



The Value and Supervision of Volunteers

A STAFF-TO-STAFF WORKSHOP

Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival

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Introduction

Acknowledgements

This curriculum was created to address the need of training staff on how to work with volunteers. The importance of fostering a warm and welcoming environment for volunteers will keep volunteers coming back to your organization. Throughout the creation of this document we have worked with numerous organizations in Toronto who rely heavily on the support of volunteers. The insight and inspiration that we received was invaluable; this curriculum would not be where it is today without their contribution.

Hot Docs would like to recognize the support of our partners, WorkInCulture and the Toronto Fringe; Ryan McInally, for helping in the copywriting and copyediting process of this document; as well as the government of Ontario for their continued dedication to resource development in the volunteer sector.

Finally, a big thanks goes out to you for taking the time to acknowledge and share the importance of volunteers with your staff. We hope that this training will provide your organization with the tools to continually improve and grow your volunteer program. It is our hope that this resource acts as just one of the many resources that will help your organization run an effective volunteer program.

Sincerely,

Alicks Girowski | Volunteer Manager, Hot Docs
Kate Teddman | Volunteer Coordinator, Hot Docs

Purpose of the Curriculum

This curriculum was created to directly engage staff in your volunteer program and ensure your volunteer department can run a successful program with input from your staff. Through real life scenarios and examples, readers will be able to get a sense of some of the challenges, opportunities and benefits that come with the territory. You may have noticed that some of the curriculum is optional; this is dependent on the involvement of your staff in the planning and preparation of volunteer roles within your organization. Feel free to add or remove any sections that specifically do or don't apply to you when you are preparing for the presentation, as not all organizations are run the same way.

This document is for facilitators to understand and teach practical strategies that staff in your organization can use when working with volunteers. Keep in mind that as a facilitator you can omit any section of this curriculum if the process does not currently exist in your volunteer program. Facilitators of this curriculum include staff in any aspect of volunteer management and executive or managerial staff. Although grassroots organizations may benefit greatly from the ideas in this curriculum, it has been developed for organizations with a basic infrastructure in place with regards to a volunteer program and staffing.

The first goal of this curriculum is to encourage the internal marketing of your volunteer program. While it may be easy for you to see how valuable your volunteers are, it is not always obvious for staff to understand how critical they are to help your organization run and prosper. The second goal is to develop your staff's skills in supervising volunteers. By the end of the curriculum, your staff will invest in the goals of the volunteer program and have a better understanding of how to work with volunteers on site.

As with any resource, thus, we encourage you to personalize this material with your own experience and needs. The curriculum actively identifies various volunteer groups and their motivations for getting involved with your organization; specifically, volunteers who help out on a short-term basis for a project or event (such as the Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival). This curriculum is not meant to instruct staff working with interns or long-term volunteers such as board members, although you may find some of the information is helpful. The scenarios presented in this curriculum reflect the various types of volunteers you and your staff may encounter while working with volunteers. These volunteer behaviours are taken from *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Recruiting & Managing Volunteers* by John L. Lipp, and will provide your staff with concrete solutions to difficult situations that may arise when working with volunteers. It is very important to note that the behavioural types provided are examples of difficult behaviour and are meant to foster discussion around solutions, as well as equipping your staff with the skills they may need. Don't forget to schedule a break in the presentation if you plan on utilizing all of the sections listed!

The learning outcomes from this curriculum are:

- Understanding who your volunteers are, and what they want
- Encouraging retention through skills-based volunteering
- Realizing the importance of effective recruitment and position descriptions
- Building camaraderie between staff and volunteers
- Recognizing and having the tools to resolve conflict on site
- Acknowledging the important role of volunteer software in tracking, note taking and the promotion of volunteers
- Providing performance feedback in a non-confrontational and effective way

Before you get going, you as the facilitator have a little homework to do! Take some time to research the following to use in your workshop:

- How many volunteers do you currently have in total? Or, how many volunteers did you have at your last festival, event, etc.?
- How many hours did your volunteers contribute last year? How many full-time staff positions is that?
- What types of volunteer opportunities exist within your organization?
- What kind of training has your organization offered volunteers in the past? Try to find some examples and present them in your introduction.

CHAPTER 1—Planning

Section 1.1: The Importance of Volunteers in Cultural Institutions

Simply put, volunteers are the gears that allow the machine of your organization to operate. Much of your organization's success and ability to run and grow is based on those who believe in your mission and choose to invest their time and energy into your work.

Please take a moment to calculate how many volunteers your organization has and how many hours they have spent with you. What is the collective number of hours from all volunteers? What does that number say to you?

Communicating the above numbers and statistics to your staff will inform them of the importance of volunteers within your own organization. It is important to get them on board as early as possible in the planning stage, so sharing information about who your volunteers are and how much they contribute will give staff a chance to create roles that not only meet your organization's goals but the goals of your volunteers as well. This is why it is critical that your volunteer department be actively engaging your organization for suggestions and ways to build a successful program, especially in the planning phase. By bringing other departments into the fold, you are creating stakeholders. People will feel they have an interest in seeing the program run successfully if they are actively involved in creating it.

As important as it is to set expectations for your potential volunteers, it is equally as important to ensure that any staff working with volunteers know they will be supported right from the beginning. This starts by including those duties right in the staff's job description, in addition to providing them with this training. Making sure that your staff have the right tools and techniques to work with volunteers and different personalities will create a positive and supportive environment in your organization.

Some questions you could ask staff in other departments:

- What do you think is missing from our current volunteer program?
- How would volunteers be useful in your department(s)?
- What challenges do you see working with volunteers?

During this brainstorming session, it may come to light that some staff members feel threatened by having volunteers work in their departments. Some staff may feel as though these volunteers are "poaching" their jobs.

Questions that may come up are, "Who are these volunteers?" and "What are their motivations for wanting to work in our organization?"

Who are these people, and why did they choose you? Understanding an individual's motivations will help you understand what they're interested in getting out of their experience with your organization. Having this open conversation will hopefully curb some of the negative stereotypes associated with volunteers.

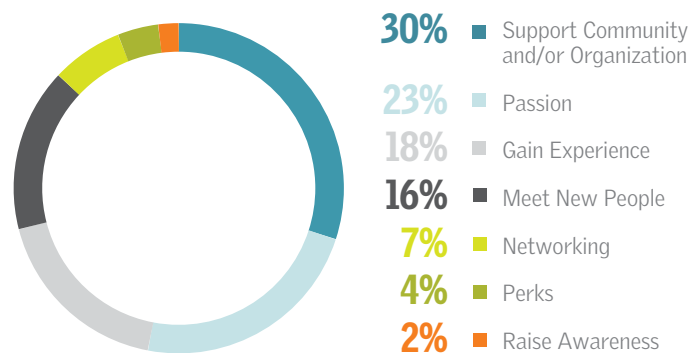
Section 1.2: Motivations

In the preliminary stages of working with volunteers, it is important to identify why volunteers choose to spend their time with your organization.

Questions to Group

- What are some of the motivations that drive you to volunteer with a particular organization?
- Why would you volunteer for this cause?

The following graph details some of the motivations that individuals identified in their choice to volunteer. It is a great idea to go through these with your staff in order to have them understand what they should focus on in order to increase retention and engagement with your volunteer team (Hot Docs Cultural Volunteer Resource Development Survey, 2014).



As this chart illustrates, the majority of volunteers seek to support their community and/or your organization. The second highest motivation is passion, followed by gaining experience.

SCENARIO

The Social Climber

A returning volunteer reaches out to you to indicate that they only want to volunteer in one very specific role, because they feel it will offer them the best opportunity to network and advance their career. The team the volunteer wants to work with is a very small department with tight deadlines and professional contacts. You sense that the department's need for professionalism might not benefit from this individual's inexperience and desire to network. How would you manage their expectations?

How would you handle this scenario?

Suggest to the volunteer that there might be a better fitting department that still offers a similar learning experience. Suggest another team for them to volunteer with that is related to their area of interest. For example, if they want to work in the Communications Department, suggest an alternative to start out with, such as distributing marketing material, which will give them an opportunity to find out more about programming and opportunities available at your organization.

