

28 Useful Tips for Recruiting Volunteers

1. Remember the number one reason given by people for volunteering is *'someone asked me'*...and usually someone they know and respect well. Simply Ask, Ask and Ask!
2. Recognise that volunteers are motivated by a host of motivations - opportunities for social interaction, friendships, skill development, self development, recognition, altruism, ideological commitment, incentives etc. - avoid a single recruitment message and ensure promotional material appeals to a multitude of motivations. Also remember, the two questions any recruitment material needs to anticipate are *'What's in it for me?'* and *"Can I do it?"*
3. Remember that volunteer recruitment is fundamentally about building relationships. Relationship building takes time and involves growing trust. Commit time to networking, lots of conversations and keep in touch with prospective volunteers for when the time for engagement may be appropriate.
4. Create a Volunteer Recruitment Team to design, implement and regularly evaluate a Volunteer Recruitment Strategy - include volunteers in the Team.
5. Realise that happy and satisfied volunteers represent the best promotion for any organisation - ensure you have volunteers as part of the Retain, recognise and Reward Strategy.
6. Engage a social media savvy volunteer to develop a social media component to the Strategy- there is a multitude of tools that can be used.
7. Regularly use local media to highlight the contributions of current volunteers and to promote the excitement of volunteer opportunities. Issue regular press releases, request regular talk back times with local radio, develop personal relationships with local media contact, seek a regular guest spot on the local radio, create your own media stories etc.
8. Collaborate with other community organisations to undertake a *'Passion and Skills Audit'* of local residents - invite people to voluntarily engage around those interests and passions.

9. Collaborate and network with other community organisations in volunteer promotion, recruitment and acknowledgement e.g. annual Community Organisation Fair, town entrance sign praising local volunteer contribution, bumper stickers with volunteering messages, annual Community Volunteer Recognition event
10. Critically evaluate procedures and red tape involved in recruitment- minimise any barriers and complexity.
11. Provide an *Information Kit* for distribution to perspective volunteers. Include clear and simple job descriptions, an information sheet that answers the most frequently asked questions and testimonials of current volunteers.
12. Keep in touch with ex volunteers - send newsletter, invite to functions, ask their advice etc.- their circumstances for dropping out may change, and they could be an invaluable advocate and recruiter of others.
13. Use exit interviews with departing volunteers to provide feedback needed for continuous improvement.
14. Maintain adequate volunteer insurance cover and clearly outline details in any volunteer information. Many people are fearful of legal litigation.
15. Have an organisational *Suggestion Box* for recruitment ideas.
16. Include a dedicated section on volunteers and their invaluable contribution on the organisation's website.
17. Utilise the help, services and resources of the local and state Volunteer Centre.
18. Discover who is new in town (eg via friendly real estate agent). Personally contact and welcome to the community. Share information about the organisation and opportunities for volunteer engagement Invite participation.
19. Design and produce an interesting and eye catching organisational name badge and/or promotional shirt. Distribute to everyone associated with the organisation and ask them to wear to any community networking event and use as a conversational starter.

20. Use special events to promote the organisation and recruit e.g. Saturday morning sausage sizzle in a prominent community location, Open Day, Information Booth at community events like markets etc.
21. Sponsor and find ways to associate with prominent and respected community events, and always ensure there is an opportunity to promote volunteer involvement opportunities.
22. Be opportunistic in generating opportunities for positive publicity and the organisation and its contribution to community/society. Do not be backward in coming forward about the importance of the organisation. Nominate the organisation and its volunteers for relevant awards.
23. Develop the fun and humour side of the organisation and promote this aspect to the wider public.
24. With the support of local businesses, develop a range of product and service discounts and incentives that are given to all volunteers.
25. Regularly photograph the group of smiling current volunteers and use as in publicity initiatives. Be creative - e.g. have them standing around an empty chair with the caption '*This seat is reserved for you!*'
26. Liaise with local schools about creating fun and interesting opportunities for students to become volunteers.
27. Commit time to capturing and distributing the stories of the organisation and its volunteers. Remember the world is not made up of atoms, but stories! People relate to stories, not facts and spread sheets!
28. Ensure any volunteer publicity uses power and passionate words. Yale University research have found the following words spark interest from people - *gain, achieve, win, secret, avoid, special, easy, health, earn, discover, love, free, unique, amazing, save, profit, new, results, you, get and magic!*

The Bank of I.D.E.A.S. acknowledges the inspiration of the work of Dr Judy Esmond in compiling this list - www.mtd4u.com

