Everything You Think You Know About Recruiting Volunteers Is Wrong
What we’ll cover

- 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
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.
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%
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
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 YouTube channel (summer 2017)
- Coming later in 2017: state-branded versions for each SHIP
Challenging Intellectually

Make a Difference

Variety

Demonstration
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