



Quick Tips for Volunteer Management

Findings from the NSGVP¹ provide insight into volunteer management in Canada. They also suggest some steps that can be taken to develop or expand volunteer management programs. These Quick Tips have been taken from the resource manual, *Volunteering Numbers: Using the NSGVP for Volunteer Management*. Available Online at <http://www.nsgvp.org/n-vm-ca.htm>.

🍁 Ask

Most volunteers became involved because they were personally asked — by someone in the organization (43%), by a friend or relative (10%) or by an employer (4%). On the other hand, one in three non-volunteers reported that they hadn't got involved because *no one had personally asked them*.

🍁 Start Your volunteer search close to home

The vast majority of volunteers (96%) give their time out of a belief in the cause espoused by the organization; two-thirds get involved because they or someone they know has been personally affected by the cause. Who has expressed an interest in your organization? Who does your organization touch? Ask these people for some of their time.

🍁 Target groups that don't fit the "typical" volunteer profile

The typical volunteer is a 35-44 year-old woman. If you rely heavily on one type of volunteer, branch out. Youth is the fastest growing segment of the volunteer population. Those who attend a place of worship regularly tend to volunteer more often and more hours. New Canadians volunteer to get connected with their new community and to learn job skills.

🍁 Involve young people - the long-term payoff is terrific

Whereas 31% of Canadians as a whole volunteered, this rose to 40% for those who volunteered while they were young.

🍁 Be flexible

Time is a precious commodity for most people. Among those who were not volunteers, 69% cited lack of extra time as a barrier and 50% cited unwillingness to make a year-round commitment. Consider short-term assignments, family volunteering, volunteer placement-sharing, and even virtual volunteering.

🍁 Communicate the benefits of volunteering

The NSGVP provides good information on what people gain from their volunteer experience. Use this to shape your volunteer recruitment message. Will your volunteers gain specialized knowledge (two-thirds of volunteers cited this as a benefit of volunteer activity); will they gain organizational skills (cited as a benefit by half of volunteers); will they learn better communication skills (cited as a benefit by two-thirds of volunteers); will they learn interpersonal skills (as reported by 75% of volunteers)? Many of these benefits are directly transferable to the workplace and can help in job searches and career advancement.

Employee groups can be a good source of volunteers

Not only are many of the benefits of volunteering job-related, but many employers recognize this and support their employees by allowing them to use business facilities and equipment for volunteer activity (27%), take time off work to volunteer (24%) and modify their hours to allow for volunteer activity (22%). This information can be incorporated into a message that aims to recruit employee volunteers into your organization.

Tie recognition to motivation to tailor meaningful thank-you's for your volunteers

The NSGVP makes it clear that some people volunteer for job readiness skills, some are motivated by a desire to learn, and others do it because they believe in the cause. Take this into account when it comes time to recognize your volunteers. If a volunteer wants to acquire job-related skills, supply them with a reference letter that outlines their skills. If a volunteer is motivated by a desire for more knowledge, give them an opportunity to attend a conference or workshop. Plan a thank-you tea or dinner for cause-motivated volunteers.

I. Findings from the NSGVP are based on reports of charitable giving and volunteering over the one-year period from November 1, 1996 to October 31, 1997 by Canadians aged 15 and older.



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More information on the results of the NSGVP, including the full text of the highlight report *Caring Canadians, Involved Canadians*, is available online at our Web site: www.nsgvp.org

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