Work to find a compromise that puts the best interest of the individual and organization into play and reminds the volunteer that you need volunteers to be flexible and that you appreciate their willingness to try something else. If the volunteer still refuses to be flexible in what they're doing, then it may be in the best interest of the individual and organization that the volunteer look for that specific role at another organization.

Why volunteer?

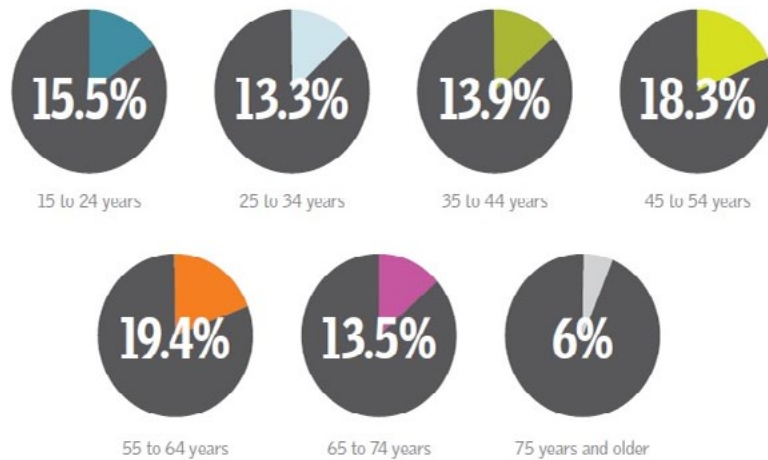
As you can see, everyone's motivation for volunteering is different. It's essential to understand that volunteers choose to participate with your organization instead of all the other opportunities that are available to them.

Take a moment to identify what motivates volunteers to participate in your organization. Here are some of those motivations again:

- A personal investment in the mission and vision of the organization
- The chance to participate in the event
- The opportunity to learn something new or develop new skills
- A desire to gain professional experience
- Social interaction
- Tangible rewards

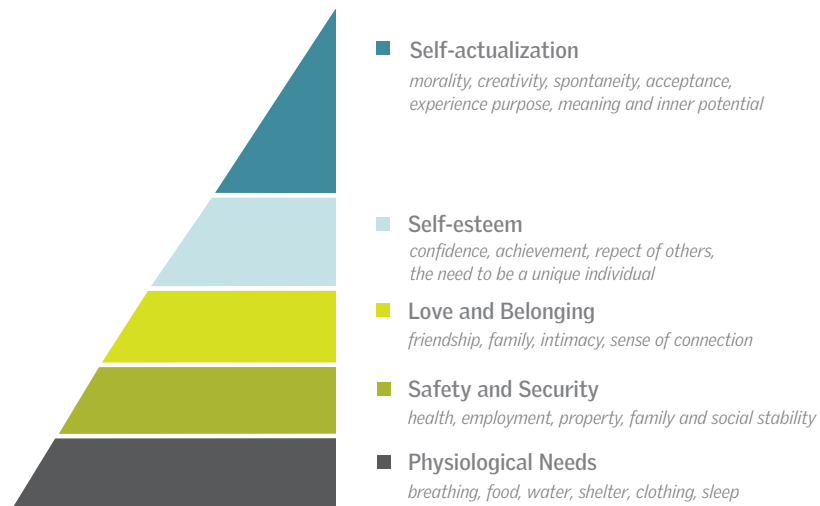
Section 1.3: Who Are Your Volunteers?

The following pie charts show what age range you might expect to have apply for a volunteer position in Canada. This survey was conducted by Statistics Canada in 2013.



What's surprising about this pie graph is that the percentage of total volunteer hours was almost evenly split between the ages of 15 to 75+. That's a lot of diversity being brought together by your organization's cause, and you will need to harness that interest and passion.

From high school, you may remember learning about Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, which organizes the needs of a human being as a pyramid, with physiological and security needs (i.e. the most basic rights) as the foundation, and social, esteem and self-actualizing needs as loftier goals that help a person to reach their full potential (Maslow, 1943).



The top three needs are especially applicable in the world of volunteering. They are socializing with others on shift and forming a sense of connection; gaining esteem and confidence from learning new skills and receiving positive feedback from staff; and ultimately bettering themselves by engaging in the community with a purpose and encouraging personal growth within themselves by pursuing their interests.

Similarly, psychologist David McClelland puts forth his own "Theory of Needs:" the need for Achievement, the need for Affiliation and the need for Power. This theory focuses on self-actualization in a different manner from Maslow, with a higher emphasis on the volunteer's motivation to not just grow, but thrive, exceed expectations and take on roles with more responsibility. Volunteers often come to your organization with a wide variety of skills that you may not know they possess. They bring the skills they learned from work experiences and school, but even more importantly, they often have great insight into volunteer programs at other organizations. These volunteers can offer a fresh perspective to your program or interesting ways to shake things up. It is important to recognize that though they choose your organization to volunteer with, often volunteers dedicate their time to multiple organizations, giving them a holistic view of volunteering within your community. More often than not in the not-for-profit sector, volunteers end up in staff roles, so thinking of them as colleagues and team members instead of volunteers is a great mindset to adopt (McClelland, 1988).

With these motivations in mind, it's easy to deduce that volunteers require stimulation, and in order to identify that, you must view them as more than helpers who should be limited to simple tasks. They can and do take on much more. Identifying projects early on that require certain skillsets will give you the time to find the right volunteer for the role, in addition to giving them valuable experience within a field and giving them a sense of ownership on that project. This is why it's important to assess what skill sets your volunteers possess early on in the planning game.

Section 1.4: Skills-Based Volunteering

Questions to Group

- What do volunteers bring to an organization?
 - Insight into processes at other similar organizations
 - An exchange of ideas that can often lead to perfecting a method of operation
 - A fresh set of eyes that can offer another perspective on the task
 - Word-of-mouth marketing to promote your organization and the volunteer program. Often volunteers are connected to others in the community through similar events and causes
 - Experience with similar databases or software from former learning experiences
 - A chance for your organization to develop and refresh methods of training
 - The opportunity for staff to increase interaction with diverse groups
 - Relief for your team, and a chance to focus on specialized areas of a job

In the last decade, there has been a push in volunteer management to engage more skills-based volunteers in organizations. Skills-based volunteers are those who service not-for-profit organizations who have personal, professional and business-related skills, developed in school or from their work experience, who then help to enhance the growth and strength of an organization. With the emergence of startups and cultural institutions which require direct funding from the government to stay in business, it is always a balancing act of running programs and paying staff.

Unfortunately, the message from many governments is to do more with less. But how do you do more with less? Bringing on more skills-based volunteers requires a commitment from your staff just as much as the commitment you are asking of volunteers. Arranging positions without having your staff buy into the idea may cause resentment from staff members as they see their jobs being replaced by unpaid workers. A lack of concern for your workers can undermine your business and cause your staff to look for greener pastures. This is why skills-based volunteering must be carefully thought out and done so in such a way that tries to put the organization's needs and the staff members' needs into account before deciding a task is no longer something a paid worker would do.

There are strict rules in place that govern what an internship is and isn't. Taking on long-term volunteers or interns for a long period of time without a definitive start and end time denoted for a task can send the wrong message to your staff and to people outside of your organization. When deciding to bring on an intern or long-term volunteer, it is in your best interest to liaise with accredited school programs, giving you the opportunity to help develop the student's skills in their area of interest.

Skills-Based Volunteering Versus Needs-Based Volunteering

First, a cautionary note. Simply focusing on skills-based volunteers, as opposed to community-based volunteers, will increase your pool of people who are looking to network or gain experience in your organization. Most skill-based volunteers tend to be younger and may be looking for work. An organization could be getting someone who knows more about software and programming, but less about the community and the causes your organization backs. Completely moving towards skills-based volunteers may bring on people who do not necessarily believe in your mission, which could change the tone and perception of your organization. Ensure that you balance out your volunteer program with many different types of volunteer opportunities, so your organization appeals to a wide base of people.

