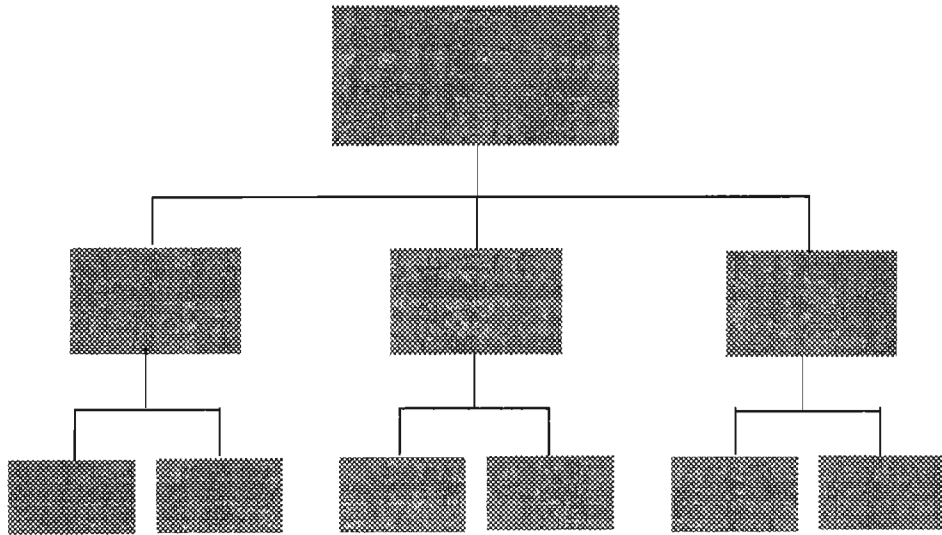


Chapter 1

The Position of Manager of Volunteers



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The Position of Manager of Volunteers

This section is primarily a resource for organizations setting up new volunteer programs, organizations launching an effort to hire a Manager of Volunteers, and for volunteer leaders who are feeling lack of clarity about their job responsibilities.

Purposes of this chapter:

- * To understand the changing, challenging and significant role of a Manager of Volunteers
- * To explore the options for staffing the position
- * To identify organizational issues that may be affecting the impact of the Manager of Volunteers
- * To examine the job functions, skills and qualities of a Manager of Volunteers

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Thought-Provoking Questions Regarding the Position of Manager of Volunteers

- 1. What title have you given to the person who is responsible for the volunteer program?**
- 2. Do you have a written job description for your Manager of Volunteers? Does it accurately portray the responsibilities and functions of the job?**
- 3. If the person has other key responsibilities within the organization, how many hours is he/she expected to work on the volunteer program? Is this reasonable as it relates to the expectations for the job?**
- 4. Where is the Manager of Volunteers placed on the organizational chart? What message does this send to the organization?**
- 5. What staff support or agency resources does the Manager of Volunteers receive? (i.e. clerical, P.R., fundraising, etc.)**
- 6. If an in-house person was selected to be the new Manager of Volunteers, was his/her time extended or was he/she relieved of other tasks to be able to carry out the duties of this position?**
- 7. What is the average length of time a Manager of Volunteers stays in that position in your organization?**
- 8. What volunteer management training and resources are made available to your Manager of Volunteers?**
- 9. Does the Manager of Volunteers have a budget for his/her program?**

The Challenging Role of the Manager of Volunteers

The job of today's Manager of Volunteers can be challenging and rewarding but often the position is misunderstood with respect to: (1) the professional and personal skills needed to be an effective Manager of Volunteers and (2) the administrative and staff support needed by the Manager of Volunteers to implement a successful program. The following points highlight some of the unique characteristics and challenges faced by today's Managers of Volunteers.

- Managers of Volunteers have a challenging job of people management, with added complications stemming from the fact that they do not have a pay check with which to reward their workers at the end of a work period. They must become experts at understanding and providing a motivational environment for each volunteer. Thus, in many ways, they need to be more skilled as managers than those supervising salaried employees.
- The Manager of Volunteers is frequently given low status and low pay for this very difficult job, thus creating the likelihood for frequent burnout and high job turnover.
- Today's Manager of Volunteers is involved in a fiercely competitive market for the use of people's free time. He/she must have a product (volunteer job) that is so enticing that the prospective volunteer would choose that activity over any other use of his/her free time.
- The profile of the volunteer is changing and the Manager of Volunteers must be able to lead the organization through the transition to new ways of utilizing volunteer resources.
- The Manager of Volunteers' job, unlike any except the Executive Director's, involves responsibilities on both the inside and outside of the organization.
- The Manager of Volunteers must be adept at supervising and keeping records on many types of people, working on different schedules at all levels of the organization.
- A good Manager of Volunteers must be able to translate what he/she knows about volunteerism to his/her organization. This requires excellent communication and training skills.
- Managing volunteers frequently involves working long and flexible hours, since many volunteer events are not held during normal working hours now that so many volunteers are employed.
- Managers of Volunteers frequently do not get many resources or training to assist them in their role.
- The job of a Manager of Volunteers can be a lonely one as he/she infrequently has support personnel or anyone within the organization who performs a similar role.

