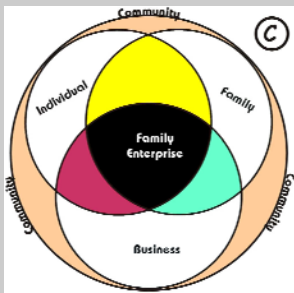




Enterprising Rural FamiliesTM

This newsletter is an instrument of the *Enterprising Rural Families: Making It Work* program of the University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service. For further information concerning the Enterprising Rural Families program or on-line course contact information@eRuralFamilies.org or go to <http://eRuralFamilies.org/>.

TIP OF THE MONTH:



Remember to view and work with all the components of your family business as parts of the whole. Even though a family business has separate parts, each is intertwined or overlapped by the others.

Families are made up of individuals—each with their own desires, needs, skills, strengths and weaknesses.

Individuals are grouped together in a family. Families are based on common ancestry, but also generate multiple interactions. Some relationships provide support and enhancement of each other's skills, some may create frustration and annoyance, and some may be downright detrimental to a productive working relationship.

All of these dynamics are a daily part of the structure that is known as the “family business” and cannot be ignored. Successful family businesses recognize the holistic nature of the individuals, family, and business, and their interactions and overlapping natures, providing room for various strengths and differences.

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Volunteers: A Vital Human Resource

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Volunteers often play a vital role in the capacity and success of an organization, business or board. Volunteer programs require the same type of managerial effort that any other program effort would require. There are several factors to consider ensuring that the experience is positive for both the volunteer and the organization. A leader may be responsible for effectively identifying, selecting, orienting, training, utilizing, recognizing and evaluating volunteers.



It is key that a clear vision or mission be clearly communicated when recruiting and accepting volunteers. This helps them and you determine if the match is a good fit. It is important that volunteers have an interest in or passion for the vision or mission.

Identification

Volunteers may be identified in a number of ways: personal contact or formal and informal recruitment using media sources, word of mouth and contacts with other organizations, businesses and agencies. Consider ways to reach people who represent demographic or geographic characteristics, expertise or skills useful in the volunteer organization and passion for the vision, mission and goals. By effectively empowering volunteers with a clear view of the mission and a purpose for their actions, they are empowered to be self-motivated.

Selection

As a leader, know what skills you need. This answers lots of questions in the selection process. Various methods may be used to select volunteers:

- Application/Information forms
- Enrollment forms
- Interviews
- Screenings
- Contracts

Careful efforts to match a volunteer's interests and skills pay huge dividends over time.



Orientation

Orientation includes providing objectives, timelines, tasks, expectations, benefits and support. Basic certification processes often include training and develop a baseline of knowledge to prepare volunteers for their work. Some find it helpful to have job descriptions for volunteers that clearly describe the organization's mission, job title, why the job is important to the mission, description of responsibilities and expectations, time requirements, training required and qualifications/special skills needed. There are numerous tools that can be used to orient new and experienced volunteers. Job descriptions outline the overall responsibilities.

Training

Volunteers benefit from ongoing training. Training manuals, on-line training opportunities, workshops and seminars, newsletters and leadership training help prepare volunteers for their role and connect them to their purpose in the organization. If volunteers serve on a board, provide board member training on a regular basis.

The training of volunteers can become an aspect of the volunteer program where experienced volunteers train new recruits.

Utilization

Utilizing volunteers means providing opportunities for growth through delegation, management and coordination. Find out how much time, energy and resources they are willing to provide and match that with the opportunities available and needs of the organization. Volunteers can contribute by writing articles, organizing activities, locating and writing grants, coordinating an event, providing leadership, or conducting training. There are multiple opportunities by thinking creatively.

Recognition

This is one of the most important aspects of volunteer management. The ways to recognize are differentiated by the three motivation types. For example, achievement-motivated people want recognition for what was accomplished, a job well-done, for excellence or uniqueness, and goal achieved -- certificates of achievement, plaques and a thank you specific to the task. Affiliation-motivated people enjoy relational rewards -- face-to-face thanks and personalized notes. Influence-motivated people enjoy public displays of honor like award nights, ceremonies, newspaper thank you ads or articles.

No matter what the form of recognition, a thank you should be important, personal, tailored to the recipient, timely and sincere. They can be verbal or tangible. They can be given for everyday things (like showing up on time), special events, final project completion, above and beyond the call, or longevity to mention a few. They are meant to make people feel proud of their contribution, to connect them to the overall mission or purpose of the organization and to see how their contribution is helping to achieve the vision.



Evaluation

A good volunteer management program includes forms of evaluation. These may be written evaluations, records of hours volunteered, committee reports following an event (what worked, what didn't), retention rates, additional programs/projects completed as a result of volunteer efforts and informative dialogues about pre-established goals.

Conclusion


Remember that volunteer management works best with a management plan in place. It requires maintaining contact with volunteers through communication in various forms, reinforcement of volunteer's efforts, delegating tasks and responsibilities and being available as an advisor and/or resource. As leaders utilizing volunteers, view your role as finding ways to help volunteers be successful while helping your organization achieve its mission. They want to see the important contribution they make to the overall success.

Citizen participation is a needed and necessary part of communities and involves finding meaningful ties between opportunities and people. Volunteerism is a characteristic that distinguishes the United States and taps the energy and leadership potential in a community as well as providing an excellent source of insight, information, knowledge and experience.

Reference:

National 4H Council. (1994) Red Taxi Trainers' Guide: Training Volunteer Managers to Get Going.

UTILIZING VOLUNTEERS



Volunteers
can be the
Heart of an
Organization

1. **Identify** - reach out to community, personally or by media
2. **Select** - know what skills you need, match to volunteer
3. **Provide orientation** - description of what is expected
4. **Supply ongoing training**
5. **Utilize** - provide opportunity for growth; use their creativity
6. **Give recognition** - either verbal or tangible
7. **Evaluate** - your goals and effectiveness of volunteers



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