Initiating a skills-based recruitment strategy is a process of:

Assessment

Assess the organization's readiness and willingness to have a pro bono highly skilled volunteer program. Have clear and identified roles in the volunteer program. Necessary funding must exist for those to manage the program. Actively identify what projects could be completed by highly skilled volunteers and what systems and communication tools will be used to work with these volunteers.

Planning

Get a commitment from staff to work with highly skilled volunteers. This is critical because if staff reject the idea and are resistant, then it will undermine the whole process of bringing on skills-based volunteers. Develop marketing strategies through print and online for recruitment strategies for volunteers. Actively engage current staff to help identify potential volunteers with a specific skill set.

Engagement

Develop protocols to orient new volunteers to your organization. Define the parameters of the working relationship and who the volunteer should be actively communicating with. It is necessary to develop some boundaries around what department they service and who they report to. The focus should be on accountability and learning about the organization.

Implementation

Engage volunteers so they share relative work and experience with specific staff and supervisors.

An Integrated Human Resource Strategy

An Integrated Human Resource Strategy is an effective and planned approach to identify the needs and functions of an organization. It requires an investment of time and willingness to attract and retain both paid and unpaid staff, or volunteers with specific skill sets. It is also about creating a reputation for offering a workplace where people can gain satisfaction from their work. It is about putting people first in protecting the rights of workers and volunteers (Volunteer Canada, 2010).

Section 1.5: Who Are Your Supervisors?

Now that we have a better idea of who comprises the volunteer base, what defines and motivates supervisors? Supervisors can come from many different departments in the organization, many different walks of life, and because they're human, they can sometimes get their priorities out of order when it comes to volunteers. Tell us if you've seen the following supervisor foibles:

The Mean Supervisor: Quite simply, they're protective of their job and view volunteers as a threat. This person acknowledges they need help but don't want to give a volunteer the opportunity to shine. They often don't say thank you and rarely interact with volunteers.

The Absent Supervisor: Perhaps they're too busy, or perhaps they just don't really think about it too much, but this person neglects volunteers who report to them and will do things like cancel a shift an hour beforehand without any thought of the repercussions. If they do arrive, they usually arrive late to a shift.

The Aloof Supervisor: While present, they don't really set themselves up as a support or source of information for the volunteer. Instead, they do their own work and begrudgingly advise the volunteer on what they should do.

The Micromanaging Supervisor: This person does not trust volunteers, and so they constantly hover over them to make sure they're doing a task correctly.

Now that we've defined the less than desirable characteristics, let's focus on the more effective types:

The Knowledgeable Supervisor: This person cares deeply about their work and is invested in supporting volunteers to help them along the way. They're present and open to questions, because they like to share the knowledge.

The Trusting Supervisor: Confident in the off and on-site training that's taken place, this person is content to leave a volunteer to either complete tasks alone or simply just let them run with something, while staying nearby to provide support if needed.

The Challenging Supervisor: Although it sounds like a negative connotation, this person actually wants to encourage the development of a volunteer and will set out tasks to strengthen their skills. By identifying the volunteer's skills first, this supervisor puts their volunteer into a position where they will succeed.

When thinking about what supervisors should and shouldn't do while overseeing volunteers, it's important to think of the environment they're creating with their actions. A hostile supervisor will create an unwelcome atmosphere, while a kind one does the opposite. In his book, John L. Lipp encourages volunteer management as a form of human resource management, which demands a lot more responsibility and accountability from volunteer supervisors than they might think. Assuming that because a Volunteer Manager or Coordinator has "volunteer" in the title and should therefore do the majority of the management is short-sighted, and creates an "It's not my job" mentality, as Lipp puts it. Instead, supervisors need to be involved and informed about decisions very early on to ensure they're recruiting and training volunteers in ways that will benefit everyone. The volunteer department is there to facilitate the process, but cannot supervise every volunteer the organization engages (Lipp, 2009).

Section 1.6: The Volunteer Office and the Big Picture

As an organization, you want your volunteers to feel important and to feel their time is well spent. This means that staff within your organization should be involved in the volunteer program as much as they can be to feel like they have a vested interest in the success of the program. A quick overview of what the Volunteer Office does in your organization will provide staff with insight into the overall big picture of the goals of the volunteer department. While many think that the volunteer office is the only department to work with volunteers, this is often not the case. Staff in the Volunteer Office are often responsible for the structure and administration of the volunteer program including, but not limited to:

- Orienting new staff on the volunteer program (application process, recruitment, orientation, rewards, training, etc.)
- Orienting new volunteers on the organization's mission and goals
- Training staff on how to work with volunteers and conflict management
- Providing guidance to staff on how to train volunteers for different roles and positions
- Developing policies and protocols for volunteers
- Working with staff to assess their volunteer needs and provide guidance on position descriptions
- Developing benefits for volunteers (vouchers, reference letters, uniform, educational events, party, etc.)

Throughout this curriculum you will find different ways of getting your staff involved in the volunteer program. Once they are aware of the structure of the program and Volunteer Office, they will be set up to provide an excellent experience for volunteers and themselves.

Ensuring that volunteers feel valued is a huge part of volunteer management. Informing staff to communicate the big picture of a volunteer's role within the organization will provide volunteers with insight into how they are being helpful, as well as how each role benefits the organization as a whole. Generally, when people know how they fit into the big picture, they are more inclined to be dedicated to the work they are doing.

Sharing your organization's mission and goals is a great way to start. Whether this is communicated through a formalized orientation session, is featured on the website where your volunteer application lives or is listed in the volunteer manual, making sure that a volunteer knows these objectives will help them figure out how their work fits into the grand scheme of things.

Volunteer training is another great time to communicate this idea to volunteers so that they can better understand how their contribution helps the organization overall. This allows things to be more seamless and, in turn, has volunteers feeling like they are doing useful tasks and contributing to the team.

An important part in the planning stage is to realize early on that volunteers are not placeholders. They should be a valued part of your team, and tasks assigned to them should be meaningful. Required tasks should fit within the mandate and goals of your organization and should not be assigned if there is no point in their completion. Bringing on a team of volunteers to stand by in one spot for hours is not exactly fun or inspiring. If there is a mundane task during a shift, it's important to check in with your volunteers often and rotate them into other roles, or consider pairing them up so that they have company during less busy periods.

SCENARIO

The Rule Breaker: You notice that a volunteer who you assigned to a stationary position has been wandering away from their post, chatting with patrons and is generally unaware of the disruption in operations they're causing. How would you communicate the importance of their assignment to them?

How would you handle this scenario?

Inform volunteers as to how the tasks they are performing fit into the goal or mandate of a specific department or project. It is a good idea to communicate to volunteers that times often fluctuate between busy times and slow times. When things start to slow down on shift, it's a great time to chat with volunteers to give them the bigger picture of how the organization works and why their position is so important. This is also a great time to really get to know them and their skills which might benefit both you and the volunteer down the road.

If it is clear that the volunteer does not understand the task at hand, give them a chance to show you how to complete the task. This will help you identify if the instructions are not clear.

Volunteers can also use this time to get to know each other and form tight bonds on shift. If at all possible, think about rotating the volunteer into another position so that they can experience different positions and situations during their shift.

Section 1.7: Volunteer Assessment and Recruitment Strategies

Taking the time to assess the number of volunteers needed by your staff early on will ensure that staff get the best volunteer for the position and will give your volunteers ample amounts of time to plan their schedule and get ready to volunteer before their first shift.

First, staff need to start thinking about the different tasks or projects where they will require volunteer assistance. It would be wise to review your organization's insurance policy to see if volunteers are covered under it. Keep in mind that volunteers are not covered by the Employment Standards Act (2000) and most are not covered under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act (1997). However, under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, organizations act as employers and still have some responsibility for the health and safety of people visiting or helping out in their workplaces; for example, by providing proper protective gear when operating equipment or by making sure equipment is well maintained.

