

# Recruiting Volunteers for Your Parent Organization

## *Follow these 3 Steps to Recruitment*

1. Create a Recruitment Plan
2. Develop a Recruitment Message
3. Implement the Recruitment Plan

## *Use the following principles when recruiting:*

- Create incentives for potential volunteers; don't just provide information about the organization.
- Be patient—recruitment takes time and requires multiple tools to achieve success.
- Make a plan for ongoing recruitment.
- **Evaluate** ways to access and connect with volunteers as you **test different tools**.
- “Brand” the organization's identity-use consistent messages, logos, and practices that help the public distinguish your organization from other groups helping students.
- Network with other organizations and their volunteer recruiters to keep your strategies fresh.
- Spend available recruitment time—only use methods that get the biggest bang for your buck of time

## *1. Create a Recruitment Plan...*

Members of your organization should brainstorm about the type of individuals needed for volunteer assignments. This exercise will be useful in developing recruitment messages. Ask the following questions and others pertinent to the organization:

- What qualities are needed in your volunteers?
- Who do you know that has these qualifications?
- What strategies will “reel these individuals in”? (this might be a personal invitation from someone they know or do they have a personal interest in the area you need volunteers)?
- How can we attract the right audience?
- How can we BEST access identified recruits? Can anyone in your network of personal contacts make contacts with recruits? (Face-to-face and phone contact usually work the best in recruitment.)
- What are better choices in written communication tools to access identified individuals (emails, newsletters, flyers, website announcements, Facebook)? Pick 2-3 of these strategies for each message.
- What are better choices in written communication tools to access identified individuals (emails, newsletters, flyers, website announcements, Facebook)? Identify 2-3 strategies for each message.
- What resistance could volunteers face to participating? (Examples: schedules, lack of time, transportation, childcare, shy personality) Can you think of solutions to these barriers?
- Will recruits have adequate and accurate information about your organization and the volunteer assignment? (Don't over do it unless they want to know more).

## *2. Develop a Compelling Volunteer Recruiting Message*

- Develop creative messages
- Include these 3 Elements for effective messages
  - ❖ State your need (see below for examples)
  - ❖ How the Volunteer Can Help
  - ❖ The Benefit to the Volunteer (this may be in the way students are helped by the volunteer work)

*Example: Message for the Special Olympics organization*

Less effective—“Special Olympics needs softball coaches for spring league.”

More creative and effective—“They have gloves, bats and softballs...but no coach. 75 boys and girls with special needs are waiting for a coach. Don't let them strike out. Join our Special Olympics Team! Call 1-800-GOLD today.

- Create an elevator speech about your organization that all members can use opportunities to promote the organization's work.
- Create messages with the same information as your elevator speech to use in various communication mediums (newsletters, brochures, flyers, email signatures, websites, Face book, Twitter, and others. )Tweak messages to be effective or meet standards in each of these mediums. For example, a fair amount of detail can be included in newsletters or brochures, but messages must be short and succinct for Facebook and Twitter (search each medium for specific requirements).
- Establish a schedule for sending out ongoing messages, updating websites, seeking feedback, analyzing your audience, etc.

### **3. Implement your recruitment plan ---Try it Out!**

- Train a team of recruiters  
Who should recruit each potential organization member?  
Successful recruiters are:
  - Happy in their volunteer work (not burned out or just looking for a replacement)
  - Enthusiastic (they are thinking “I am Sold Myself”)
  - Can articulate their interest in the organization's work in an inspiring way
  - Connected with the person or group being recruited
- Call or visit personally with potential recruits whenever possible!
- Create a recruitment packet of information from which everyone can glean information to remain consistent. (This will help build the organization's brand). The packet should include the following:
  - Job description
  - Team brochure
  - Personal story (ies) about why volunteering for the organization is rewarding
  - Other information that is pertinent to your organization.

### **Implement your recruitment plan ---Try it Out! (continued)**

- Try recruiting outside your normal circles, especially for community volunteers:
  - Put a request for Community Volunteers in local papers.
  - Ask local business and government leaders if they know of anyone who might be interested. Their social networks are often larger than the average individual's and their support may boost recruitment efforts.
  - Post a want ad in a central area of the school where parents/volunteers gather frequently.
  - Use social media networks such as Facebook to post requests for help on volunteer assignments.
  - Evaluate strategies after a designated period of time. Change strategies if recruitment hasn't improved in quantity or quality of volunteer efforts.

### **Using Social Media to Recruit Volunteers**

When recruiting volunteers with social media tools, many of the same principles apply as in “old-fashioned” recruiting. Some key differences are:

- **Increased tools to choose from** and potentially, a faster turn around in reaching volunteers or the public. Be aware—some tools' effectiveness may deteriorate more rapidly than traditional

communication methods if public interest wanes in their use. This is another reason to use at least 2-3 methods of communication in an ongoing fashion.

- **Interaction** occurs between potential recruits, the public, and the organization compared to organizations simply pushing information out and a **passive receipt** of information by end users. This can be useful in spreading need through the potentially broader social network than traditional networks.

### ***Make Decisions About Using Social Media***

- Conduct simple research of tools that look useful for accessing your organization's particular target audience. Research could include applicable tutorials, attending workshops, asking individuals that have used the tool you're interested in, and trying them out on a limited basis prior to full implementation).
- Consider the capacity of your organization or the ability to build capacity to delve into the use of social media tools more deeply.
- Choose to implement only those tools that your organization has the capacity to manage well.

### ***Implement Social Media tools***

- Methodically test those media tools that look most promising while continuing to use traditional methods. Some tools require persistent and frequent management.
- Implement new tools with commitment to using them as well as you can.
- Market, Market, Market the organization's chosen tools to increase the likelihood they'll yield positive results.
- Be patient if you encounter unexpected glitches while learning the system and while you wait for marketing to engage the public.
- Re-evaluate chosen tools after testing them for 3-6 months. Choose whether to phase out old tools or add them to the repertoire of recruitment strategies you will use.