

7 Keys to Finding & Keeping Valuable Volunteers: Part 1

*presented by
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Today's goals

- ▶ Brainstorm ways a volunteer program (or an improved volunteer program) can help solve problems in your nonprofit
- ▶ Learn 7 key strategies for finding and keeping volunteers
- ▶ Discover how to implement each strategy in a logical, effective way
- ▶ Discover resources in this room to share information, challenges, and successes



7 Keys to Finding and Keeping Valuable Volunteers: Part 1

1. **ASSESS THE NEED FOR VOLUNTEERS**
2. **USE VOLUNTEER POSITION/ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS**
3. **CRAFT WELL-DESIGNED RECRUITMENT MESSAGES**
4. **USE A VARIETY OF RECRUITMENT METHODS**
5. ENGAGE VOLUNTEERS IN MEANINGFUL WORK
6. RECOGNIZE VOLUNTEERS IN WAYS THEY FIND MEANINGFUL
7. EVALUATE THE PROGRAM FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

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Part 1 covers Keys 1 - 4

- 1. ASSESS THE NEED FOR VOLUNTEERS**
- 2. USE VOLUNTEER POSITION/ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS**
- 3. CRAFT WELL-DESIGNED RECRUITMENT MESSAGES**
- 4. USE A VARIETY OF RECRUITMENT METHODS**



Key 1 – Assess Need

1. **ASSESS THE NEED FOR VOLUNTEERS**
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4. **USE A VARIETY OF RECRUITMENT METHODS**



Assess the Need for Volunteers

- What programs or services could be strengthened with the help of volunteers?
 - Poll all staff members
- What type(s) of volunteers do you need?
 - Long-Term vs Short-Term Volunteers
 - Corporate Volunteers
 - Family Volunteers
 - Student Volunteers
 - Skills-Based Volunteers
 - Virtual Volunteers



Types of Volunteers

- **Long-Term** (docent, researcher)
- **Short-Term** (golf tournament, 5K run, festival)
- **Corporate** (usually a group or department)
- **Family** (group or team projects)
- **Student** (intern, project-based, work/study)
- **Skills-Based** (financial, legal, HR)
- **Virtual** (online mentoring, social media)

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Best Practice

- ▶ CREATE BUY-IN from day one by involving the entire staff (including the CEO and HR) in the volunteer task brainstorming process

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Now You Try...

- ▶ In teams of 3-4 people, brainstorm a list of 20 or more ways volunteers could extend, expand, or create programs in your nonprofit.

You don't have to see the
whole staircase -- just
take the first step.



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Key 2 – Position Descriptions

1. **ASSESS THE NEED FOR VOLUNTEERS**
2. **USE VOLUNTEER POSITION/ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS**
3. **CRAFT WELL-DESIGNED RECRUITMENT MESSAGES**
4. **USE A VARIETY OF RECRUITMENT METHODS**



Use Volunteer Position Descriptions

- Essential as a plan for achieving goals through volunteer work
- A recruitment tool to help find someone with the right experience/skills
- A management tool for the orientation, training, support and supervision of the volunteer

Components of a Volunteer Position Description

- ▶ **Title** – A descriptive title gives the position purpose and identity and will also help program staff and other volunteers understand the assigned role.
- ▶ **Purpose/Objective** – In 1-2 sentences, describe the specific purpose of the position *in relation to the organization's mission and goals.*
- ▶ **Location** – Describe where the person will be working.
- ▶ **Key Responsibilities** – List the major responsibilities and *clearly define the expected results of the position.*
- ▶ **Qualifications** – Indicate the level of education, experience, knowledge, skills, abilities and any age requirements for the position. Background checks and any other requirements should be indicated here.



Components of a Volunteer Position Description ...continued

- ▶ **Time Commitment** - Length of the assignment, hours per week, and/or other special requirements.
- ▶ **Training/Support Provided** - Define the type and length of all training (both general and position-specific) required. List all staff and material resources available to the position.
- ▶ **Benefits** - Describe benefits available to the volunteer, such as lunch, T-shirt, development opportunities, mileage reimbursement, etc.
- ▶ **Supervisor and Contact Information** - Which staff or volunteer leader(s) will be working most directly with the volunteer, and his/her contact information.

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Best Practice

- ▶ CREATE POSITION DESCRIPTIONS that are both informative and interesting to grab a prospective volunteer's attention. An unusual title can also be an asset!

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Now You Try...


- ▶ From the volunteer tasks generated in the previous exercise, design a dynamic and exciting volunteer position description with a catchy title.




