
- But we rarely spend time to develop policies to support employees who work with volunteers
- Motivating employees to work with volunteers:
  - More than saying "nice job"
  - The organization needs to build working with volunteers into the job framework of employees

Homework

Read and rate the draft policies

a. We have such a policy
b. We need such a policy
c. This is not appropriate for us

Sample Organizational Policies Related to the Volunteer Program

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1.2 Scope of volunteer involvement
Volunteers may be involved in all programs and activities of the organization, and serve at all levels of skill and decision-making. Volunteers should not, however, be used to displace any paid employees from their positions.

1.3 Oversight of the volunteer program
Senior management and the board of directors shall monitor the operation and progress of the volunteer program through regularly scheduled reports at staff and board meetings.

1.4 Role of the volunteer management unit
The productive engagement of volunteers requires a planned and organized effort. The function of the volunteer management unit is to provide a central coordinating point for effective volunteer involvement within the organization, and to direct and assist staff and volunteer efforts jointly to provide more effective services. This unit shall be responsible for promoting the involvement of volunteers in programs in the community and assisting in community-wide efforts to recognize and promote volunteering. The Volunteer program manager shall bear primary responsibility for planning for effective volunteer deployment, for assisting staff in identifying productive and creative volunteer roles, for recruiting suitable volunteers, and for tracking and evaluating the contribution of volunteers to the organization.

1.5 Role of the Volunteer Program Manager

Think about Implementation

How will you implement missing policies?

- Formal or informal approach?
- Part of written personnel policies?
- Part of operating procedures for the volunteer program?

Who else should be involved in the effort?

Volunteer engagement can't be done *to* staff; it can only be done *with* staff!

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Last Thought

- Employees treat volunteers the way management treats employees
- In diseased organizations, everyone tends to get sick
- If this is your reality, try to isolate volunteers as much as possible

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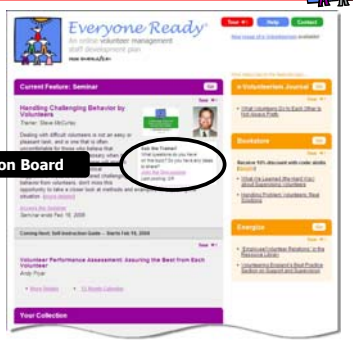
Discussion Board

Join the Discussion!

Through April 17th



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End of Part 3

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