



# **2017** SMP/SHIP National Conference

JULY 10–13, 2017 AUSTIN, TX

Everything you think you  
know about recruiting  
volunteers is wrong

July 2017



## What we'll cover

Steve McCurley,  
consultant, and SHIP  
TA Center

- A strange exercise to show you that you're your own worst enemy when it comes to recruiting volunteers
- How to do recruitment the right way
- A preview of the SHIP TA Center's recruitment testimonials



# WHY RECRUITMENT GOES WRONG

1. The goal of recruitment: “just enough of the right volunteers.”
2. Primary tasks in recruiting volunteers:
  - ✓ Getting people’s attention
  - ✓ Giving them a reason to say “yes”



## Exercise

- Find a group of intelligent, compatible, **new** faces: 3-4 people per group.
- Say 'hello' really quickly.



# Instructions

- Read classified ads
- Pick **2 best** and **2 worst** recruitment ads
- Exchange views with others in group: which, why



# A “good” recruitment message...

- ...is one that attracts the kind of volunteer you are attempting to recruit.



# Important subtle point

- We're not trying to recruit you.



# **RECRUITMENT THE EASY AND EFFECTIVE WAY**



# 1. Build a good intake system

- Most volunteer recruitment efforts fail because the organization doesn't have a smooth and welcoming intake system for prospective volunteers.



# Hobson & Malec, 1999

- 49.3% received offer of assistance
- 69.3% did not receive name of person answering phone
- 26.4% were not referred to appropriate contact person
- 48.7% were not asked for contact details if contact person not available
- 70% of those who left contact information did not receive a return call



# Instant gratification:

- Major common mistake is not getting back to potential volunteers quickly enough - “quickly” means within 24 hours these days.
- Don’t need a full response, just an “echo” or an acknowledgement. It should sound friendly. Info packets that you can email people are a good way to buy time.
- Train people who answer phones on exactly what to do when a prospective volunteer calls.



## 2. Use no-brainer recruitment

- Encourage staff and volunteers to tell people they know about volunteering: “talk it up”
- Post signs about areas of activity: “If you like this what we do and you’d like to be involved in it, talk to...”



## More advanced note:

- “Word of mouth” recruitment is very effective but if it’s the only kind of recruitment you do it is also a very effective way to kill your volunteer program...



The Danger:

- Cloning



### 3. Learn to ask

- A direct face-to-face request for someone to volunteer will work about 70% of the time – at least to get them to check things out further.



# Powerful phrases

- “We need your help...”
- “You were recommended as the best person for this job...”
- “Here is where your background and experience makes you perfect for this...”
- “This is what we can accomplish...”
- “You can be in charge of...”





## 4. The Internet works

- Volunteer matching sites
- Program web site
- Social media



# VolunteerMatch, 2006

How many volunteer opportunities did you list with VM last year?

- 2%                      None
- 1-5                      65%
- 6-10                      19%
- >10                      14%



# VolunteerMatch, 2006

On average, how many people responded to each listing?

- 2%     None
- 44%    1-5
- 26%    6-10
- 14%    11-15
- 14%    >15

- The key to Internet recruitment is being able to get back to inquiries quickly and begin the process of cultivating a relationship.



## 5. Recruitment is about motivational buttons

- Need
- Solution
- Fears
- Benefits



# Motivational appeals to seniors:

- Life is a continuing journey with never-ending opportunities.
- New bridges are being built to new generations - you can help.
- Your experience, wisdom and talent are needed and will be valued.
- Your freedom and autonomy will not be compromised.
- You can experience the unique satisfaction of a “relationship with a purpose” again.





Summing this all up

# SHIP TA CENTER TESTIMONIALS





# Overview

- **We asked Steve**, “How can we help SHIPs recruit volunteers at a national level?”
  - ...and then we took his advice
- **What did we do?**
  - Interviews with diverse volunteers from CA, IA, MI
  - Short videos from edited interview footage
- **Where will they be and when?**
  - SHIP Center website and You Tube channel (summer 2017)
  - *Coming later in 2017*: state-branded versions for each SHIP

Challenging  
Intellectually

Make a Difference

Variety



**Demonstration**

# Contact Us

- Steve McCurley, consultant
  - shm12@aol.com
- Ginny Paulson, SHIP TA Center director
  - gpaulson@shiptacenter.org, 319-358-9402
- Dennis Smithe, SHIP TA Center program development manager
  - dsmithe@shiptacenter.org, 319-874-1183
- SHIP Center General Information
  - Website: [www.shiptacenter.org](http://www.shiptacenter.org)
  - Email: [info@shiptacenter.org](mailto:info@shiptacenter.org)
  - Phone: 877-839-2679



# QUESTIONS?

*The production of this presentation was supported by Grant No. 90ST1001 from the Administration for Community Living (ACL). Its contents are solely the responsibility of the SHIP TA Center and do not necessarily represent the official views of ACL.*