Source: Stallings, Betty B., Building Better Skills

Options for Staffing A Manager of Volunteers' Position

Agency budgets, priorities and/or staff availability (paid and volunteer) generally impact an organization's choice of one of the following models for staffing the Manager of Volunteers position.

1. Full-Time Position as Manager of Volunteers

The ideal - but only infrequently does a small organization have this luxury.

2. Part-time Position, Manager of Volunteers (with no other duties)

The value of this option is that the person will not be splitting time with other activities in the organization.

3. Part-time Position, Manager of Volunteers (with other major areas of responsibility in the agency)

Frequently in this situation, volunteer management is given as an add-on responsibility and the staff person primarily sees him/herself in other role(s), squeezing in volunteer management as time allows.

4. Decentralized Model

All staff members recruit and manage their own volunteers, as needed or desired. (Very little quality control, usually very disjointed efforts.)

5. Volunteer Position, Manager of Volunteers

These are difficult folks to find. They need time, skills and dedication. Agency must supply them with the necessary resources to succeed. This may be a shared position among a number of volunteers.

Issues Impacting a Manager of Volunteers' Effectiveness

Position title

In *101 Ideas for Volunteer Programs* (1988), Sue Vineyard and Steve McCurley illustrate the variety of ways one can name the person who is in charge of his/her volunteer program. Picking one name from any column, one instantly sees the variety possible:

1. Volunteer		1. Development		1. Coordinator
2. Community		2. Resources		2. Administrator
3. Human	+	3. Affairs	+	3. Director
4. Personnel		4. Involvement		4. Officer
5. Field		5. Services		5. Manager
		6. Relations		6. Specialist
				7. Chair

Some tips to consider in name selection

1. It is confusing to outsiders if you call a person Volunteer Manager, as it may appear that he/she, too, is a volunteer when he/she is most often paid staff. It is best to call the position - Director, Manager or Coordinator of Volunteers.
2. If a person has several roles, give him/her two or three separate titles and calling cards to avoid confusion and the sense that the volunteer job is an insignificant add-on.
3. The title you select frequently indicates where this person will fit in the organizational chart. Staying tuned to today's titles, it would seem that the pecking order from bottom to top would be:

Coordinator of Volunteers

Manager of Volunteers

Director (or Administrator) of Volunteers

Time allotted for the job

The amount of time allocated for staff to manage the volunteer program says a great deal about the weighted importance of this effort. Assigning a person 5-10 hours a week to develop and direct a volunteer program of any size is unrealistic. This situation usually occurs when the person appointing or hiring someone to perform this job does not understand the skills and responsibilities of the job.

If you are initiating a program, or wishing to alter yours to make it more realistic, visit similar organizations which appear to have an excellent volunteer program and determine how much staff time is involved in managing it. (Your local Volunteer Center should be able to direct you to such an organization.)

Placement of the position in the organization

Where the volunteer staff person is placed on the organizational chart gives a significant clue as to the relative importance given to this aspect of the organization. A real distinction appears to be between whether the person is considered to be on the management or on the support staff. Organizations in which the person is considered on par with other management staff, in position and wages, will attract the best qualified people and frequently have the most outstanding programs. The decision of Manager of Volunteers' placement frequently stems from the relative value placed on volunteer efforts within an organization.

Budget

Frequently, in small organizations, the staff person in charge of volunteers must "beg, borrow or steal" any funds to support the volunteer program. The message given by the organization is, "Volunteers are free." We know this is not true. Even in the smallest of programs, it is recommended that there be a special budget for expenses such as travel, recognition, printing, etc. Folding the expenses into other programs will never allow you to determine how much money is available to support volunteer services.

Staff support

An important question to ask when developing the position of Manager of Volunteers is, "How much staff support will be available to him/her?" Minimally, there should be some clerical support for a designated number of hours a week. The important thing is to make certain that clerical people are aware of this time. Often they can become resentful because these duties are simply added on to their full-time job. One clear way to destroy a volunteer program is to thrust staff unwillingly into provision of the volunteer program without providing training and support to them.

