How to Get the Best from Volunteers

An increasing number of organizations recognize the added value of volunteer involvement. Prospective volunteers are also customers who can choose from a multitude of alternatives in the volunteer marketplace. Once you’ve successfully secured a volunteer’s support, it is important to ensure that the benefits of volunteering continue to outweigh the costs. Satisfied volunteers can be strong advocates for an organization’s mission and persuasive partners on a volunteer recruitment team. Once you lose a volunteer, it’s hard to get him or her back.

➤ Provide Meaningful Work
  - Make their work meaningful and never waste their time.
  - Provide orientations that link volunteer assignments to the broader mission of the organization.
  - Create positions that are diverse in tasks.

➤ Show Them Respect
  - Never require anything from them that you can’t enforce.
  - Provide them with clear instructions and the necessary tools to perform the work expected.
  - Accept their recommendations and take their advice.

➤ Support Career Enhancement
  - Help volunteers acquire new skills and relate these skills to the marketplace.
  - Provide opportunities for leadership advancement.
  - Offer classes on resume writing and job interviewing.

➤ Offer Personal Growth
  - Let them grow with the program.
  - Give them opportunities that they might not get in the marketplace.

➤ Show Recognition
  - Show your appreciation often and in ways that are specific to the individual being recognized.

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