



Dear Colleague:

July 1, 2013

Thank you for attending the "Smarties" session at the Conference on Volunteering and Service a few weeks ago. As promised, below are 38 suggestions from the table discussions. There are many ideas I love and will certainly be sharing them with clients. Perhaps you'll be sparked with a few ideas to try as well.

Bringing dynamic engagement to our organizations takes time and patience. One suggestion: start with a small staff/volunteer leader team and do a pilot project that meets a vital agency need. With the pilot's success, others will likely want to also utilize volunteers in new ways.

Please visit www.volunteerfrontier.com anytime to access my forms and other free resources to help you on your journey to increased and dynamic volunteer engagement. I am available for free consultations. I also provide keynotes, training sessions, volunteer engagement assessments, and coaching should you be interested.

All the best, *Reed*

Reed Dewey of Volunteer Frontier

Group Question:

What steps have you taken or want to take to move volunteer engagement to the next level?

- ✓ **Create a "Volunteam."** Have leaders recruit their peers and create a culture of volunteerism. Have project leaders take the lead and do the legwork. Hold them accountable.
- ✓ **Create your own volunteer engagement assessment tool** for your organization to see where you need to expand/change.
- ✓ Have **staff/direct supervisors play key role in putting together relevant volunteer position descriptions** - yet encourage them to have some level of flexibility and a personalized approach with volunteers.
- ✓ Get a **consultant to facilitate the creation of a volunteer strategic plan** and present the plan to the departments in the organization.

- ✓ **Utilize our website better** and leverage social media to help measure the number of visitors and interactions.
- ✓ **Guide people to volunteer in their area of passion.** Use a skill/interest assessment to help find a good fit for volunteers. Recognize that volunteers may not always want to serve in the area of their professional expertise.
- ✓ **Provide easily accessible online management resources** for volunteers and staff.
- ✓ **Develop levels of leaders** and support them through training. Over time work to build ever higher levels of commitment to the agency.
- ✓ Use **skilled volunteers to train and support different levels of volunteers.** Embrace their experiences and skills.
- ✓ **Create new volunteer roles** by engaging a skilled facilitator to work with our volunteer/staff team.
- ✓ Treat volunteers as staff. **Help volunteers see the "career path"** (example: American Red Cross). Help promote volunteers who are interested to the next level.
- ✓ Focus on creating relevant **and compelling position descriptions AND developing more volunteer teams.**
- ✓ **To help build staff and senior management buy-in,** share concrete success stories of skilled and leader volunteers. **Show how volunteers have been capacity builders or service delivery producers.** Be open to concerns about volunteers in new roles, but push back with specific victories.
- ✓ **Create a volunteer leadership program** which is a tiered system that develops our volunteers and also recognizes them. Use leads to help with the leadership program.
- ✓ **Have co-captain volunteer leaders** who complement each others' skill sets and share/divide up responsibilities.
- ✓ Consider having **competition between volunteer teams** and neighborhoods to incentivize volunteerism.
- ✓ Check out www.Seattleworks.org which came up with a **unified clear communication strategic plan that** emphasizes the different views of stakeholders - including volunteers. Look under "about us" at the top of the webpage and download their strategic plan. See also their pie chart of leader engagement at <http://www.seattleworks.org/programs>.
- ✓ **Have senior staff leaders interview volunteers** prior to giving them a leadership role. Have senior staff be involved in creating new volunteer leadership positions.
- ✓ **Create a volunteer led "smart team" to expand your organization's impact.** Help staff realize that they can give up some control to get more of a return on investment.

- ✓ Get local **businesses to engage their employees to be involved in a volunteer engagement** training series that culminates in a service project at the end of the training.
- ✓ Have **staff training sessions on volunteer management 1 or 2 times next year**. Incorporate staff feedback into these trainings to see if sessions are seen as useful and if staff plan on utilizing volunteers better or in new ways.
- ✓ Ask **leader volunteers to engage the businesses** for which they are employed to be more involved.
- ✓ **Provide volunteer management training to other agencies who send volunteers**. Help these agencies better recruit and screen volunteers and to manage expectations.
- ✓ **Select volunteers to become mentors to new volunteers**. This gives them a leadership role.
- ✓ **With younger volunteers - have happy hours** with partner agencies and encourage volunteers to share expertise with each other.
- ✓ **Create LinkedIn campaigns for skilled volunteers**.
- ✓ Make sure **to follow up with everyone** who's expressed interest in our agency's work. Keep track of all phone calls, e-mails and as possible social media engagement.
- ✓ **Combine our agency's outreach efforts with our volunteer engagement recruitment**. Also look at what other groups are doing to attract new volunteers .
- ✓ Create **volunteer peer to peer fundraising pages** using online platforms to connect volunteers.
- ✓ Create **more opportunities for volunteers to network**.
- ✓ Strive to **keep volunteers actively involved** at all levels. Work to prevent volunteer drop off.
- ✓ **Sponsor programs that come from ideas the volunteers pitch**. They shape it, organization provides structure and resources as needed.
- ✓ **Create "who knows who" lists to target the recruitment of skilled volunteers**. Ask volunteers and staff to think of who might be interested in serving so when there is a need, prospective volunteers are at the ready.
- ✓ **Create an APP** for volunteers to be able to do a self-assessment of their experience.
- ✓ **Create a volunteer services committee**.
- ✓ **Create a "Volunteer Recruitment Center"** on the agency website.
- ✓ **Provide tours of the organization** that is focused on the work and the mission - with no volunteer or financial asks at the time. **Provide tangible stories** about how the agency is making a difference.
- ✓ **Use photos to document the before and after** of the work that volunteers do. Capture the stories from clients and volunteers who've seen the work.