

Volunteers Expanding Access to Health Care: A Resource Toolbox

Motivation

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A Project Developed with Support from:

Washington State Dental Service Foundation

Washington State Department of Health,
Office of Community and Rural Health

Western Washington Area Health Education Center

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Why do People Volunteer?

Without a doubt, Mother Theresa of Calcutta is one of the most amazing health care volunteers of our time. Relentlessly, she continues her care for the sick and the dying by doing what she can, one person at a time. What keeps her going, year after year? She says that “*To keep a lamp burning, we have to keep putting oil in it.*” What constitutes “oil” will vary from one volunteer to another and is likely to be different for the volunteer at different times in their lives. One of the strongest motivating factors in the why, who, and when of volunteerism lies within each individual and is linked to their most basic self perception. “People who feel ‘good’ about themselves are more likely to help and to give to others.”¹

Nancy McDuff of Sound Volunteer Management² outlines three basic reasons “why” people volunteer.

Affiliation is the sense of being part of an organization or team effort. This person works most easily with people they know well and may feel most satisfied in situations where the results of their efforts are more tangible and recognized by others. Social interaction, group projects, and promoting the organization to the wider community are some of the ways you can engage this kind of volunteer.

Accomplishment motivated people enjoy seeing tangible, measurable, concrete evidence of their work. This volunteer needs specific goals and sticks to tasks until completed. Number of patients treated per clinic session, emphasis on periodic achievements, funds raised to complete an aspect of the clinic expansion are all part of the clear goals that feel rewarding to an accomplishment minded person.

Power or Influence motivates people who are comfortable in a leadership role. These are goal-oriented, natural “persuaders” who enjoy showing people a better, easier way of reaching a goal. Board positions, fund campaign management, training/teaching opportunities, and strategic planning teams are ways to involve community leaders.

¹ Fisher, Lucy Rose and Schaffer, Kay Banister (1993). *Older Volunteers: A Guide to Research and Practices*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. Pg. 54.

² <http://www.halcyon.com/penguin/svm/superv.htm>; Sound Volunteer Management, 9594 First Ave., NE, Box 413, Seattle, WA 98115-2012;

What Motivates Older Volunteers?

“Most research findings and theoretical concepts about volunteer motivation seem to apply to volunteers of all ages. For example, older volunteers and younger volunteers identify multiple reasons for volunteering and are about equally likely to say that they volunteer to *help others* or to *do something useful*.”³ However, despite the similarities among various age groups, research findings do suggest a number of motivating factors that are more common among older adults. For example, older volunteers are much less likely than younger volunteers:

- to be motivated by material rewards to themselves or their families;
- to indicate having status or reward based motivations;
- to be concerned about education for the sake of career development and are instead more interested in education as a form of personal growth.

Older volunteers are *more* likely to say that they volunteer because they have

- *available free time;*
- *religious concerns.*

Regardless of the age of the individual, ***personality plays an important role in understanding how to motivate and recruit volunteers.*** Whether a person is a “born” volunteer or has acquired a volunteer spirit over time, a number of practical considerations are important.

- *Recruit selectively.*
Not everyone will naturally or intuitively embrace your clinic’s mission and values. The culture of your clinic is strongly influenced by your underlying assumptions about issues like charity, justice, and dignity.
- *Avoid situations in which volunteers or potential volunteers experience rejection.*
Have a range of options toward which the willing volunteer can be guided. Communicate clearly the desire for a positive working relationship. Negotiate a “yes” that truly works for both the clinic as well as the volunteer.
- *Use training programs to develop volunteer skills appropriate to your clinical setting.*
Consider creating a mentoring system that pairs “veteran” volunteers with the new recruits.

People of all ages are most likely to volunteer in situations in which they can clearly perceive a pressing need, no alternative source of help, *and a likelihood that their help will have a direct and positive impact.* Volunteers all want to know that their time will be well spent and that their efforts will make a difference.

