VolunteerMatch Learning Center
Introductory Approaches

Re-Energize Volunteer Engagement with Mission-Driven Opportunities

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Agenda

- Moving volunteers from a nice to have to key component in your organization’s success
- Creating an emotional connection to the work
- Transitioning to Mission-Driven volunteer opportunities
- Share your mission-driven story of volunteer engagement
- Getting started in your own program
Shift how you think about volunteers

Think about volunteers as being a key component to your organization’s success

- Shift away from a traditional, nice to have, resource
- Instead of focusing on the “I just want to help” statements ask volunteers about their motivations
- What are they getting out of volunteering? Can and should be personal. Ask them to answer Why?
- Include impact and outcomes in your recognition
- Don’t just say thank you, share “because you volunteered...”
Create a personal connection

When developing mission-driven work it is important to create a connection to the work

- Some have the most personal connection
- Support others in the same way they were supported
- Can be powerful, but this motivation (like any other) needs to be managed and those volunteers need to practice good self-care
- This emotion, gratitude, can be a good example of why this work matters
- Volunteers, clients, families – this is where our stories about mission-driven work comes from
Mission-driven opportunities

Making the transition to mission-driven opportunity design may take a shift in thinking

- Some roles, activities, responsibilities, may not change, but the way we talk about them has to
- Friendly Visitor becomes Patient Caregiver
- Office/Clerical Assistant becomes Record Manager, Organizational Wizard
- Create a clear description of the responsibilities and the role on the team.
Mission-driven opportunities

Put the focus on why the work matters, not the specific work.

- Work with physicians, social workers, etc. Support the patient and family emotionally.
- Emphasize the skills, characteristics of a good patient caregiver, rather than it being just stopping by and saying “Hi”
- Rather than 'Must be able to type 50 wpm' instead put your organizational skills to use to help people during a difficult time.
- Not everyone wants to, or can, provide direct client services. Organizational skills, strong attention to details allows for accurate reporting, easier process for clients and community.
Roles still need to be accurate

Don’t misrepresent the work, but focus on the outcomes and impacts rather than the tasks.

- Remember what your volunteers, clients, and community members told you about the work and their experiences
- What mattered about the work?
- How did the work make an impact?
- Why are they volunteering with you in this way?
- Match this information to the roles, activities, and responsibilities
Mission-driven opportunities

What work do volunteers do?
- Think about the outcomes or deliverables not just the tasks. Stuff envelopes becomes prepare fundraising mailing

Who benefits from the work?
- Think about both internal and external outcomes

What's different or better after the work is done?
- Deliverables or outcomes plus client interactions and impacts

Is the impact short-term, long-term, or both?
- How can you count, measure or evaluate the impact?
Understand the story you need to tell

Not everyone may have the same idea about the value of the work volunteers do

- Talk to your stakeholders
  - Volunteers, clients, community members, program managers, executive staff, leadership staff, etc.
- Ask what they think about volunteers/work and listen.
- Ask for examples but don’t try to defend or change minds
- Use this information to start sharing the story of your volunteers
Understand the story you need to tell

Remember the goal is to help others understand that:

• Volunteers have valuable (and invaluable) impacts on your organization. They are more important than just a head count or number of hours.
• The work they do is mission-critical, not something that is just nice to have
• Volunteers are doing real work – your job is not just to keep them busy and happy
• You have complete control over how you talk about volunteers and the work they do!
Share this story with your organization and the community

Change the way you talk about volunteer accomplishments in day-to-day conversations and emails.

- Include the impact and outcomes in recognition events – to the volunteers and to others.
- Share these outcomes with stakeholders – especially leaders/decision makers.
- Tell the story of why volunteers matter to your community.
- Videos, interviews, narratives – include as many stakeholders as you can
Getting Started!

Learn what matters to your volunteers

- Consider recruiting a team of volunteers to help
- Surveys, interviews, what they tell their friends & family, why they volunteer

Look at your current opportunities/position descriptions

- Incorporate outcomes/impacts
- Design new roles with your mission and impact in mind
- Another great role for volunteers!
Getting Started!

Change how you talk about volunteers

- You can’t control what others think, but you can control how you talk about the work they do and why it matters
- Tell your story every day and make sure to include the impacts and the Why!

Start small

- Think about a pilot program or focus on one role/department at a time
- You don’t have to change everything all at once
- Don’t leave your volunteers out of the process. They are the most invested in how things are/will be.
Thank you!

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