Job Functions of a Manager of Volunteers

- Program Planning and Administration**
- Recruitment and Public Relations**
- Interviewing and Screening**
- Orientation and Training of Volunteers and Staff**
- Supervision**
- Motivation and Recognition**
- Evaluation**
- Recordkeeping and Reporting**
- Other Responsibilities**

Skills and Qualities to Seek in a Manager of Volunteers

Depending on your particular organization, some of these skills and qualities may be more important than others. Thus, you may wish to prioritize them in relation to your specific needs.

- **Strong management and organizational skills**
- **Strong interpersonal and communication skills**
- **Enthusiasm about volunteering**
- **Experience as a volunteer**
- **Good P.R. skills**
- **Public speaking ability**
- **Flexible, adaptable personality**
- **Time and stress management skills**
- **Good listener**
- **Familiar with or readily able to connect with community resources**
- **Successful leadership experience**
- **Administrative experience**
- **Staff training, interviewing and supervision experience**
- **Other qualities and skills needed in your setting**

Manager of Volunteers

Sample Job Description:

MAJOR RESPONSIBILITIES:

Create, direct and manage a volunteer program

- 1. Plan, develop, implement and evaluate the agency/organization volunteer program.**
- 2. Provide volunteer management training for paid and unpaid staff who work with and/or supervise volunteers.**
- 3. Investigate, create and develop meaningful and appropriate volunteer positions within the agency/organization.**
- 4. Recruit and place volunteers in appropriate volunteer positions within the agency/organization.**
- 5. Advocate increased agency-wide commitment to volunteerism.**

Adapted from: *The Volunteer Administrator... Complete your Management Team*, p.7, published by: *Volunteer Administrator's Network of Central Ohio*, 1987

Director of Volunteer Services

Sample Job Description:

Reports to:

(designated administrator)

Supervises:

Volunteer Services Department personnel including primary responsibility for all in-service volunteers throughout the organization.

Basic function:

Provides direction, coordination, and consultation for all volunteer services programs within the organization. Plans, develops, and manages volunteer services so that the organization will derive full benefit from the important resources available to it through a consistently well-managed corps of volunteers that will be a valuable resource in achieving the organization's mission.

Duties and responsibilities:

- Evaluates the need for volunteer services within the organization in conjunction with the requesting department.
- Directs the recruitment, interviewing, selection, and placement of volunteers to meet the organization's needs.
- Develops and supervises volunteer orientation, training, and performance evaluation to ensure consistent, high quality service to the organization.
- Develops goals and objectives for the Volunteer Services Department and monitors progress toward their achievement.
- Directs the development of a department manual containing policies and procedures and reviews the material periodically in order to make necessary revision on a timely basis.
- Prepares and administers the department's budget.
- Directs the development of written assignment descriptions and procedures for volunteer guidance and coordination of volunteer services.
- Serves as a consultant to administration and other departments in areas relating to volunteerism.
- Directs the development of appropriate recognition, retention, and motivation programs for volunteers.

- Plans and schedules volunteer service placements and changes in assignments.
- Maintains appropriate volunteer personnel records and reports to document volunteer services and hours.
- Communicates regularly with administration regarding volunteer services in the organization.
- Establishes and maintains good relationships with professional peers and participates in relevant continuing education programs to enhance professional growth.
- Keeps informed about current provincial and federal laws that apply to the organization and volunteer services.

Required education and skills:

- A baccalaureate degree preferred, with a major in the behavioral sciences, personnel administration, business management, or communications.
- Prior experience of three to five years in supervision or management, preferably in a similar organization.
- The ability to relate to persons of all ages and of diverse backgrounds, skills, and abilities.
- A high level of verbal and written communication skills.
- A demonstrated commitment to volunteerism, which could include actual volunteer experience.
- Management and organizational skills to carry out the responsibilities of the position.

Source: *Strategies For Success in Volunteer Service Administration*, pp.19 & 20, published by: *The Ohio Society of Directors of Volunteer Services*, 1990

Continuing Professional Development

To remain current about the skills needed in this career, Managers of Volunteers need to annually assess their skills and deficiencies as they relate to this job. With the assistance of their job supervisor, they can develop a plan to enhance their professional development. Volunteer management training opportunities are available through Canadian and American organizations. The Volunteer Centres of Edmonton, Calgary, Vancouver, Winnipeg, and Toronto all offer basic and advanced training in volunteer management. The AVA (Association For Volunteer Administration) offers national and regional trainings in the United States. The Points of Light Foundation National Conference is another excellent educational opportunity. Your local Volunteer Centre is a good source of information on regional training opportunities and may also have a lending library of books and videos in the volunteer management field.

Further References

The position of Manager of Volunteers

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