

NVAVA Training Notes 11/14/19:

The 4 R's of Volunteer Administration Round Tables

Recruitment:

- Post opportunities to social media
- Flyers (at cafes, senior centers, or other venues)
- Corporations: Approach their Corporate Social Responsibility department with a clear list of ways their employees could assist; Let them know upfront if you can mention their company on social media or newsletters if their employees volunteer
- Ask local government representative (ex: county supervisor) to add your need to their newsletter or post to their social media streams (create a bit.ly link to track the effectiveness and shorten the link); This works best for localized needs
- Post to Volunteer Match, Volunteer Fairfax/Alexandria/Arlington
- Post need to your organization's website
- Make the following clear in the description: what ages are appropriate, what kind of time commitment is needed, time of day, day(s) of week, if groups can volunteer
- Advertise group volunteer opportunities separately from individual
- If your organization has donors, approach donors about volunteering
- Consider the task required and approach groups/clubs that have a strong interest in that kind of task
- Conduct presentations to groups about your organization and volunteer needs (Rotarians, churches, civic associations, scouts, etc.)
- Ask current volunteers to do outreach for you, or ask them for ideas of groups/clubs/houses of worship to contact (get a personal introduction via email from your volunteer); Ask current volunteers to post to their social media streams, including NextDoor, about your needs (send volunteers a sample blurb they could use and include a good link)
- Maintain your current volunteer base by thanking them and showing them that they are valued

Wishlist for NVAVA members: Volunteer Managers expressed that they wished they had a greater awareness of volunteer needs for other organizations, so when they cannot place a potential volunteer, they can refer them directly to another organization. The short term solution is to refer these volunteers to Volunteer Fairfax/Alexandria/Arlington.

Retention:

Group input:

1. What do you do for Retention?
Survey, focus group to get feedback
Let volunteer know their impact
Build relationship

Check in with the volunteer...during the conversation get to know them, see if position is a good fit, offer other positions or see if other interests within the organization.

Incentives

Need to recruit and appreciate volunteers so they will stay

2. What has worked?

Seeing volunteers become employees of the organization or get employment is a success that motivates others to serve/stay

Communicate as often as the volunteer likes/wants.

Offer benefits: t-shirt, recommendation, hours, experience,

Provide training

Make volunteer feel a part of the team

Select those to be volunteer Leaders (offer room to grow with organization)

Handwritten notes for all ages. Note the impact in the letter/note.

Tie the position description with real expectations and stick with them (ex. Long training requirements or requested commitments)

Tie impact to the specific position description

Sharing organization information...building ownership

Surveys and respond/share to the input

Newsletters (internal, external and within vol population); highlight volunteers; highlight other positions the organization offers.

Tell them the story

Tell stories in orientation

Partner new volunteer with mentor (more experienced vol)

Walk the talk

Short surveys and phone calls work

Picture of volunteer on wall to "see" the team and have others get to know them

Commit to the period of time volunteer agreed to; ask upfront

3. What hasn't?

Survey responses are low

Providing "on call" volunteers sometimes doesn't work; especially when the vol wants to develop a relationship with the client/ student/ family etc

4. One definition: when positions are all filled

Discussion on many resources on recruiting, recognition and supervision/resignation not a much on retention.

Recognition:

Group 1 Notes

-Golf course: \$500 worth of golf to volunteers (used to be unlimited, but had to change thanks to IRS); volunteer/employee golf tournament with drawing and prizes; drawing for volunteers for different gift certificates

-Rec volunteers: 85 passes for rec center; drawing for volunteers

- Volunteer appreciation event once a year; family friendly, with food, volunteers have opportunity to speak about experiences
- AFC: Volunteer recognition at holiday party to specific volunteers (have since discontinued because of feedback from volunteers); volunteers don't respond well to individual recognition; have pictures and recognition for how long they have been there on a wall; birthday e-mails; volunteer profiles in annual report (taken place of gold star award); provide food for volunteers in evening
- 2 socials during the year; volunteer awards; birthday cards; rec center access
- Recognition luncheon for volunteers for senior volunteers; ask staff to nominate volunteers for outstanding volunteers, would then go to them when they work to surprise them (prize patrol) with a few gifts
- Issues: have a lot of volunteers that have been here for a very long time and some for a very short time
- Arlington County: has pins to recognize length of time (could put on nametags)
- Have had volunteer groups write thank you notes as a volunteer project
- Struggle with budget in county programs, makes it an issue to recognize volunteers

Group 2 Notes

- OAR Nova: volunteer appreciation event in the evening with snacks, about 45 attended from about 130 invited, awards for hours not superlatives, guest speaker and client speaker; opportunity to meet other volunteers; continuing education events once a quarter with guest speakers (having trouble getting volunteers getting to come to those events) usually about 5 or 6 volunteers show up
- Want a way to get more people to come to events- provide volunteers; have tried different time;
- Volunteer Solutions: annual volunteer recognition luncheon; have star volunteer from each region; volunteer group; partner with Neighborhood and Community Services; break out game; music; drawings for gift certificates; certificates for retiring from volunteering; handwritten thank you notes; used to do a coffee morning during volunteer appreciation week
- Habitat: construction volunteers do luncheon; handwritten holiday cards; retail spaces every other month do a small recognition event based on theme (ex. Valentine's cards) for all the volunteers; event during volunteer appreciation week event
- Traveler's Aide: 2 volunteer appreciation during the year (holiday and Spring); service awards based on length of service (playing with new ones this year, ex. Weekend warrior); coffee and treats during volunteer appreciation week; have a break room for volunteers across the hall from the office with coffee, etc., have continuing education opportunities (CPR or tour around areas that are not always open)