³Fisher, pg. 48

Morale Boosters

Adapted from *1001 Ways to Reward Employees*, by Bob Nelson.
Workman Publishing, New York, NY, 1994.

Delivering quality patient care in a community health clinic is, at best, a daunting and challenging experience. Most people who choose to volunteer in such a setting report a deep sense of satisfaction in their work. Sometimes, however, the very nature of the work takes its toll on everyone. Discouragement is bound to occur. The strength of the team and the general climate for the organization can use an occasional boost. Here are some suggestions:

1. Quality treats bring out the kid in all of us. Order a pizza or huge submarine sandwich for a communal lunch.
2. Designate a bulletin board as a place to share favorite jokes, cartoons, etc.
3. Attach cartoons or humorous anecdotes to the more mundane memos that need to be circulated.
4. Schedule a staff meeting off-site; if possible, consider a casual social event.
5. Schedule an Ugly Tie or Crazy Sweater or Silly Socks day with a joke prize for the winner.
6. Hold betting pools for high-profile events as the Super Bowl, World Series, Apple Cup.
7. Take a daily humor break; designate someone to share a joke or funny story with the rest of the staff.
8. Bring a Polaroid camera to work. Take candid shots and post the results throughout the clinic.
9. Make a point to smile and say hello to office mates.
10. Never take anything too seriously. Keep reminding yourself, “This isn’t brain surgery,” (unless, of course, it *is* brain surgery)!

Success Factors for Community Collaboratives

From the *Pew Partnership for Civic Change, Leadership Collaboration Series*.

Pew Partnership, Charlottesville, VA, 1995-1996, p.30-31.

Following is a list of the Wilder Foundation's 19 factors of success as it appeared in *Collaboration: What Makes It Work*, by Paul Mattessich and Barbara Monsey, copyright 1992, reprinted by permission from the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation (for more information on the Wilder Foundation's publications, call 1-800-274-6024):

Factors Related to the Environment

- History of collaboration or cooperation in the community
- Collaborative group seen as leader in the community
- Political/social climate favorable

Factors Related to Membership Characteristics

- Mutual respect, understanding, and trust
- Appropriate cross section of members
- Members see collaboration as in their self-interest
- Ability to compromise

Factors Related to Process/Structure

- Members share a stake in both process and outcome
- Multiple layers of decision making
- Flexibility
- Development of clear roles and policy guidelines
- Adaptability

Factors Related to Communication

- Open and frequent communication
- Established informal and formal communications links

Factors Related to Purpose

- Concrete, attainable goals and objectives
- Shared vision
- Unique purpose

Factors Related to Resources

- Sufficient funds
- Skilled convener

Stakeholder Analysis

Why Do A Stakeholder Analysis?

Strategic planning includes analyzing the impact of stakeholders. To effectively control its future, a business must satisfy the interests of its stakeholders.

What Are Stakeholders?

Stakeholders are those individuals and groups who affect a business' activities. In other words, a stakeholder is someone who has an interest, a stake, in what a business does.

A potential patient may choose to seek health care locally or choose to go elsewhere for their health care needs. This individual is one example of a stakeholder for local health care providers.

The individual's decision, of where to seek health care, impacts the revenues of the local health care providers.

Thus, stakeholders consist of individuals or groups who feel they have a stake in the consequences of management's decisions and who have the power to influence current or future decisions.

Stakeholders may include the following:

- Employees
- Unions
- Consumer advocacy groups
- Government agencies, and
- Suppliers consumers educational institutions

How to Manage Stakeholders

Stakeholders have varying expectations and interests in a business. They may also differ in the influence they exert over a business.

They may represent the views of large numbers of people or of a limited few. The task of management is to identify the stakeholders and their respective powers to influence business activities.

Steps in managing stakeholders

- Make a list of stakeholders;
- Identify each stakeholder's expectation of your business;
- Assess the level of influence each stakeholder has on your business; and
- Identify means of communicating with the important stakeholders.