There are two key steps for assessing your volunteer needs:

1. Decide as a staff what tasks a volunteer can and cannot do. Keep in mind what tasks need more supervision than others and that any equipment or resources volunteers will need are in good working condition. To determine where you could use the assistance of volunteers, try to keep a few things in mind:

Volunteers can:

- Provide exceptional customer service
- Help with the planning and execution of orientation and training sessions
- Offer information to the public as instructed by supervisors
- Assist with event management

- Engage in tasks that are meaningful and respectful
- Work autonomously BUT must be supervised by a staff member

Volunteers cannot:

- Replace the work of paid staff (handle cash, serve food or alcohol)
 - Work with equipment without proper protection
 - Lift more than 30 pounds on shift (if light lifting is involved, it **MUST** be noted in the position description)
 - Be assigned to a task without the supervision of a staff member
 - Complete a task they feel is unsafe (the right to refuse unsafe work)
2. Decide as staff what specialized volunteers you will need to help accomplish your goals. Have the staff break up into their departments and start discussing details of the position description for the volunteer. Determining specialized skills for tasks that need to be completed during the shift. Stating these assets when the shift is posted can help attract volunteers that have worked with similar systems before. While some staff may see this as competition or threat to their jobs, often having someone to bounce ideas back and forth can help provide insight into a process you might not have thought of. The result can be a complement to your work, and increase efficiency to allow you more time to focus on succeeding in other aspects of the job. Once having decided on the different tasks that could use the assistance of volunteers, it will be much easier to start the recruitment and screening process.

Recruitment Strategies

If you are looking for specific skill sets for certain positions, the first place to look is with your current staff. Staff members usually have contacts and information that may be vital in helping you locate the right candidate. The main point to successful recruitment is to reach out to communities that your organization is not already engaging with. Any ideas from staff about educational programs or other organizations they know of goes a long way toward recruiting the right volunteers.

There are many strategies you can employ in your recruitment, such as the three basic ways inspired by Rick Lynch and Steve McCurley, authors of *Essential Volunteer Management*.

1. *All Hands on Deck Recruitment*

This recruitment method works well when looking for a large group of people and not requiring a vast array of skills. Some examples could be:

- The public library system, which will often post flyers or promo material for free in all branches
- Free publications (e.g. *NOW*, *Exclaim*, *Metro*, etc.) often provide free event listings online
- Online job boards like WorkInCulture and Charity Village
- Volunteer opportunity websites like Volunteer Toronto and GetInvolved.ca
- Distributing your promo material to local businesses and coffee shops
- Participating in recruitment events
- Word of mouth

2. Targeted Recruitment

This recruitment method works well when looking for people with specific skill sets and is excellent when looking for volunteer leaders. This method takes more planning with respect to locating places to promote the opportunities.

- Industry circles
- Educational institutions
- Partner organizations
- Returning volunteers who have succeeded in the role before

3. Concentric Circles Recruitment

This recruitment method uses the network you already have to make a call out to other interested friends. Some people you can approach for this method are:

- Staff and co-workers
- Friends of current volunteers and staff
- Family and friends
- Stakeholders
- Board of directors

It's a well-known fact that over half of your volunteer base heard about volunteering with your organization through good old word-of-mouth marketing. Over the last few years at Hot Docs, 55.5 per cent of volunteers joined the organization by hearing about it through current Hot Docs volunteers, friends or family, through other festivals they volunteer for or through their educational institutions.

Whether you use an application form or interview process to screen your volunteers, this initial step is very important in bringing on volunteers.

Screening Volunteers

Screening is an essential and necessary process that should be taken into serious consideration not only when a volunteer first begins their affiliation with your organization but also when a volunteer decides to take on a role with more responsibility. Screening procedures should apply to all volunteers and no exceptions should exist; a person should not be vetted on the recommendation of one person. The process should be viewed as a positive by those who work for the organization, as it aims to bring the best people into roles that fit them. In order to ensure that staff find the best fit for their roles, it is recommended that they partake in the interview process. Generally seen as a task that staff in the Volunteer Office conduct, getting other staff to participate in the screening process will ensure that they receive the best volunteer for their particular role plus, that staff member will have more insight into the details of the position and can clarify any expectations for the role.

Allowing lots of time in the recruitment process is especially important when you are looking for volunteers with specific skills sets, which will require submitting résumés and conducting interviews. A lengthy screening process is often required when you are bringing on skills-based volunteers or those in leadership roles. This timing allows the staff member requesting the volunteer and the volunteer management to get to know the volunteer beyond their résumé and find out if they are the right fit.

Ultimately, you want to get to know the volunteer better to encourage the best experience for them and their staff supervisor. The interview process does not have to have a very formal air.

Here are a few things to keep in mind when staff members are involved in the interview process:

Interview Tactics

- Interview people one on one in a neutral setting where they can feel relaxed to answer your questions openly and honestly. For some people a one-on-one interview can be hard, as they're intensive and preparation can be a full-time job in itself. Make sure to create a safe space where your interviewee can feel comfortable in providing you with honest feedback about the role or their experience with your organization. This is your opportunity to get to know the volunteer better as well as ensure the position will be a great fit for them.
- Interviewing someone with other individuals can help ensure that if one of the interviewers has a bias or misunderstands something, then the group can work as a team to break down what was said and meant in the interview. This can also backfire, as having multiple interviewers can be extremely intimidating to a person who is being interviewed. Not every person is comfortable in these settings or will perform well based on these circumstances.
- Interviews over the telephone work well if an in-person interview is not possible. Remember to conduct the interviews in a quiet spot and if there is more than one interviewer, avoid confusion by choosing what questions each will ask before the interview.
- Pay attention to body language as it can say more than their answers ever could.
- Allot an hour for each interview and a 30-minute break between interviews to allow extra time in case one goes over the allotted time. You may also want to go over your notes or have a quick debrief on the candidate.
- Try not to do more than four interviews in a day to give each person an equal chance. Doing interviews too early or too late may cause the interviewer to be unfocused or uninterested in the person being interviewed.
- Ask follow up questions and ask for examples to support what people are saying.
- Don't forget to ask the interviewee if they have any questions about the process at the end of the interview.

Things to Consider When Interviewing a Volunteer

- Try to determine what the volunteer wants to get out of the experience.
- Be realistic when assessing and asking how much time they can commit to the position. Most people make themselves appear more available than they actually are.
- Try to understand what skills and experiences these individuals can bring to your organization (Lipp, 2009).

Section 1.8: The Idea of Inclusivity—What Is Inclusivity?

Throughout this workshop you may note many different aspects of inclusivity throughout the application process and recruitment, ranging from position descriptions and conflict resolution. While many of these tactics won't necessarily be pointed out as being inclusive practices, the importance comes in thinking about integrating these processes in your everyday volunteer program.

- Take a look at where your current recruitment strategy reaches out to make up your current volunteer base. Where do they mostly come from and what areas are you missing in your outreach?
- What does a multicultural volunteer base bring to your organization?
 - Professional skills: newcomers to Canada come with a multitude of skills but in some cases, due to lack of experience or restrictions around professional licensing, cannot find work
 - Cultural skills: act as a bridge to their cultural community for your organization
 - Language skills: serve a wider client base by communicating effectively with other cultural communities
- Showcasing the value in having intergenerational volunteers.

Stereotypes and Discrimination

It is important to identify stereotypes associated with each generation in an attempt to avoid them. Discriminating against someone based on their age is an identifiable form of discrimination. This is done through casual or systematic policies, beliefs and policy at the individual and institutional level. A not-for-profit organization can discriminate based on someone's age just as much as a company or other kind of organization can. Admitting there are stereotypes when it comes to age is the first step in actively avoiding them.

Here are some common stereotypes associated with certain generations:

Traditionalists—Traditionalists are those who were born in the late 1920s to mid '40s. They are often stereotyped as being pragmatic and careful. They are seen as being respectful to the rules of law as well as authority figures.

Baby Boomers—Baby Boomer refers to individuals who were born after the Second World War. They are often stereotyped as not being technologically savvy. They are also seen as having a strong work ethic.

Generation X—Generation X are those who are born in the early '60s to the early '80s. They are stereotyped as being risk takers, skeptical and self-reliant. They are also stereotyped as being lazy and having less concern for work ethic than their parents.

Millennials—Millennials are those born in the early 1980s to 2010s. They are often portrayed in the media as being apathetic. They are also accused of being self-centred and caring only for themselves. Another stereotype is that all Millennials are technologically savvy. However, this is false and some Generation Xers and Baby Boomers are more capable with technology than their younger counterparts.

