Managing Difficult Volunteer Transitions

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Agenda

- Preparing your Organization
- Identifying the Transition
- Challenges in Each Transition
- Strategies to Manage the Transition
- Strategies for Ending the Relationship
- Ending the Relationship
Preparing your Organization

Identify the Problem

Articulate and Validate the Problem – Build the Case

• Identify the Issues or Personality Concerns
• Negative Impact on Strategic Initiatives of Organization

Discuss Problem or Issue with Supervisor or Leadership

Provide Solution Recommendation to Organization

• Pros and Cons
• Potential Legal or Liability Ramifications
• Budget or Cultural Impacts
• Timing
• Responsibilities
Identifying the Transition

Traditional Volunteer Program → New Engagement Model

- Guild or Auxiliary
- Skilled or Pro Bono

Aging in Place → Emeritus or Retirement

- Lack of Physical Ability
- Loss of Mental Acuity
- Managing Risk

Entrenched Volunteer(s) → Re-energized Volunteer(s)

- Inability to Accept Change
- Anger/Negative Energy
- Invested in the Past
Traditional Volunteer Program Transition

Challenges:

- Ownership and Territory
- Resistance to Change
- How do you run a dual program? Should you?
- Honoring All Levels of Contributions Equally
- Intergenerational Issues
- Communication
Aging in Place Transition

Challenges:

- Honoring Contributions while Managing Risk
- Building a Real Recognition Opportunity
- Addressing Aging Issues Tactfully but Honestly
- Creating Avenues for Further Contribution
- Dealing with Denial or Anger
- Ownership and Territory
Entrenched Volunteer(s) Transition

Challenges:

- Invested in Power and Status
- Rage, Negative Energy
- Inability to Acknowledge Organizational Challenges
- Resistance to Embrace Any New Ideas
- Not Able to Own Impact of Actions
- May Involve Legal or Liability Ramifications
Strategies For Managing Transitions

Clear Communication Strategy
Open and Transparent Communication
- Reasons and Outcome for Change
- Negative Impacts of Change

Hear and Validate Concerns
- Actively Listen
- Be Open to Feed Back

Honesty About Organization Realities
- Money, Programs
Strategies For Managing Transitions

Engage all Parties in Solutions
- Ask for Help/Brainstorming
- Role Playing
- Ensure Equal Representation

Identify Early Adopters/Champions
- Elevate to Leadership Positions
- Run Meetings
- Public Voice – not staff telling volunteers how
- it’s going to be
Strategies For Managing Transitions

Defuse Rage

- Early and Continuously
- Address Negative Energy Directly

Utilize and Honor Volunteer’s Organizational Knowledge

- Historical Consultants
- Ask them to be Change Agents
Challenges for Ending Relationship

Mentally Prepare Yourself

Consider and Plan Negative Impacts
  - Budget Shortfall
  - Loss of Major Donor or Community Connector

Maintain Trust and Morale of Remaining Volunteers
  - Communicate Difficulty of Decision
  - Protect Confidentiality
  - Quell Gossip

Keep Volunteer’s Integrity Intact
  - Behaviors and Issues, not Personal Attack
Strategies for Ending the Relationship

Be Decisive, Professional and Efficient

- Once Decision is Made – Act

Is it Amicable?

Does it Require Legal Counsel?

Letter of Commendation

- Letter of Commendation
- Contributions and Work
- Personalized and Heartfelt
- From Organization Leader

Public Acknowledgement of Contribution

Engage Outside Professional if Needed
Strategies for Ending the Relationship

Public Acknowledgement of Contribution

Difficult Termination

- Engage Outside Professional if Needed
- Inform Leadership and/or Security of Date, Time, Location
Thank you!

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