



# Everyone Ready®

Achieve more when *everyone's*  
ready for volunteers

FROM ENERGIZE

## Online Seminar Discussion Guide

### Building and Sustaining Strong Volunteer Leadership

Trainer: Carol Weisman

### 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:**

1. What is your definition of a “leader”?
  - a. Reflect on the leaders – paid and volunteer – who have influenced your life. List the characteristics that made them great. Do you see a pattern?
  - b. What leadership traits do you need in your organization today?
  - c. Would any of these character traits prove problematic?
2. Which leaders in your organization meet the seminar’s description of “visionary” and which are “servant leaders”? Are the right types in the right positions?
3. How has your own life changed in the past 20 years? Is the way you spend your time different from or the same as your parent of the same gender at your age? How might this affect volunteers in general and the ability of someone to assume a leadership position?
4. If there is a written job description for a vacant leadership position, review it. Is it appealing? Clear? If you don’t have one, create it.
5. How are we developing the skills of volunteer leaders?
  - a. Using the Web and the phone book, see how many existing training programs you can find that might be beneficial for board members, special events chairs, and other volunteer leaders.
  - b. How much do these cost? How might your organization pay for this or offer scholarships if needed?

## Discussion Questions *(continued)*

6. Do we ever ask financial donors to volunteer, too? How might we identify which donors have the potential to be leaders as well?
7. What are ways we could encourage frontline volunteers to accept greater responsibilities at a leadership level?

## 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.*

### Opening the Session:

- ❖ Ask participants to explain what types of volunteer leaders they hope to engage. Board members (with authority)? Advisory council members? Chairs of various committees and events?
- ❖ Have the group reflect on leaders – paid and volunteer – who have influenced their lives and discuss why those leaders were influential. Do the group members expect leadership volunteers in your organization to have these same influential qualities?
- ❖ Discuss why they think so many people shy away from accepting leadership roles.

### .....Show Part 1 of the Seminar.....

- ❖ What is everyone’s reaction to what Carol had to say about types of leaders and how today’s prospective leadership volunteers have changed from the past? Any new insights?
- ❖ Next ask participants to share specific recruitment strategies they use now to find leadership volunteers. What seems to work best? Is there anything that used to be successful but not any longer?

### .....Show Part 2 of the Seminar.....

- ❖ Think about what was identified before watching the seminar about recruitment techniques that are not successful. Did the seminar help to explain why?
- ❖ What new ideas for recruitment began to bubble to the surface as they watched?
- ❖ *If time permits:*

#### Option 1 (if everyone in the room is with the same organization)

As a full group, list the leadership positions you actually need to fill. Discuss the qualifications and characteristics you’d like most in a candidate for each role. Now, break into smaller groups to focus on specific open positions:

- Brainstorm where you might find a volunteer to fill this role.
- Based on your list of possible sources, create a strategy to recruit him or her. Include a timeline, a person to be responsible, and a way to celebrate when the position is filled. (Carol recommends something from the four basic food groups: sodium, sugar, carbs, and chocolate!)

## Ideas for Building an On-site Workshop around this Seminar *(continued)*

### Option 2 (if participants are from different organizations)

Select a few of the real-life leadership roles participants want to fill. Break into smaller buzz groups, assigning a different role to each. Have each group brainstorm:

- Why someone might be attracted to this role or have reservations about it
- Where likely candidates might be found
- What techniques or recruitment “pitch” might be successful

Report out from each group to see how many different, targeted recruitment campaigns have been proposed.

- ❖ With the full group, discuss: Assuming leadership volunteers are found, what does it take to prepare and work with them?

### .....**Show Part 3 of the Seminar**.....

- ❖ Discuss reactions to Part 3.
- ❖ What things do participants already do to support leadership volunteers? Did the seminar suggest new ideas?
- ❖ If participants *have a volunteer board and paid staff*, review the following chart and discuss who should be doing what at this time. Remember, this division of labor will change and you will need to review this whenever there are transitions of paid staff and volunteers.

<b>Task</b>	<b>Board</b>	<b>Staff</b>	<b>Both</b>
Fundraising			
Soliciting funds from board members			
Soliciting funds from staff			
Donor thanks and recognition			
Creating a budget			
Create a fundraising plan			
Approving a budget			
Orienting board members			
Creating a strategic plan			
Implementing a strategic plan			
Hiring and evaluating the ED			
Hiring and evaluating other staff			
Legal and accounting compliancy			
Marketing			
Evaluating board members			
Chairing the board meeting			
Determining the mission			
Lobbying the legislature			

*(continued next page)*

## Ideas for Building an On-site Workshop around this Seminar *(continued)*

- ❖ If the participants *are not working at the level of the board of directors*, what division of labor issues need to be discussed with other types of leadership volunteers? For example:
  - Is the volunteer position description clear and specific, particularly about expected workload, deadlines, reporting, and more?
  - Who has final authority over what decisions?
  - How will you maintain two-way communication and exchange?
- ❖ Discuss what might be included in a commitment letter for a new board member or other volunteer leader.
- ❖ What forms of recognition might be welcomed by leadership volunteers – not just at the end of their term of service, but *during* their service, to maintain enthusiasm?