Reminding staff that their experiences with a certain individual or group of people should not affect their approach with others is one way they can actively avoid these stereotypes. Placing limitations on a volunteer before they have shown their capacity is not only discrimination, it is a loss of opportunity. A volunteer who you thought wasn't capable of doing something might have been a great asset to your organization.

Volunteers come from a variety of professional and cultural backgrounds in addition to ranging in age, abilities and skill sets. The main reason that brings them together is support for the organization's mission. Recognizing this important fact should illustrate why it is important to approach every volunteer differently. Ultimately, you want to ensure the success of a volunteer in their role to keep them happy and coming back to your organization.

To illustrate this, think of people with disabilities. John L. Lipp has a great take on this group who have naturally evolved into problem solvers for their day-to-day existence. They enter a space and immediately have to think of how they can navigate it, or they approach a customer service representative in a store and need to find an easy way to communicate. They have an amazing ability to see the world in a different way; think of how their skills can translate into your organization.

Take some time to assess the different demographics of your volunteer program. Identify what age groups, ethnicities, abilities and parts of the community you are not engaging and create a strategy for engaging these new groups. Diverse outreach is rewarding to both the volunteer program and the volunteers themselves, since it opens up a whole new environment where all are welcome and appreciated. Engaging volunteers from different backgrounds will also bring a new perspective to a task or identify what is missing from your current program (Hot Docs Volunteer Office, 2015).

Questions to Group

What can our organization do to ensure that our volunteer program is as inclusive as possible?

- Distribute program information to Canadian consulates in the area or target sites for newcomers.
- Create a welcome package for new immigrants featuring information about how they will get involved in the community, learn new skills, obtain work experience and meet new people.
- Share the success stories of current volunteers within your organization who display an array of abilities, ethnicities, faiths and ages.
- Develop staff and volunteer policies that promote inclusivity and respect for all.
- Create a clear and unbiased application form.
- Ensure that your recruitment material, application form and position descriptions are available in different languages.
- Pair up experienced volunteers with new volunteers in a mentorship program. This works really well with newcomers who volunteer in order to brush up on their English skills.
- Focus outreach initiatives on reaching new communities in your area and include a diverse range of cultural backgrounds, abilities and age groups.
- Add a tagline to the bottom of each position description stating that your organization provides equal opportunity to volunteers and employees.

The next section will focus on how to use systems to make your program function by involving your staff in the preparation stage in addition to the planning stage.

Chapter 2—Preparation

Now that you have gone through the process of planning how you want your volunteer program to run, the next step is to prepare for this. There is an assortment of tools, resources and programs that will help you track, assess and promote your volunteers. Without these systems it is hard to manage and understand who your volunteer base is and how well it is doing.

Section 2.1: Volunteer Requests and Effective Position Descriptions

Assessing the volunteer needs in your organization early on in planning may take a little while as your co-workers may not be thinking about what support they need on hand for an event that may be months away. It is the responsibility of the volunteer department to work with staff in determining the needs they may not even know they require, as well as providing guidance into what is an appropriate task versus one that a volunteer cannot do. Open communication with staff at meetings, via email and telephone to collect this information and talk about your deadlines will help limit changes further down the road and will ensure that your time will not be spent chasing people down for that information.

In order to ensure that all necessary information is included in the position description, the first step should be to create a volunteer request form that staff can fill out and return back to the volunteer department. This can be through an online form (e.g. free Google forms) or through a Word document; as long as the information is easily retrieved and accessed, it doesn't matter how you collect it. Since staff requesting volunteer assistance will have the best knowledge of what the task entails and the numbers they require, empower them to provide the most amount of information they can in the request form.

The first portion of the form should be dedicated to tips and guidelines when requesting volunteers, and should possibly include:

- Determining the length of a shift. Generally, a volunteer shift should at least be three hours in length. If the shift contains lots of repetitive work, consider splitting a longer shift into two shorter shifts.
- Logistics, including the number of volunteers needed per shift and the number of shifts needed.
- Breaks for volunteers. Check out your local employment standards acts and make sure that the same standards are applied to volunteers as well.
- Details on what should be included in a position description and what legally must be noted. If a volunteer is required to work with equipment, proper protective gear must be provided to them.
- Performance evaluation and feedback. Make a point to ask staff and supervisors to note exceptional volunteers, as well as volunteers who are experiencing performance issues. This little task will go a long way in making your job easier by immediately finding the superstars in your group and will build a rapport between your staff and volunteers.
- Contact information of the volunteer department staff and who to contact if they have any questions.
- A big thank you to staff filling out the form. Without even knowing it, they are aiding the volunteer department in achieving its goals by helping you prepare for recruitment.

A well-written position description goes a long way to ensuring that you recruit reliable and skilled volunteers. The position description also ensures that you are laying out your expectations for a volunteer within your organization. It should be clear and easy to read and reflect the time you took to think about the tasks of the position, time commitment and skills you are looking for to accomplish your goals. By translating your position descriptions into different languages, you can effectively target a variety of communities and reach out to a whole new volunteer base. Here are some things that are essential in any position description:

- Outline of the task the volunteer will be required to complete with as many details as possible
- Time commitment of the position (i.e. once a week for eight hours, four hours each month, etc.) and duration of task (i.e. one month, one year, one time)
- Direct supervisor name or position of person supervising the volunteer
- Specific skills required (e.g. data entry and experience with Excel, people skills, copy-editing skills, etc.)
- Any heavy lifting that may be required or physical expectations, like standing for long periods of time or walking
- Identify the nature of the position (e.g. lots of downtime, fast-paced environment, greeting guests, assisting with set up)
- Application process (i.e. sign up online, email volunteer coordinator, email with cover letter and résumé, phone interview, etc.)
- Training session date (i.e. is it mandatory, length of session, cost associated with training)
- Dress code (if applicable)
- Benefits the volunteer will receive (intangible, like skill development, or tangible, like a membership or event tickets)

Section 2.2: Volunteer Orientation

Preparing an effective Orientation Session can take a while, and making sure that input from staff working with volunteers is vital to ensure that the messaging to volunteers is consistent and accurate. Once the position description and the assessment of volunteer numbers and needs are complete from each department, it's time to include that staff in certain aspects of orientation.

Here are ways staff can help with orientation:

1. Anticipating a Q and A from the volunteer base and drafting answers ahead of the orientation session.
 - Prior to holding the volunteer training, and as you plan the training with your staff, you will want to anticipate, write and draft answers to questions that the volunteers might possibly ask. This will also let staff know what to expect and prepare for before presenting at the volunteer training.
2. Invite staff members to pitch their volunteer opportunities.
 - The Volunteer Office should outline its role. Some important information to highlight is that it is not the creator of all volunteer opportunities. Instead, the Volunteer Office is the conduit and coordinator of the opportunities.
 - You will want to give the staff time to break out into their departments to brainstorm a list of volunteer roles that they will need, their position description and dates when the volunteers will be needed, as well as how many volunteers they might need for a given shift.

- It is important to make it clear that the departments are all working together to make one cohesive event.
- By incorporating staff into orientation, volunteers can put a face to names. It also shows that staff in your organization have bought into the volunteer program and respect volunteer's time and effort.
- By attending the session, staff also get the opportunity to meet volunteers and assess whether they're right for the role (Hot Docs Volunteer Office, 2015).

SCENARIO

The Know-It-All: A very talented returning volunteer who was promoted to a role with a higher level of responsibility five years ago refuses to review the revised position description for their position this year and does not want to attend training, citing that it's basically the same, so there's no need. What would you do to encourage them to review the description and attend the session?

How would you handle this scenario?

It is best to start with a compliment by first saying you're aware of how well they've done with the organization and respect their dedication. Next, follow up with a comment about how the position descriptions change yearly and that it is in their interest to read it over. Explain to them that policies and procedures are not constant.

You can also tell them that new volunteers in that role will be looking to their experience for answers and if they do not review the basic information of the role or attend training, how do they expect to answer these questions from other volunteers? With their experience and dedication to the role, it is their responsibility to stay on top of changes and keep up to date with role-specific training. This strategy plays into their strengths of knowing everything while addressing the need to fulfill their responsibilities in this higher level position.

