

VCS Assembly Volunteering Event, Kirkley Hall 20th October 2015

Notes of Presentations

Peter Walls, Gentoo Group – The value of volunteering to businesses and the communities they serve

- Importance of putting customers first
- Getting the business community to make a difference
- Gentoo values very important and drive organisation. Part of day job to be in communities. Values and culture require collaboration.
- Need to help companies to provide support in communities and use their skills. Important to trickle down wealth and resources which can be achieved by staff giving generously of their time. Businesses want to give back and struggle how to use it.
- What do staff get out of volunteering – improved relationships, greater sense of happiness, flexibility to engage and use their talents, improved physical and mental health, helps with careers
- Businesses exist with the permission of the community. Engagement is good profit, staff learn more when out volunteering. Better grounded staff.
- Businesses are not sure how to go about volunteering.
- Important to measure the outcomes of volunteering, need to show that benefitting and making a difference. Opportunity to make the most powerful impact in local settings.
- Volunteering not appreciated for what it can do and need to demonstrate value. Three things drive human behaviour – autonomy, mastery – getting better and cause – having the drive to do it

Jan Jones, Barnado's – Recruiting Volunteers

- Clear understanding of what you want
- Thinking about your roles
- Think about the skills you need and how many volunteers you want
- Can you offer expenses?
- Think who will recruit and support that volunteer and interview
- May be a different person who supports them
- Advertise – shops, friends, colleagues,
- Respond to enquiries quickly
- Complete an application form and get an emergency contact
- Safeguarding volunteers
- Be aware of any health problems they have
- Obtain two references

- Carry out DBS checks
- Build up a relationship so that they know that they can come to you
- Has to be something in it for them too and to make sure they have a good time.

Terri Bearhope, Seton Care Befrienders – Supporting remote volunteers

- Support keeps volunteers
- Allow to off load and moan to release stress
- Ask niggling questions
- Need to feel appreciated – belonging, listened to and feel appreciated
- Motivated
- Remote – can be difficult to get what they need, as not face to face easy to forget about
- Have to remember individuals with emotions

What can we do to manage them?

- Communication
- Mentor
- Group support meetings
- Post paper copies if not online
- Ask if happy to receive texts
- Need to spend some money – costs money even when remote, get together, feed people
- Make sure website works and is up to date. Include photos of staff and volunteers

Notes of Workshops

How do you ensure that volunteers have a good experience?

- Award ceremony/evenings
- Treat volunteers as equals- same training, same opportunities as staff
- Text messages/emails/phone calls – thanks/communication
- Respite/social activities/rewards/spend time together. Common theme/ discuss experiences
- Supervisions
- Welcome pack – info on what they can do, what charity is about – pre – induction follow up calls. Inductions
- Training – develop cv's /skills, get together/share/ nice lunch
- Policies and procedures – awards and incentives, expectations/commitment - volunteer and organisation, safeguarding
- Handbook – boundaries, what you can and can't do
- Specific tasks / role descriptions
- Made aware of what to expect, quiet times
- Create roles – stagger volunteers across the week, shift times 4 – 8 hours
- Expenses – lunch/travel expenses
- Anonymous feedback forms
- Update volunteers – newsletters/emails
- Smooth/timetabled recruitment process
- Encourage new roles and suggestions
- Rewards – residentials once a year, birthday cards/Christmas cards
- Volunteer week/trustee week – celebrate events, snacks
- Just say 'thank you'

How do you attract and retain volunteers

- Public sector takes a role
- Volunteer Coordinators
- Never remove paid employment, social problems
- Small business running at optimum example engineering at least 60% 40% split.
- Duplication of services –some volunteers not suited to one job passed to another. Volunteer portal
- Problems not one stop - volunteers need to be able to find information immediately
- CVA can direct volunteers to various organisations
- Most volunteers are middle aged and above, younger workers need to be enticed to volunteer. Younger people are volunteering, its access routes to work. Younger volunteers can also recruit older members.
- Money – all join together to attract funding instead of single bids.

- Marketing

What should organisations expect from volunteers?

- Reliability
- Clarity of expectations (on both sides)
- Trial period
- Not using to replace paid staff
- Understanding of their role/ role description
- Relevant skills/expertise
- Honest feedback – say if they feel they are ‘taken advantage of’
- Commitment to complete paperwork
- Attendance at training
- Act as advocate/ambassador
- Impact/ideas about developing the organisation/project
- Flexibility to consider/undertake other roles
- Loyalty and confidentiality
- Enjoy it!
- Feel valued

How do you raise awareness and market the role and skills required of trustees?

Trustee roles

- Tend to be presented in a boring way – doesn’t attract people
- Don’t need too much information
- Change the role terminology - finance officer, steering group instead of committee. Less formal language
- Need to sell the organisation and guidance on how to present this, no jargon!
- Educating people about VCS and how it works
- National ‘Do it’ website to see how others present information
- Some organisations give heavy weighting status to the role – can work both ways! Narrows market.
- Management Board can be exclusive – not friendly
- Buddying scheme to overcome this.
- Skills match – matching skills to roles
- Trustee training available with VCS. Charity commissioners give guidance
- Turn things around. Someone interested in volunteering and see what role they can fulfil
- Needs to be a joint approach- create interest and then skills match
- Trustees development is like community development approach. Don’t go out and buy the first shoes you see, shop around.

- Most trustees start out as volunteers, we need to recognise this and work with it – home grow!
- Fun AGM's – celebrate/ inform/activities
- Mentoring – support people in roles
- Make it interesting – guidance from Northumberland CVA
- Community Development process – bringing volunteers along with the organisation, skills match, make it normal – not pandering to status
- Need a WOW factor element
- Rural areas particular issues – status or pressure from others is common, older population
- Incomers – good resource more willing to get involved, can bring its own issues
- Transport a rural issue/core costs, this limits who can get involved, or timings/venue
- Virtual volunteering – website, newsletter, using technology to develop this.
- Need a good chairperson- if you have a bad one how do you get rid of them?
- Need to get the right people in the right role
- Some potential trustees having come from a professional background do not want responsibility.
- Younger people – older people can put them off. Tends to be tokenistic, not coming from young peoples point of view. Encourage through colleges and projects.