

Recharging the Volunteer Delivery System

How do you keep the volunteer delivery **system** on the road? The following **road maps** (strategies and critical events) keep the volunteer delivery system going by encouraging retention of present volunteer staff and by facilitating replacement when volunteers leave the system.

Road Maps

There are four strategies to use as checkpoints once your volunteer delivery system is in operation.

Communication is essential for any organization but especially for a volunteer delivery system where the staff may not be day-to-day employees. Creating regular and clear channels for announcement of dates, explanation of policies or directions, and recognition of accomplishments is important to maintain awareness and motivation of all individuals. Just as important is the development of a climate for open communication and appropriate channels for discussing issues and opinions.

So, are you. . .

- announcing dates in a regular, clear way?
- clearly, periodically explaining policies and directions?
- systematically recognizing accomplishments?
- providing open communication?

Long term scheduling is extremely important to the volunteer delivery system. Managers who establish a consistent cycle of date development and announcements allow others to be prepared, create anticipation, and develop a sense of overall direction to all segments of the volunteer delivery system. Not only does scheduling events on a 12-month basis lead to higher quality programs, it also makes the planning and implementation of each event much less stressful. Long term scheduling or calendarization also allows replacement volunteers to “fill in”, instead of operating from “scratch” since some planning has already occurred.

So, are you. . .

- using a consistent method to select and announce dates?
- regularly scheduling event-planning sessions on a 6 or 12 month basis?

A replacement strategy is needed to ensure growth of the volunteer delivery system. Empowerment replacement encourages total involvement of the current volunteers. Beginning with a regular review of present role descriptions, let volunteers seek their own replacements. Recruiting from within for more challenging or responsible roles helps build a base of experience for the future and keeps volunteers from becoming tired of a specific role. Systematically develop a marketing approach to reach out to the existing friendship networks of current volunteers. Annual marketing to specific pools of volunteer recruits also works.

So, are you. . .

- involving volunteers in finding their replacements?
- recruiting from within for interesting opportunities?
- marketing through the networks of existing volunteers?
- using an annual marketing plan?



Volunteerism for the Next Generation



Team building helps all volunteers work together rather than in isolation. Team building helps volunteers create a sense of give and take, learn how to work out differences together to attain a common goal, and to see the larger picture rather than just his/her role. If you can create a climate of mutual support and a feeling of "together we can do", you will be able to accomplish the development of other attributes for renewal more easily.

So, are you. . .

- helping volunteers work together?
- helping them work out differences together?
- helping them work toward a common goal and see the big picture?
- creating a mutually supportive climate?
- creating a sense of "together we can do it all!"?

Combined, the development of these four attributes lead the volunteer delivery system toward **system renewal or recharging**. As a volunteer manager, you must create an overall climate for continual improvement for the organization. You must stress a system wide focus on "we can make a greater impact on youth" **plus** "we can do it better". Renewal isn't just the manager's responsibility but the responsibility of all volunteer and salaried staff. The primary role for a volunteer delivery system manager is to create a climate for shared leadership capable of developing continual improvement. Now that's system renewal! That's recharging! That's staying on the road!

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