-Look at presidential awards for

-Cornerstones: nominate for volunteer Fairfax award; volunteer appreciation week; event in May instead of April; recognize volunteers in e-newsletter to showcase different programs; pins for volunteer service length

-Volunteer pins for recurring volunteers

Group 3

-Cornerstones: annual volunteer appreciation event (informal); formal event is not what volunteers want; can bring family members; alcohol served; recognize volunteer birthdays; nominate for volunteer fairfax awards, governors awards; each program does their own smaller recognition event throughout the year; staff members learn volunteers names

-Follow up with groups so that they know that they are appreciated

-Send out thank yous after the end of a program; inviting them to come back again; asking what can be changed or fixed; make it as personal as possible

-Weekly shout out in newsletter; highlight volunteers; e-mail is short and to the point (includes weekly schedule, link to volunteers); not paragraphs, utilize bullet points; have announcements for other programs; allows for volunteers to see what is going on in different programs

-Volunteer Solutions: annual luncheon for volunteers at a country club; partner with other organizations for more informal volunteer events (Cabot grill); have a limit on number of guests at the annual luncheon

-Personalized notes for volunteers for going above and beyond

-Cornerstones has pins for volunteers

-Highlight volunteers in the Golden Gazette

-For donations to families for holidays, have families write or draw thank you notes to donors; Donors share with other volunteers and appreciate the notes

-Have a scrolling slide show with pictures, but also quotes from clients and center staff

-Inviting certain volunteers to trainings with staff based on their program

-Allow long term volunteers to volunteer to something that 'regular' volunteers are not invited to

-Make sure to ask permission before recognizing them; respect their boundaries

Group 4

-Cornerstones: had a volunteer write thank you notes and send out birthday cards; recognition event/reception with alcohol; used to do potlucks which volunteers loved because Cornerstones didn't spend a lot of money on it; during May instead of April; nominate Volunteer Fairfax and governors awards and other community based awards; trying to have a card for volunteers for ID but also has offers at local merchants to get a benefit; volunteer pins, some sites have nametags; staff sign a card for volunteers to give them

-Travelers Aid: biannual events; have one in December; volunteers look forward to it; give service awards during winter event; looking at doing pins; volunteer spotlights in newsletter; thank you notes from passengers

-Make a Wish: Send holiday goodie to volunteers; struggle with budget; send out volunteer praises via newsletter; volunteers are spread out so in person events can be difficult

-GOTR: thank gift for coaches each season (pop socket, magnets, etc.); have done happy hour for coaches (only 10-15 came, but great turnout compared to other events); for event volunteers, buy gift for them (logo keychain); give t-shirts and waterbottles that are leftover; birthday e-mails; coaches get special shirt each season

-Befriend a Child: Mentor happy hour; token gifts (picture of mentor/mentee in a frame);

-A volunteer was recognized for their volunteering at their work (Deloitte)

-Outing instead of a happy hour (Nats give out tickets)

-Wolftrap gives out tickets to community groups, Cornerstones will send out e-mail blast

Resignations:

- Often not prioritized, but understanding resignations and the quality of your volunteers' experience with your organization can impact how you recruit which impacts your overall volunteer retention. Many organizations have informal procedures when a volunteer leaves – could firm these up to make it work for your program and round out the volunteer cycle full circle.
- Exit surveys can help to understand why a volunteer leaves, their experience with your organization. PRS' (Lauren Padgett) exit survey enclosed.
- Evaluations – completing evaluations of your volunteers (especially volunteers that are longer term or have commitment requirements they must meet) are helpful to determine if a volunteer is in good standing and may be eligible to volunteer in the future or become an employee. Evaluations can also be used two-ways with both the employee and the volunteer completing evaluations. These can be helpful tools if you are facing challenges with a volunteer.

- Send a thank you when volunteers leave. Another idea is to mail or email your volunteers a certificate of completion.
- Update your records and donor database that a volunteer is inactive, former, or the date the volunteer resigned.
- Challenge with resignations is knowing when your volunteers leave. Ways to combat this challenge is to check in with your staff weekly, attend staff meetings, etc.
- “Firing” / Letting Go of volunteers:
 - o Ask for a meeting with the volunteer. Check in with them and ask what is going on their personal life? What other ways can we get you involved in our organization, or the community?
 - o Redirect the volunteer to another organization or position within your organization if the current position is no longer working out
 - o Important to have support from your management
 - o Important to document if you’re having ongoing challenges with the volunteer

PRS Volunteer Exit Survey Questions:

(I wasn’t able to transfer all the formatting over, but here are the questions so you get an idea. Feel free to email me with questions! lpadgett@prsinc.org)

With what program did you volunteer?

How did you first find out about this volunteer opportunity?

How long did you volunteer?

In a typical month, about how many hours did you volunteer?

What caused you to resign from your volunteer position?

Please rank how satisfied you were with the following (Very Dissatisfied to Very Satisfied):

- Orientation
- Training
- Flexibility of schedule
- Accuracy of your job description

How can we improve in these areas? _____

Please rank how satisfied you were with the following. (Very Dissatisfied to Very Satisfied)

- Your workspace and the overall environment
- Being part of a team
- Feeling respected by clients and staff
- The impact you have as a volunteer
- The work is fulfilling
- Feedback about your performance
- Support from your supervisor
- The appreciation you receive from your supervisor

How can we improve in these areas? _____

What was the most meaningful aspect of being a PRS volunteer?

How were you recognized for your volunteer work? Select all that apply. (list)

Please rate how likely you are to do the following.

- Return to volunteer
- Recommend volunteering to a friend, family member or colleague

How can we improve in these areas? _____

What could we be doing better / differently at PRS?