Ask the volunteer to pitch the role at orientation or at a training session and act as the support for new volunteers in that role. This way you are providing them with more responsibility and they will feel that they have to know the role inside and out in order to present the details about it. If they still refuse, inform them that it is an expectation for them to review the position description and stay informed in order to fulfill that role as a volunteer. Given the type of volunteer you're dealing with, they likely won't take it this far.

Section 2.3: Setting Yourself Up to Work with Volunteers

Building a volunteer schedule isn't just about getting a certain amount of shifts filled. There are nuances that cannot be ignored for a successful shift to take place. Here are some things to consider before creating a successful volunteer shift:

- Determine the number of volunteers needed. If a given position has lots of downtime, consider pairing the volunteers to give them some company during these times.
- Determine specific tasks or skills required to complete the task and the type of person you are seeking.
- Determine the amount of time necessary to complete the tasks, ensuring that you are making the most out of your volunteers time. Don't schedule a shift for six hours when the task can be completed in four hours.

- Assess and alter the schedule to avoid conflicts with staff, ensuring that they will be available to sign volunteers in and out and avoid confusion with a shift overlap. Brief staff about start and end times of volunteer shifts, and assign a meeting spot to avoid confusion.
- Identify the nature of the position (lots of downtime, greeting guests, assisting with set up).
- Identify ideal break times.
- Provide resources or other materials that volunteers may be able to help with during slower periods.
- Prepare to team up eager volunteers who may be seeking training and answers with veteran volunteers who know the role as well as you do.

You want to create a warm and welcoming environment. Here are a few things that you should not do when you are working with volunteers:

- Show up late when you're supposed to meet with a volunteer at a specific time.
- Ignore the volunteer position description and instead ask the volunteer to do "other stuff."
- Constantly forget the volunteer's name and not saying hello when you see him or her.
- Cancel a project and wait to the last minute to tell volunteers, "thanks, but no thanks," or worse, wait for them to show up before sending them home.
- Never check in with a volunteer after they have started on a project.
- Never share information that may be relevant to volunteers' work or their understanding of the organization.
- Act in a brusque and/or condescending way when interacting with volunteers. I once heard a supervisor say, "Don't worry about why I'm asking you to do this, just do it." That may work in a volunteer army, but not with civilian volunteers!
- Never say thank you.

To become a better supervisor, focus on these few things. More details around these will be discussed further on in the session:

- Practice active listening so people feel that they are truly being heard.
- Provide corrective feedback in a timely manner to stop negative behaviours from escalating.
- Understand how motivational theory translates to "different strokes for different folks" when it comes to supervisor techniques.
- Conduct performance evaluations that actually help people perform at a higher level.

There are three areas to focus on when preparing volunteers:

- **Resources:** As a staff member overseeing your volunteers, you want to ensure that they have all of the resources they need to do their role properly and safely. Have staff members sit together and make a list of all the equipment that they might need. If a volunteer is asked to work with certain equipment, you must provide them with proper protective gear. One example is a theatre volunteer needing a flashlight for the role of usher. How many flashlights do you need in order to run a successful festival?

- **Training:** Adequate training is an important discussion to have with the staff. What tasks will the volunteer be performing on shift? Working on a detailed training session should answer the main question of *how* the task will be performed. For example, a volunteer who needs to use a microphone on shift. If you are having the volunteers be runners during a Q&A session, you will need to train them on the use of the microphone, as well as how to properly and efficiently move the microphone from patron to patron. Creating a training manual and making it available to volunteers will help by providing the volunteers with everything they need to know. Ultimately, this means fewer questions for you to answer.
- **Support:** Staff provide all tools, training and information that is necessary to be successful in a volunteer position. The staff must provide training and make sure that the volunteer understands the task at hand, and the staff must be available for any questions that the volunteer may have. Oftentimes, this may involve quick re-training while the volunteer is on shift. Never assume that a volunteer should know how to perform the task at hand or have common knowledge of your office space and processes. It's a great idea to put these things in writing so that the volunteer knows they can turn to a particular resource for support (Lipp, 2009).

What to include in the volunteer orientation of the space:

- Introduction of volunteers to staff and surrounding area
- Clear instructions for their role and responsibilities
- Where the volunteers should leave their personal belongings
- Location of washrooms and accessible washrooms
- If at a theatre venue, what is special about the venue
- Where needed equipment can be found

Be cognizant about accommodating the many different personalities, age groups, abilities and cultural backgrounds you will encounter while working with volunteers. Here are a few things to note:

- Different generations bring their own life experience and expectations to their volunteer work. Understanding the differences is the first step to finding common ground.
- Volunteers learn in many different ways, so try delivering instructions in a few different ways (e.g. visually showing how to complete a task in addition to verbalizing instructions).
- When supervising senior volunteers, deal directly with any performance issues and offer training or alternatives to help them transition to a new phase of service.
- Be patient with volunteers who have other obligations (e.g. job, family, volunteering elsewhere), check in often and offer as many flexible services or opportunities as possible, such as thinking about shortening shifts to suit the volunteers.
- Understand that today's youth have a tremendous amount of pressure, including everything from homework to chores. Make their volunteer work fun and rewarding so it's the beginning of a life-long commitment to service.

SCENARIO

The Saboteur: Despite your best efforts to create a welcoming environment for your volunteer team, one person in particular seems intent on disrupting the peace by taking too long to return from a break, procrastinating on a task you assigned to them, and generally seeming annoyed. How would you try to improve their experience?

How would you handle this scenario?

The volunteer obviously seems like they are not enjoying themselves and may need to be re-assigned to a new task. It would also be necessary to speak to the volunteer about breaks and why it is important for people to come back on time to ensure everyone gets a break. There may also be real-life problems that are distracting the volunteer from completing the task. Engaging the volunteer as to why they are distracted would be the first step to understand their actions. Do not assume you know what the issue is and take the time to talk to the volunteer to identify why they are acting out in a disruptive manner. Once you understand the cause of their behaviour, you can then take steps to correct it.

Section 2.4: Building Camaraderie with Staff and Volunteers

During the training session or on shift, staff may want to set time aside for a quick icebreaker or team-building activity. This will allow the staff and volunteers to learn more about each other and feel more comfortable about working together.

It's important for staff to speak to volunteers as equals. Volunteers should not be assumed to be staff members' subordinates. Volunteers have specific roles and duties, which are often created by staff and assigned by your Volunteer Office. Staff need to stick to the duties listed in the position description. Asking volunteers to complete other duties can often lead to confusion and may make the volunteer feel uncomfortable if they are not familiar with the new task.

Volunteers are there to help and do tasks that some staff may consider menial. However, to volunteers generally, how you ask them to do something is more important than what you're asking them to do. Try to keep in mind the tone that you use when speaking not only to volunteers, but to people in general. This may be hard in a fast paced stressful environment but it is staff's job to foster a warm and welcoming environment (Lipp, 2009).

Section 2.5: Software and Evaluation Tools

Software in the digital age has severely cut down on the amount of paperwork necessary to do almost any job. However, these programs must be utilized with necessary care and consideration. Maintenance of records is just as important as constant utilization of these programs. Having too many programs and places to put information can convolute your program and make it difficult to get the correct information in a timely fashion. By trying to run an effective program, you may be running an ineffective program. Centralize as much information as you can to avoid this issue.

What software brings to the table:

- Objective aesthetics and optics of a volunteer program
- Shows that you are more organized
- Tracking volunteer performance and hours; volunteers know how much they contributed and they feel valued

- Optimizes placement of volunteers in specialized roles
- Scheduling volunteer shifts
- Training documents for review (i.e. position descriptions, support material)
- Connection to the community (sharing other organization's opportunities)

Evaluate the options and what your volunteer program needs. Here are some aspects that you should look into when thinking about your software:

- Scheduling: Volunteers can claim shifts first come first serve OR shifts that the Volunteer Office or a staff member can pick and schedule
- Up-to-date contact information for volunteers
- Skills and résumé
- Communication templates or mailing lists
- An area for note-taking or tracking things like performance and attendance
- Ability to post PDFs for documents
- Promoting upcoming events
- Reporting purposes

Some examples of volunteer software are:

- Volgistics: size-based pricing, mass email, filing
- Salesforce: CRM used for staff and volunteers, mass email and scheduling options
- Better Impact: Canadian company
- Timecounts: easy-to-use interface, can be integrated into larger databases
- Volunteer Spot: simpler calendar system for smaller organizations

Software is necessary to help keep track of volunteers, schedule shifts, post documents and keep records of any incidents both positive and negative relating to that individual. It is a basis and source of information that your volunteer department can use to help decide on promotions, demotions and management of your volunteers. Ultimately, supervisors are responsible for providing performance feedback when they work with volunteers. This allows your staff to better place volunteers in appropriate areas that are relative to their skill sets (Volunteer Canada, 2012).

