

Working with Volunteers

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When do we want or need volunteer help?

- When the scale of the event demands massive labor
- When they are an essential aid in fundraising
- When you cannot be in two places at once

Where do we find and recruit volunteers?

- The constituency that benefits most
 - Students in our institutions
 - Standing Committees
 - Alumni
 - VIPs and donors
 - Ourselves and our work groups

Creating Structure and Organization

- Establish what committees are needed
- Choose the committee chair
- Build a support group, or committee members who actually do the work
- Create an understandable “chain of command”
- Formulate a meeting schedule leading up to the event
- Train and motivate your volunteers
- Write job descriptions

What committees are needed?

- PR and Marketing (Sponsorships)
- Food and Beverage
- Entertainment
- Hospitality (attendees and workers)
- Operations and Staff Support

Committee Chair

- This person is vital and should be a “doer”
- If you select a “lay” person of community standing they will attract more volunteers but you may need to relinquish some “control” to them
- Often a person of financial means and able to advance your cause
- Often, you and your committee chair will decide what jobs need to be done within the committee

Committee Members

- Ask your committee chairs to help recruit their committee members
- Should be chosen for their talents and ability to aid in the endeavor
- Pick people who are already vested in your event and want to make a contribution
- Write job descriptions, complete with timeline, budgets and reporting structures

Chain of Command

- You are, ultimately, in charge and responsible
- Committee chairs report to you
- Committee members report to their chair
- Individual event teams (parking, guides, etc.) report to assigned committee member
- Create a structure that eliminates “loose cannons”

Meetings

- Establish a meeting schedule that runs the life of the event
- Contact all volunteers in the committee with meeting schedule
- In advance, decide with your chair who runs the meeting
- Clearly set goals and objectives accompanied by a timeline
- Have a written agenda for each meeting and communicate it to each member before the meeting
- Take notes and distribute them ASAP after the meeting
- Treat all your volunteers as professionals: be on time, end on time, and don't waste anyone's time

Train and Motivate Your Volunteers

- Immediately contact all your volunteers, thank them, and give them the meeting schedule, which may include training sessions
- Match interests and skills with jobs to be done
- Explain goals and objectives clearly
- Teach them why a task is necessary, how to do it, and where it fits in the event schedule

KEEP IT FUN!

Information you need from your volunteers

- Name
- Address
- Social Security Number
- Home phone/cell phone
- E-mail address
- Medical information you may need
- Emergency contact

Information your volunteers need from you

- Event Fact Sheet
- Dress code
- Working conditions (inside, outside)
- Time of mandatory training sessions or meetings
- FAQs
- Contact information for them and their families
- Volunteer guidelines

Job Descriptions

- Formalizes the need or activity to be performed
- Give timelines leading up to the event
- Give timeline during the event
- Give a full description of the job – it will help volunteers decide if they have time for the job
- Sometimes, writing the job description highlights training needs
- Give them “room to move”

How do you adequately say “Thank You!”?

- Recognize and reward your volunteers the entire life of the event – don’t wait until it is over
- Public, positive feedback makes people feel great and leads to them redoubling their efforts
- Recognize that different age groups appreciate different things
- Sometimes, your best thank you is an offer to pay them next time!