

Recruiting, Mentoring and Retaining The Right People

The number one concern and challenge for community groups is recruiting and retaining the right people to help them get the job done.

There may not be any magical or instant solution to this, but there are some tips and tricks of the trade that could help your group attract new people and keep them involved.

VOLUNTEER DEVELOPMENT CYCLE SUMMARY

Follow this step-by-step checklist of best practices, based on the volunteer development cycle, and design a volunteer program that is right for your group.

1. Plan Ahead

What do we want and need?

- Think ahead about what your group needs to do to get the job done
- Get everyone involved in developing the plan
- Set goals and identify ways to achieve them – is what you are trying to achieve related to your group's overall dreams (mission and vision)
- Identify what skills, abilities or talents are needed to accomplish the work
- Identify who can take on different tasks and who you need to recruit to help out

2. Develop a Recruitment Strategy

Who do we know?

- Make a list of all the people you could approach
- Ask everyone in your group to contribute to your list – everyone knows someone who knows someone who could help!
- Identify a recruiter (or a couple of recruiters): someone in your group who has the gift of gab and who is not afraid to approach people and talk to them about your group

Where will we target our recruitment efforts?

- Contact local service clubs or other community groups
- Contact your local volunteer centre

- List the locations where you can find the people you are looking for (i.e. if you are searching for new retirees, you won't find them in the local pinball-arcade)
- Focus on attracting the right person for the right job with the right skills at the right time.

Get to know people – why do they want to get involved?

- Get to know the potential volunteers – people interested in helping out
- Talk to them, learn more about them and try to understand why they are interested in getting involved with your group
- Identify a greeter within your group: someone who is responsible for welcoming newcomers and giving them background information on the group and its work, and who will get to know them in order to best involve them in the group

3. Offer the Right Orientation and Training - what do volunteers need to get the job done?

- Give people all the material and information they need to do the job well
- Identify a mentor within your group: someone who has been involved with the group for a good period of time and can offer some orientation or support to the newcomer
- Check in with volunteers to make sure they are having a positive experience

4. Thank and Recognize volunteers - how will you recognize everyone's contribution?

- Recognize contributions, talents and skills
- Provide a thank you when it is warranted
- Let people know why you value their work and involvement with your group
- Show your appreciation in formal (a card, a plaque, etc..) or informal ways (a thank you, a smile, etc..)

5. Celebrate and Evaluate - what are we most proud of and what could we do better next time?

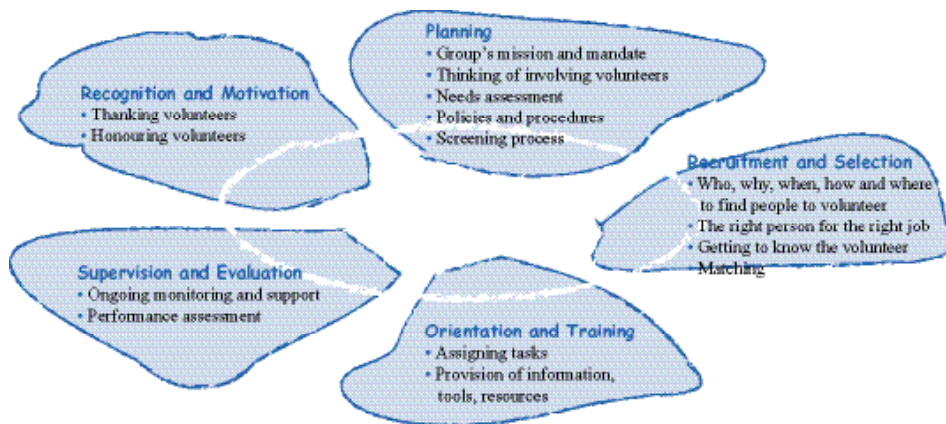
- Take time to celebrate all your successes – big or small
- Review your approaches, the process used to get the job done, and identify what could have been done differently to help you succeed
- Ask for everyone's input and feedback; listen to their comments and suggestions
- Keep track of what you've learned and take this into account next time you plan an activity

Planning, Recruitment, Orientation and Training, Supervision and Evaluation, and Recognition are the key steps to effectively involve volunteers in your work. Success is about taking the time to think things through, connecting with each and every individual involved, and making sure everyone has the right tools for the job. Together you will make a stronger impact.

There is an approach to finding, involving and keeping dedicated volunteers. It's called **Volunteer Development** and it is made up of five stages. This **Fact Sheet** (no. 14 of 14) provides an overview of the **Volunteer Development Cycle**.

For more information on the Volunteer Development Cycle or Volunteer Involvement, contact your local Volunteer Centre (www.volunteer.ca/volunteercentres).

Volunteer Development Cycle



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