As the facilitator of this curriculum, this section is more for you to assess the needs of your volunteer program and encourage staff to provide input on how it can help them work with volunteers more effectively. Simply letting your staff know what resources are being used to keep track of volunteers will encourage them to provide necessary feedback, knowing it will be put to good use in the future.

Chapter 3—In Practicum

Now that you have successfully planned and prepared for how you want your program to look, it is time to put it into practice. This section deals with how to give feedback and manage different volunteer personalities. It also deals with how to look at conflict resolution in the context of working with volunteers.

Volunteers tend to learn in one of three ways: sight, sound or experience. Of course, some benefit from a mixture of these tactics, but when it comes to on-site supervision, you need to assess the best way to guide a volunteer.

Section 3.1: Effective Supervision and Feedback

Every person has their own unique style and way of managing the day-to-day operations of those who work with them. It is not always easy, especially when you're managing those who aren't getting paid. A softer approach is recommended, as many volunteers are giving up their free time and energy for your organization. If a volunteer feels as though they are receiving the same pressures or personal conflict that they may receive from their regular job, then there is less of an incentive to stay with your organization. Here are a few things to prepare for to ensure you are providing a great experience for your volunteers:

- Check in with your volunteers during their shift
- Provide breaks
- Provide proper instruction and make sure the volunteer understands the task at hand. It's very important that the volunteer perform the task with supervision at first to make sure that they know what they are doing on shift
- Provide corrective feedback and/or praise as necessary
- If you are having problems with volunteer conduct or experience a violation of the code of conduct, you may want to follow this escalation structure: volunteer leader -> staff supervisor -> Volunteer Office staff -> solve problem/escalate accordingly

Demonstration of Task & Tour of Facility—The How

- Take the group of volunteers on a tour of the facilities so that they are comfortable with the space and know where to find any resources they may need on shift. Outline where the emergency exits are and the area where volunteers and staff gather in the event of an emergency.
- A demonstration of how to complete the task volunteers will be asked to do will go a long way in terms of understanding. People learn in different ways, so the more ways you can incorporate in your training session, the better chance you have of reaching all of your volunteers. Feel free to use photos in your presentation, live demonstrations of the programs, software or equipment the volunteer will be using and/or break out into small groups allowing the volunteers to try the task themselves.
- If working with a large group for a variety of tasks, you may want to set up a circuit-training model. In this model, your large group is broken down into multiple, smaller groups and each group moves to various locations where a staff member or experienced volunteer demonstrates each task.

Providing Feedback

Not so surprisingly, the volunteer department can't be everywhere at once and therefore need feedback from supervisors. Feedback doesn't have to just focus on the positive or the task at hand. It can help shed light on how the volunteer program can be improved upon. It's also an opportunity to identify a volunteer as either someone who needs additional guidance or can take on more responsibility. Supervisors need to remember that volunteers can be let go, but we need to make sure that the events leading up to that regrettable stage are well-documented (Lipp, 2009).

One of the most important aspects to a person's ability in learning a new task is receiving feedback. Whether it comes from staff or a volunteer supervisor, it's imperative that a process exists to make volunteers feel valued and help them succeed in their roles. It is important to note here that while supervisors are asked to provide feedback and performance reviews related to volunteers, volunteers also provide feedback and performance reviews about staff to the Volunteer Office. Keep this in mind when educating your staff on how to deliver feedback. If they know that volunteers are encouraged to provide feedback about supervisors, it may change how they interact with them on site.

There are two generally agreed upon forms of feedback:

Reinforcement: Identifies desirable traits and encourages the individual to continue with these in the future.

Corrective: Identifies areas that need improvement and provides suggestions on how to improve the task at hand.

While giving reinforcement is usually the easier to do, most studies agree with the fact that corrective feedback is indeed important with the learning of a new task. Methods of delivering feedback vary, with common approaches including the BOOST and EEC models:

Balanced: Ensure that your feedback includes both points of development and strength.

Observed: Focus on what you have observed and not what you may think happened.

Objective: Don't bring in personality traits; you want to highlight the issue with the behaviour and not the person.

Specific: Back up your comments with specific examples of the behaviour.

Timely: Your follow up on the issue must be timely and happen shortly after the activity.

Or:

Evidence: Ensure that you are providing specific examples of the behaviour without focusing on the personality of the person.

Effect: Describe what effect the person's action had on the overall task at hand.

Change: Offer guidance on how to change the person's actions. It's best to encourage them to offer solutions instead of imposing your own ideas.

A few important things that these two models both take into account are the ideas of providing specific details of the inappropriate behaviour involved and focusing on the behaviour itself and not the person. You most certainly do not want your emotions to contribute to your discussion with the person involved if you want to resolve the issue at hand smoothly. These models also contain some very useful skills utilized in conflict resolution strategies:

- Focus on the problem, not the person.
- Practice ACTIVE listening by repeating key points the volunteer focuses on.
- Point out specific details surrounding the issue, not hearsay.
- Encourage working together to find a solution.

Ensuring that the conflict and resolution are properly documented by staff on shift is critical in shaping a great volunteer program. Often, conflict comes up on shift because there is some aspect lacking in the volunteer program or information is not readily available. Without feedback from supervisors on shift, it is hard to identify what areas of the program need some work.

Having staff track volunteer performance through reports is important for numerous reasons:

- Exceptional volunteers can now be recognized so that the Volunteer Office can offer special positions and leadership opportunities to them.
- Providing the Volunteer Office with regular feedback helps the organization retain its superstars, making your lives much easier the next time you want to request volunteers.
- Identifying areas of improvement as well as areas of success in the volunteer task.
- Identifying individual volunteer strengths and areas for improvement.
- Ensuring that volunteers are placed appropriately in the future.
- Flagging excellent volunteers for promotion or additional rewards.

When tracking performance it is important that staff focus on aspects of the task at hand and how the volunteer performed the tasks. Reporting that a volunteer is "nice" speaks to the volunteer's personality but does not elaborate how the volunteer accomplished the duty. While aspects of a volunteer's personality are important to note, focusing the feedback on the performance is very helpful for the reasons noted above.

Recognition

Giving recognition is just as important as giving feedback. You should let your volunteers know when they did something worth congratulating. Boosting the morale and self-confidence of your volunteers is important in helping these individuals develop the esteem in their tasks in order to continue to do them more confidently. But giving recognition when a volunteer did not quite do something right just to make them feel better can lead to more incidents where the volunteer underperforms or does things contrary to the nature of their position.

Section 3.2: Conflict Resolution

SCENARIO GROUP WORK

Similar to our study of the pitfalls that supervisors can sometimes encounter, we will now focus on the kind of volunteers who can make a shift difficult. As with the scenarios provided above, these scenarios focus on problematic behaviour that your staff may encounter on shift. These behavioural issues can be found in John Lipp's *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Recruiting & Managing Volunteers*.

Divide your attendees into four groups. Assign them one of the following difficult volunteers:

The Gossip: While on your break you happen to overhear a volunteer talking loudly nearby about how unimpressed they are with the executive director of the organization. They're describing them in very unkind terms to anyone who will listen.

The Negative One: An unforeseen hiccup has occurred during a volunteer's shift that requires them to re-do a large portion of the task they just completed. They're pretty displeased about this development and are clearly displaying it, bringing the positivity down with them. They also begin to criticize how the system in place must be wrong since the issue occurred.