**After you've assessed the
need for volunteers,
planned with the whole
team, and created a library of
Volunteer Position
Descriptions...**



**it's finally time to start
Recruiting for Volunteers!**



**How wonderful it is that
nobody need wait a single
moment before starting to
improve the world.
- Anne Frank**



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Key 3 – Recruitment Messages

1. **ASSESS THE NEED FOR VOLUNTEERS**
2. **USE VOLUNTEER POSITION/ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS**
3. **CRAFT WELL-DESIGNED RECRUITMENT MESSAGES**
4. **USE A VARIETY OF RECRUITMENT METHODS**



Craft well-designed Recruitment Messages

- ▶ *Customize message depending on motivation.*
- ▶ *what motivates your volunteer?*
 - *Achievement*
 - *Affiliation*
 - *Power*



Craft well-designed Recruitment Messages

Achievement-oriented volunteers:

- *List clear goals & objectives*
- *Provide benchmarks and timelines*
- *Offer tasks that can be done alone*
- *Opportunities to learn new skills and knowledge*
- *Merit-based tier system allows for advancement*
- *Map out volunteer “career pathway”*



Craft well-designed Recruitment Messages

Affiliation-oriented volunteers:

- ▶ *Personal ask by a friend already in program*
- ▶ *Provide group/team activities*
- ▶ *Connect to Point Person on staff*
- ▶ *May be excellent long-term vol if energized and nurtured in the group*
- ▶ *Be very careful with criticism; these vols are often “Feelers”*



Craft well-designed Recruitment Messages

Power-oriented volunteers:

- *Explain how vol program furthers mission*
- *Give stats and show impact of services*
- *Offer leadership role with title: “Team Leader”*
- *Provide opportunities for advancement*
- *Mission-focused; can be excellent “cheerleaders” for your organization*



Craft well-designed Recruitment Messages

- Essential as a plan for achieving goals through volunteer work
- A recruitment tool to help find someone with the right experience/skills
- A management tool for the orientation, training, support and supervision of the volunteer



Craft well-designed Recruitment Messages

- **Catchy title** grabs the volunteer's attention and is descriptive of actual tasks involved.
- **Opening message** entices the potential volunteer to consider volunteering for this organization.
- **Need:** What is the community problem?
- **Solution:** How will this job help solve the problem?
- **Benefits:** What's in it for the volunteer?
- **Action:** What steps does the potential volunteer need to take to get involved?

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Best Practice

- SPECIFIC, TARGETED recruitment messages will appeal to your ideal volunteer and weed out those people whose interests and skills don't currently match the organization's needs.

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Now You Try...

- From the volunteer position description you just wrote, brainstorm a message that would appeal to this position's ideal candidate. Remember the 5 W's (who, what, when, where, why) and 1 B (benefits)



**One person
can make
a difference...
and everyone
should try.**



Key 4 – Recruitment Methods

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Recruitment Methods

- ✦ E-Newsletters
- ✦ Local Media – radio, news articles, TV
- ✦ Website
- ✦ Booths/Fairs/Speaking





Use a variety of recruitment methods

- Post your volunteer opportunity on your website and a volunteer matching service like the MS Hub Network's Get Connected website
- Post flyers or brochures
- Utilize local media (e.g., newspapers and radio)
- Speak to groups
- Network with community groups and leaders – DOVIA (Directors of Volunteers In Agencies)
- Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, blogs

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Best Practice

- ▶ A PERSONAL ASK by a peer of the volunteer is the #1 way to recruit (friend asking friend, pastor asking parishioners, colleague asking colleague, etc.)

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Now You Try...

- ▶ Choose a partner and role play a personal ask with a potential volunteer. Swap roles so each person has an opportunity to be the interviewer and the volunteer.



Go local... Where to post recruitment flyers

- ▶ Coffee Houses
- ▶ Libraries
- ▶ Grocery Store
- ▶ Welcome Wagon Packages
- ▶ Doctors' & Veterinarians' Offices
- ▶ Public Transit Stations
- ▶ Shopping Malls
- ▶ Corporate Buildings
- ▶ Job Counseling Offices
- ▶ High Schools & Colleges
- ▶ Salons
- ▶ Restaurants



Even more places to look for volunteers

- Corporations/Businesses
- Colleges/Universities, High Schools
- Civic Groups (Rotary, Lion's Clubs, etc.)
- Jr. League or Jr. Auxiliaries
- Retired and Senior Volunteer Programs (RSVP)
- Places of Worship, Church Youth Groups
- Military Bases or Retired Military Groups
- Civic Clubs, Sororities and Fraternities
- Teacher's Associations, Retired Firefighter, Police, and Executive Associations
- Independent Living Homes
- Disability Services Groups

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Best Practice

- ▶ PLACE RECRUITMENT POSTERS OR FLYERS in all the places you normally visit. You never know where someone may see your message!

