



Power Booster

DuPage Association of Volunteer Administration

Attracting Young Volunteers

Ideas from article by Kerrie Spinks in Turn Your Organization Into A Volunteer Magnet. Kerrie has worked in the volunteer sector for over 9 years in consultancy, training and research.

During 2001, I was on an advisory committee with a young woman who said, "Don't expect the young people to be enthusiastic volunteers if they are treated without respect and are constantly told what to do, how to do it and when to do it, without having any input into the decision making processes within the organization." The question I would pose is *how many of us are really brave enough to involve young volunteers in decision making within our organizations?* In many cases the reality is that older volunteers are not involved in decision making, so the young people are certainly not going to be. We keep hearing that young people are our future and the leaders of tomorrow; well why not start tomorrow early and let them do some leading now? Each organization could consider these issues:

- Have you analyzed the volunteer tasks to make them more attractive to young people?
- Have you broken volunteer tasks down into small chunks that can be completed in a short time frame (thus giving opportunities for short term volunteering)?
- Have you considered the existing skills of your current team and then looked for skills gaps (i.e. Web page or brochure development) that could be appealing areas for young people?
- Have you looked for intergenerational opportunities for skill sharing amongst your volunteers (such as matching a technologically challenged older person who has excellent organizational skills with a young person who has the technological skills—both learn during the process!)
- Have you ever asked young people why they have never considered volunteering for you?

Attracting Retired Professionals

Ideas from an article by Mac Benoy in Turn Your Organization Into A Volunteer Magnet. Mac has 3 years RePro experience, and is an IT lecturer and civil servant and currently volunteering at the Red Cross and Bureau of Meteorology.

The retired professional (RePro) baby boomer is a resource of great potential for the not-for-profit sector and those who appeal to their needs may gain the value of an expensive consultant at no cost! A useful way to understand the needs of retired professionals is to refer to an age-old management theory called the *Hierarchy of Needs* defined by Abraham Maslow. Typically, retired professionals are people who have enjoyed their working experience but are now financially secure. However, the day the RePro retires, many experience a dramatic loss of their motivators. Through their careers, daily attendance at work was a source of friendship, self-esteem, achievement, creativity and problem-solving. You can attract RePros by configuring volunteer positions that will directly replenish the loss of their motivator needs.

- Offer jobs that are interesting, creative and challenging.
- Offer them jobs that are social - imbed them physically within the paid workforce.
- Many will respond well to opportunities to grow professionally by applying their skills in a different field. For example I am working with a former accountant who's setting up a sales plan for a publication, a botanist who is managing a database and a scientist who's part of an oral history project.

RePros spent most of their working life operating autonomously

- Brief them on what you want done, allow them to make suggestions and negotiate a satisfactory outcome.
- Involve them in decisions.
- If they work within a group of volunteers, allow them to be self-managing by choosing their own team-members and leaders.

RePros expect to be treated as professionals:

- Allow them to work closely with your management.
- Provide essential resources such as desk space, IT access, stationery, etc.

RePros want time flexibility to schedule-in their other interests:

- Configure project-style work that is flexible, short-term and time defined.
- Consider including virtual opportunities.