The Harasser: After pairing up an older, more experienced volunteer with a young high school-aged volunteer, you begin to notice that the older volunteer is taking tasks away from the younger one, often giving them a glare or a condescending lecture in the process. The fact that they're trying to complete the tasks of two volunteers on their own is slowing down operations considerably.

The Prejudiced One: While sitting in on a volunteer leader's debrief to their team, you notice that the leader is actively discouraging the older volunteers from taking on more challenging roles available during the shift, stating that they should probably just take it easy. Despite the protestations of the volunteers, they still decide to relegate them to a corner, so to speak.

How would you handle these scenarios?

The Gossip

These volunteers love gossip, especially when an organization is going through change. The best way to stop gossipers is to ensure information flows directly from one source like your Volunteer Office. Keeping people in the loop makes other volunteers less inclined to listen to gossipers. A directive approach may be necessary to let the individual know their behaviour is inappropriate and won't be tolerated.

The Negative One

These volunteers never see anything as being right. They are quick to find flaws and if you are trying something they will probably suggest that it won't work. While these volunteers' impact is usually minimal, they can keep people's spirits down and create a toxic work environment for other volunteers. When dealing with these individuals, listen to them and keep it positive. Do not get sucked into their negativity. Humour is a good way to sidetrack negativity. It is best to keep these individuals away from public positions as they are not the type of people you want to be the face of your organization. They may also corrupt other volunteers, so it is best to keep them away from recent recruits as their influence and negativity may grow. If you're unable to work with these people and properly place them, then you may need to remove them altogether.

The Harasser

The harasser is a combination of the know-it-all and the saboteur combined. However, they have a much more intense approach. Through direct and indirect intimidation they can make others feel uncomfortable. They may use threats and make demands of co-workers. These people have a one-track mind and are often willing to compromise when it comes to how things are done. This type of behaviour should never be tolerated. Their behaviour is unacceptable in every part of society, whether it is at work or during their leisure time. These volunteers should be removed once their behaviour and actions have been verified and documented by a staff member.

The Prejudiced One

The prejudiced volunteer can have many prejudices about many different things. Common prejudices include age, sex, sexual orientation and nationality, and can also include an area someone grew up in. A common prejudice that is seen a lot in volunteering is that some individuals believe that older volunteers aren't fit or capable of volunteering. On the flip side there is also a belief from some prejudice volunteers that younger volunteers aren't experienced or responsible enough to be in a supervisory role. These behaviours, if accepted can lead to a hostile work environment, a mass exodus of good volunteers and even legal trouble for your organization. Every person regardless of whether they are paid or not should be able to work in an environment where they feel safe, appreciated and not judged for who they are (Lipp, 2009).

Conflict resolution for volunteers can happen on so many levels: staff-volunteer, volunteer-volunteer, volunteer-external participant. Making sure that volunteers have proper training and understand the resources and staff that are available to them when a situation arises is key. If they feel that they do not have support in these situations, it may deter them from coming back to your organization; volunteers need to be given a comfortable environment in which to work and express themselves.

When dealing with problematic volunteers please take the following steps:

- Remove the volunteer from the situation in a polite manner and talk to them privately.
- Focus on the behaviour, explain why it is problematic and how it impacts the task at hand.
- Ensure the volunteer understands why their behaviour is unacceptable.
- Reach a solution together or escalate the issue to the Volunteer Office.
- Document the incident in a report or email to the Volunteer Office.

Naturally, when working with many different types of personalities and work ethics, conflicts are bound to arise. Developing a planned approach to conflict management and training your staff and supervisors, using some quick and easy tips to resolve the issue, will create a better workplace for both parties.

A great way to start minimizing conflict is to take a look forward to see how conflicts may arise and then take the steps to mediate potential conflicts right away. A great tool from Volunteering Queensland Inc. highlights some problems that may arise with volunteers and how to avoid the situation. We suggest using the handout on the next page to complement this section:

Volunteer Performance Problems and Solutions	
Problems with volunteer performance occur most often when:	How to avoid this situation:
What is required of the person in the position is unclear	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have clear position descriptions
People's contribution is not recognized	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use formal and informal ways of recognizing volunteers • Reward volunteers individually as well as a group
People do not know when they are not performing well	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give regular honest feedback • Conduct regular performance appraisals/reviews
There are no opportunities for training and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide regular training sessions • Utilize guest speakers to talk about various topics • Consider supporting the volunteer in gaining qualifications
Managers do not take the time to listen and understand their particular and changing experiences and needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule time to listen to volunteers • Ensure volunteers know when the "best" time to approach is • Gather regular feedback about various aspects of the program
A person does not adapt well or cope well with change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give plenty of notice about upcoming changes (wherever possible) • Ensure volunteers understand why the change is necessary • Give support and encouragement
A person does not have the knowledge or skills to do the task	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have clear position descriptions, selection and application process • Consider using "skilled" or "professional" volunteers
There are not the resources or equipment necessary to do the task	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only put volunteers in a role if you have the required resources

It's a fact: most people do not enjoy conflict. Providing tips on how to approach the situation if one arises ensures that volunteers and staff can resolve the situation effectively and can leave the situation feeling good. Here are some common tips on how to approach a conflict:

- If tempers flare, take a step back and walk away until you're calm. Leave your emotions out of the discussion.
- Make sure you maintain eye contact. You do not want to look distracted or uninterested in the discussion.
- Focus on the problem with the behaviour; do not attack the person. Bring up specific details of the issue and how it impacted you or the operation of task.
- Communicate your feelings clearly and calmly; do not assign blame to anyone involved.
- One person should not be right or wrong. Everyone should leave the discussion feeling like they contributed, so work together to come up with a solution. When only one person's needs are met, the situation is not solved and the problem will continue.
- Listen to the other person without interrupting. Often people just need a little time to vent, and appreciate being heard.
- Repeat key details of the other person's account so they know they are being heard.
- Never jump to conclusions. Wait until you are aware of both sides of the story when coming up with a solution.
- Thank the other person involved. You do not want to end the discussion with someone storming off, still angry. Take the time to deescalate the situation and sincerely thank them for bringing their grievances forward.

A lot of people have read about conflict resolution and know most of the above tips when coming face to face with a problem. Create a few real scenarios that may happen in your organization and run through the scenarios with your staff and supervisors and see how they use the tips above to resolve the issue (Lipp, 2009; March of Dimes, 2015).

Section 3.3: Constant Communication

Communication is important but it needs to be constant. Volunteers should easily be able to contact their supervisor and the Volunteer Office while on shift. Some organizations have invested money into creating a webpage specifically for volunteers, centralizing information about available shifts and other necessary information in one area. This also cuts down on unnecessary phone or email conversations. Directing volunteers to one area will make your life and day-to-day job easier.

While working with volunteers on shift, staff supervisors need to take the time to check in while the work is being completed. This is especially important when the volunteer has only worked on the task a few times. It's much easier to step in early to make corrections during a process than it is to have to redo the work once it's completed incorrectly. This type of support is appreciated by the volunteer in the task, as they know they can turn to someone if they have any issues (Lipp, 2009).

Conclusion

As you can tell, John L. Lipp has been a huge influence on this curriculum, and we thought it fitting to close with a sentiment that he introduces in his own book. He says it's important to create a "Culture of Thanks" around volunteers, where you're continually showing your appreciation in various ways, whether it's providing on-site feedback, sending thank-you cards, throwing parties, giving goodie bags and so on. It's actually very rewarding for a volunteer to get direct and positive contact with their supervisor, which is why it's important that supervisors don't let their involvement with the volunteer program end when the job's done.

Some other suggestions for creating this atmosphere is to have various social outings, develop a volunteer advisory committee to help those develop a sense of ownership of the program, hold networking events for volunteers and develop off-season opportunities for those who want to stay actively involved in your organization.

Getting involved beforehand just makes sense since it helps the supervisor to steer the volunteer ship in the right direction. Staying involved afterwards to ensure that the volunteers know that their contribution was appreciated by their leader is what truly makes a volunteer program successful. When volunteers feel that their time was well spent, they will return, and the "Culture of Thanks" will be reciprocated by them as they appreciate your efforts to organize them.

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