



Restructuring Existing Volunteer Opportunities

Six ways to restructure volunteer opportunities to appeal to volunteers seeking more flexible and shorter term opportunities

1. **Substitution.** If it just has to be done every day, week or month, try creating the position of *substitute*: volunteers who are willing to be on-call and fill-in temporarily for volunteers in traditional jobs as their schedules permit.
2. **Job Sharing.** Why not assign two volunteers to the same opportunity? They may be given the same responsibilities, or different ones depending on their individual skills. You might identify the two volunteers to job share or you could ask the new volunteer to recruit a job-sharing friend. The volunteers follow a prearranged schedule or work it out among themselves week by week.
3. **Rotation.** With this option four volunteers might take turns filling a volunteer assignment, each working for a period of just three months out of the year. Such an arrangement might work well for snowbirds or seasonal workers.
4. **Segmentation.** Can a labor intensive position be broken down into more manageable short-term opportunities? For example, a special event coordinator might be replaced by several short-term volunteers each working on one piece of the overall work plan.
5. **Team Volunteering.** Assign multiple volunteers to the same client, each having a specialized function. For example, instead of just one volunteer being assigned to a homebound senior, a care team is created. Perhaps one volunteer likes giving emotional support, another handling finances and a third doing housecleaning. No one volunteer has to do it all -- making the load lighter for everyone.
6. **Telecommuting.** In this scenario, a volunteer provides the service from home or some other off-site location using technology. A good example of the application of this strategy is in the area of mentoring. School-based mentoring can be a fairly inflexible assignment. However, volunteers who cannot go into the school on a regular basis can still participate through e-mentoring, the exchange of e-mails over the Internet. Whether the volunteer is at work, overseas on vacation or at home, all they need to do is to get on their laptop and send off an e-mail to their mentee. E-mentoring is not a replacement for face-to-face mentoring, but it can be a way to involve a greater range of volunteers in the experience

From "Creating Boomer-friendly Volunteer Opportunities: Restructuring Existing Opportunities" by D. Scott Martin. (<http://www.nationalserviceresources.org/node/17770>)



Volunteer Recognition Ideas Across the Generations

Here are tips from leaders of volunteers at MAVA workshop on what they have found for recognition preferences in the different generations.

Traditionalists

Born before 1946

- If give an item, give something useful
- Make donation in honor of them
- Service pins are popular
- Honor years of service
- Many like recognition parties

Boomers

Born 1946-1964

- No trinkets or meaningless stuff
- Like training opportunities
- Like thank you for organizational leaders
- Promote to new opportunities. Offer leadership of a project.
- Send “insider” information – such as advanced notice of new Executive Director hiring or including in organizational communication
- Provide name tags like staff have
- Send thank you to their family for sharing their time with the organization.
- Some like to be highlighted in newsletters, on website, etc.
- Mixed reaction on recognition parties – some like the networking and some feel to busy to attend

Generation X

Born 1965-1980

- Send note to their works supervisor
- Give business cards for volunteer position
- Offer to be a reference
- Acknowledge in news or other ways that are public
- Add to their network, help make a connection, introductions
- Offer opportunity to develop skill or skill set
- Spontaneous email thank you
- Give volunteer positions interesting titles
- Provide electronic logo that could add to website

Generation Y/ Millennials

Born 1981- ?

- Offer reference letter
- Give feedback – this generation loves feedback
- Offer to take to meetings for networking opportunities
- Offer information interview with position(s) in organization
- Offer increased responsibility or a challenge
- Gift cards popular
- Like verbal thank you.
- Give increased responsibility, a leadership role or a project to be in charge of
- Many do not like traditional recognition parties
- Handwritten notes

A Guide to Engaging Volunteers Across Generations

	Millennials	Generation X	Baby Boomers	Silents/Builders (Traditionalists)
Motivation to volunteer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Egoistic motivation Working with friends and relatives Giving back 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Altruistic motivation To be involved with community Being involved with their children Focus on a meaningful cause 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Altruistic motivation Address a community need Sense of accomplishment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Altruistic motivation Following the example set by parents Sense of being needed
Hindrances to volunteering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time conflicts/lack of flexibility Personal conflict with other volunteers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time conflicts due to family and work People with negative attitudes toward others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time conflicts/lack of flexibility Lack of organizational structure and vision Poor treatment of volunteers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time conflicts/lack of flexibility Unclear objectives Health
Motivation to continue with volunteer efforts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enjoyment of the work Enjoy the people they work with and those they help 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to help the community Being involved in their children's activities Enjoy the people with whom they work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sense of accomplishment Feel needed and appreciated Their talents and skills are beneficial to the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help the community to survive Socialization Feel needed – an asset to the community
Actions volunteer professionals can change or improve to ensure continued volunteerism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flexibility Be respectful and caring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate frequently with volunteers Expand the volunteer base 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appreciation for volunteer efforts Expand the volunteer base Clear communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand the volunteer base Clear communication
Most important factors in retaining volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appreciation for their efforts Worthwhile purpose Comfortable environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appreciation for the efforts of the group Sense of accomplishment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appreciation for their efforts Sense of accomplishment Flexibility with time demands Adult learning opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Worthwhile projects Sense of accomplishment

^[1] Theories emphasizing egoistic motivation assert that motives for volunteering are self-seeking.

^[2] Altruistic motives, the desire to help others and serve the community, are found in people becoming volunteers.