

SCRIPT - Empowering Through Volunteering

Slide 1: Introduction

Hello, everyone. Welcome to today's training session 'Empowering through Volunteering: Your Guide to Starting a Volunteer Program'. My name is Marta Driscoll and I'll be guiding you through the essential components of establishing and managing a successful volunteer program.

Slide 2: Start at the Beginning

When developing a volunteer program for your organization, whether it be a local government or a non-profit, you need to start with your why, and then quickly transition to the who, what, when, where, and how. Before considering any type of program where you will be engaging human capital, you must be very clear on the why or the mission of the organization as well as the outcomes you are seeking to achieve. As we move forward in this presentation, I will assume that your organization has done the hard work and is clear on its mission.

Slide 3: Objectives

My hope for this presentation today is that you walk away with the:

1. Understanding of the key concepts of an established volunteer program.
2. The ability identify the major challenges and critical issues associated with volunteer programs.
3. To provide you with a few key takeaways to get you started.

Understanding these objectives is crucial because they will help us design and implement effective volunteer programs that enhance our capacity to serve our communities.

Slide 4: The Value of Volunteer programs

Your why will guide you, and their why will lead volunteers to you. But that is not enough. Volunteer programs are incredibly valuable to both government and nonprofit organizations. They augment our workforce without additional financial burden, which is particularly important in times of budget constraints. Volunteers help enhance community engagement and improve public relations, making our organizations more connected and trusted within the communities we serve. By improving service delivery and operational efficiency, volunteer programs allow us to do more with less. As HR managers, understanding how to leverage volunteers effectively connects directly to our roles in enhancing team capacity and community involvement.

Slide 5: Nonprofits & Local Governments Environment

Nonprofits and local governments often operate under fiscal constraints and have limited resources. This makes it imperative to engage the community effectively to support our mission. Volunteer programs are a strategic way to bridge resource gaps while fostering community involvement. For example, during a community event, volunteers can assist with everything from setup and coordination to providing services, thus reducing costs and increasing community engagement.

Slide 6: All successful programs start with understanding the financial constraints and the resource availability within the organization before seeking outside help. Without clearly defined objectives, what could have been a beautiful garden of potential volunteer energy will quickly turn into a weed-filled lawn overgrown with dandelions of resentment.

Slide 7: Dandelions

And no matter how beautiful they are in this sunset photo, few of us want to live with a lawn filled with dandelions especially those of resentment.

Slide 8: Key Components of Volunteer Programs

How do we avoid resentment and failure? We first define the components of a volunteer program.

Key components include:

1. Recruitment and retention strategies
2. Training and development
3. Management and supervision
4. Impact measurement and evaluation

The importance of such programs cannot be overstated—they help us align volunteer activities with our mission and objectives.

For instance, effective recruitment involves clear communication of volunteer roles and leveraging various channels such as social media and community partnerships.

Slide 9: Major Challenges in Volunteer Programs

Starting and managing a volunteer program comes with its own set of challenges. Recruitment and retention can be particularly tough—finding dedicated volunteers and keeping them engaged requires ongoing effort. Training and development is another critical area; we need to provide comprehensive and continuous training to ensure volunteers are equipped with the

necessary skills. Coordination and supervision are essential, as managing volunteers effectively can be time-consuming. Lastly, navigating legal and ethical considerations, such as compliance with liability coverage and background checks, is vital to protect both the volunteers and our organization.

Slide 10: Critical Issues for Managers

There are several critical issues we must be aware of as we develop and manage our volunteer programs.

1. Clear role definition is key to avoiding confusion and ensuring efficiency—volunteers need to know exactly what is expected of them.
2. Resource allocation is another important factor; we must ensure we have the necessary funding, materials, and staff to support our volunteers.
3. Understanding volunteer motivation is crucial for keeping them engaged and committed to our cause.
4. Performance evaluation helps us measure the impact of our volunteers and identify areas for improvement.
5. Finally, promoting diversity and inclusion ensures our programs are accessible and welcoming to all community members.

Slide 11: Take Aways

In summary, there are two key take aways from today's training. First, strategic volunteer management is essential. This involves careful planning and continuous management to align volunteer activities with our organizational goals. Second, building strong relationships with the community and volunteers is crucial for sustained support. Engaging with our community and maintaining a positive environment for our volunteers will help us achieve our mission more effectively. For example, regularly recognizing volunteer contributions and providing opportunities for personal growth can significantly enhance volunteer satisfaction and retention.

Slide 12: Additional Resources

Finally in addition to this short training video please check out the 3 page hand out that identifies all 10 Key volunteer management concepts with question to guide your program development. As well as one page pro /con list for utilizing volunteers in your organization for when you begin the conversation with your team to establish whether engaging volunteers is the right path for you.

Slide 13: Questions & Discussion

Thank you for your attention. If you have any questions about this topic you can reach me at mdrisco@udel.edu.