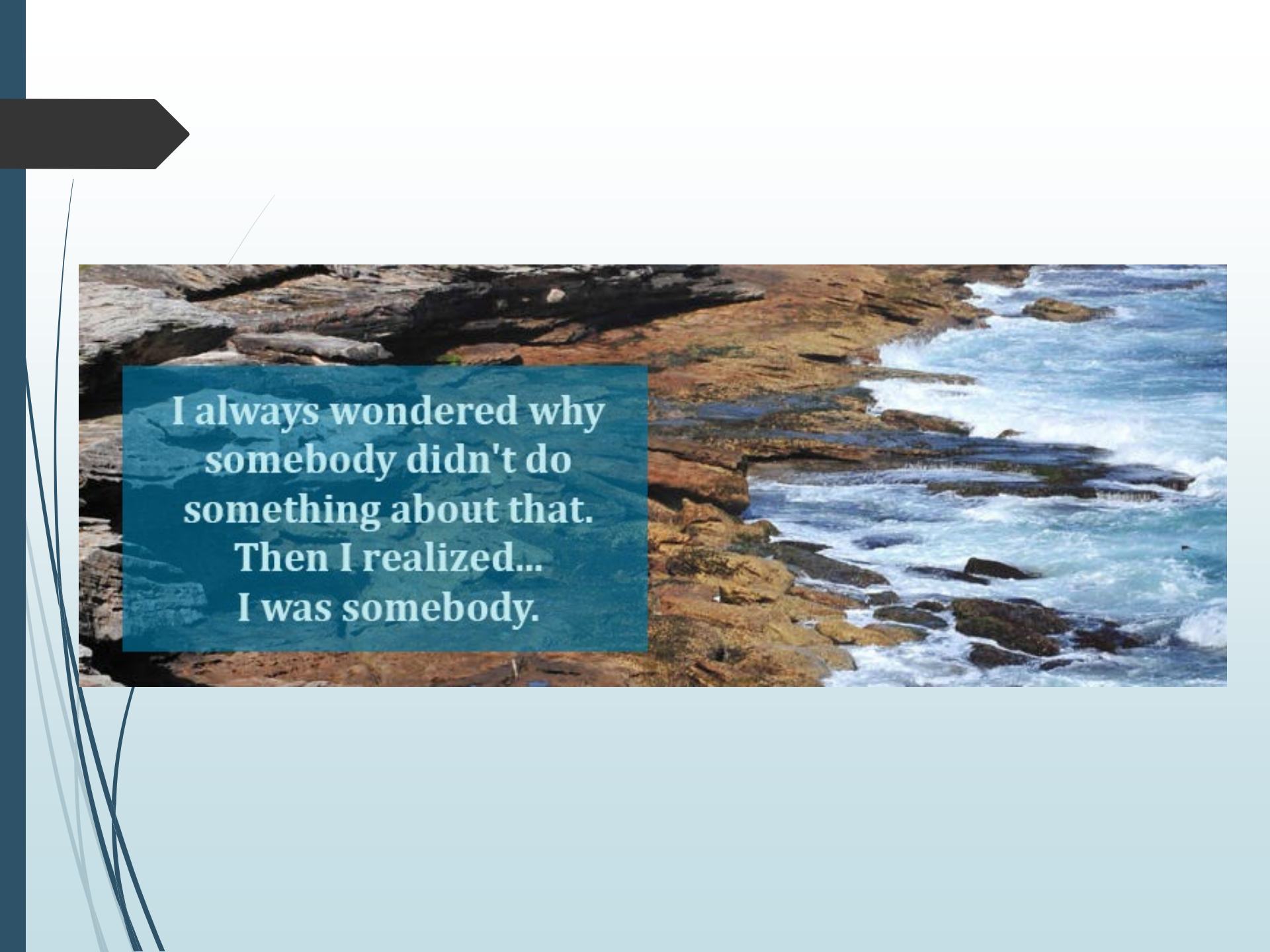
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Now You Try...

- ▶ Brainstorm a list of 15 or more places, ways, or strategies to get your recruitment message into the pathway of your ideal volunteer *(note: do not edit this list – even crazy ideas may yield surprising results!)*

Resources for Vol Managers

- Volunteer Hub Network
(www.alliancems.org/volunteer-hub)
- Volunteer Mississippi
(www.volunteermississippi.org)
- Energize, Inc! (www.energizeinc.com)
- National Council of Nonprofits
(www.councilofnonprofits.org)
- Points of Light Foundation
(www.pointsoflight.org)
- DOVIA Mississippi (www.doviams.org)
- *Your peers in this room!*



**I always wondered why
somebody didn't do
something about that.
Then I realized...
I was somebody.**

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COMING SOON:

**7 Keys to Finding & Keeping
Valuable Volunteers:
Part 2 (Keys 5 – 7)**

- 5. ENGAGE VOLUNTEERS IN MEANINGFUL WORK**
- 6. RECOGNIZE VOLUNTEERS IN WAYS THEY FIND MEANINGFUL**
- 7. EVALUATE THE PROGRAM FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**