

# Volunteer Retention

# Volunteer Toronto

## Who We Are

We are a charitable organization striving to increase the positive impact that volunteering has on the City of Toronto. We inspire, inform and connect volunteers and the organizations that need them.

## What We Do

We provide in-house, online and on-demand training and have a resource library covering a wide range of volunteer management topics.

## How We Learn

We stay up to date on current legislation and best practices, conduct original research, learn from sector experts, and get feedback from our extensive network of non-profits.

# Introduction

## Face Off!

StatsCan asked 47,100 households...

What were the top 3 reasons that people volunteer?

What were the top 3 reasons people didn't volunteer (or volunteer more)?

# Why Do People Volunteer?

- 93%** Make a contribution to community
- 77%** Use skills and experiences
- 60%** Personally affected by cause / mandate
- 49%** Explore personal strengths
- 47%** Network with others
- 39%** Because their friends volunteer
- 23%** Improve job opportunities
- 18%** Fulfill religious obligations or beliefs

# Why Don't People Volunteer?

- 65%** Do not have time
- 61%** Inability to commit long-term
- 56%** Prefer to give money instead of time
- 31%** “Nobody asked me”
- 31%** No interest in volunteering
- 27%** Did not know how to get involved
- 25%** Health problem or physically unable
- 19%** Financial cost of volunteering

# Motivations

Values

Career

New Skills

Social

Personal Growth

Avoid Guilty  
Feelings

Have you seen these motivations?  
How can you support these motivations?

# Getting to Know Motivations

Get to know your volunteer and their motivations!

Have a discussion about your volunteer's motivations!

## How to assess motivations

Selection  
option/text area  
on application

Screening;  
interviews,  
follow-ups, intros

Check-in  
regularly; in-  
person, group,  
surveys

# Retention & Attrition

## Volunteer Retention

Volunteers:

- Return to your organization
- Stay with your organization
- Renew their commitment
- See roles grow and change

## Volunteer Attrition

Volunteers:

- Leave & don't return
- Don't finish their term
- Leave & no replacement
- Become burnt out and/or unmotivated and stop volunteering



# Why Do Volunteers Leave?

Volunteers leaving your organization doesn't always mean your program is not successful!

## Volunteer:

- Finds a job
- Moves away
- Has limited access to transportation
- Is having life changes
- Is burnt out
- Isn't having needs met
- Simply moves on

**Volunteers leaving can sometimes be a cause for celebration!**

**Thank the volunteer for their work, offer an exit interview or survey and **move on!****

# Mission-Based Volunteer Roles

## Why It's Important

Volunteers want to contribute to your cause

Volunteers will effectively serve your organization

Volunteer roles will be meaningful

## What You Can Do

Identify link to mission in position descriptions

Reiterate the importance of roles

Communicate the link explicitly

# Communicate Impact

## Why It's Important

Helps volunteers understand the importance of their work

Helps volunteers see the bigger picture

## What You Can Do

Tell the story of your volunteer program

Share results of program evaluations

Allow volunteers to contribute their ideas

# Volunteer Goals

## Why It's Important

Makes roles personally meaningful

Increases satisfaction with role

## What You Can Do

Find the right fit

Track progress

Provide opportunities for advancement

What can you do?

# Giving Feedback

Volunteers should have the opportunity to give and receive feedback

Feedback should be both formal and informal:

*Informal:*

Observations  
Advice  
Recognition

*Formal:*

Meetings  
Performance reviews  
Follow-up

# Motivation as Retention Tool

Volunteers feel part of the team, growth is important

Volunteers see their own goals are respected & valued

Motivation

**Why volunteers don't volunteer *more***

- Not enough time
- Unable to make longer commitment
- Other factors affect motivation

# Avoiding Burnout

Fatigue or apathy that results from work that is stressful, emotionally draining, or demanding.

Exhaustion

Cynicism

Sense of  
inefficiency

Caused by

Emotionally  
draining work

Workload

Role  
ambiguity

Lack of voice

What does burnout  
look like to you?

# What's next? Recognition!

**Without recognition, volunteers feel...**

- Underappreciated
- Unnoticed
- Like their work isn't meaningful
- Low commitment and motivation

**With recognition, volunteers feel...**

- Valued
- Appreciated
- Like integral members of your team



Volunteer  
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