

# VOLUNTEERS



## **HOW TO RECRUIT VOLUNTEERS**

Volunteer work is an important part of every ministry. There is much work that needs to be done by a ministry which can and should be delegated to volunteers. This provides the minister with the time and energy needed to provide spiritual leadership and nurturance to the members of the church. Volunteer work helps people become involved in and excited about the ministry. It also provides individuals with a sense of ownership in the church, enlists their active involvement in the activities of the church and promotes a sense of spiritual community. Perhaps most importantly, volunteer work enables individuals to utilize the principles we teach, and therefore, promotes self-esteem, self-worth and spiritual development.

Some of the areas of ministry for which you will need a volunteer team include: greeters, ushers, fellowship hour hosts and hostesses, prayer leaders, youth education teachers, social activity coordinators, flower arrangement leaders, and so forth. It is important to surround yourself with dedicated, committed, enthusiastic individuals who express a loving attitude of service. Surrounding oneself with teams of people growing spiritually in the understanding of Truth will help to bring like-minded newcomers and friends to the ministry.

Provide clear and explicit job descriptions and instructions on duties needed for each particular volunteer area of service. In the area of greeters, it is essential to have newcomers and friends be greeted warmly and be made to feel welcome. Often that first impression from greeters will determine whether the individual will return. Also, be sure to provide a guest register so that all newcomers can sign their name, address and phone number. This helps to build a mailing list for the ministry.

Praise and appreciation for the volunteer staff is one of the most important activities for you as the leader. Praise and give thanks for your volunteers often and plan a special volunteer appreciation dinner annually to celebrate and honor the volunteer team leaders.

On the following several pages are three documents entitled "Professionalizing a Ministry Volunteer Program" which were written by Martha Mosley, Vice President of Education, a number of years ago. I trust this information will help you recruit dynamic volunteer teams.

For information on computer software which can be used to create a volunteer database contact Parson's Technology at 1.800.833.3241.

## PROFESSIONALIZING A MINISTRY VOLUNTEER PROGRAM: PART 1

Martha Mosley

---

*In general, volunteers are more professional, better educated, and represent a wider variety of skills than every before. To attract and retain these individuals, programs must be designed to utilize their skills, contribute to their feelings of self worth, and foster their commitment to the Unity ministry.*

---

An ongoing management responsibility is organizational development. This is a process of building an organization to be the best it can be. There are many tools available, among them strategic planning, statistical analysis, demographics, and personnel techniques. Although ministries do not exist primarily to do business, they must address the business affairs of the ministry. In so doing, an ongoing concern is the utilization of resources to best do the work of the ministry while being good stewards of funds. One of the ways to maximize resources in ministry is through the use of volunteers. Because of the potential value that volunteers can give to ministries, this will be the first in a series of articles addressing the theme of professionalizing a ministry volunteer program. By presenting these ideas, it is hoped they may contribute significantly to the overall effective use of both volunteer and staff hours.

Volunteerism has a long tradition in American society. In *The Board Member's Book*, Brian O'Connell states, "The United States is the only country in the world where giving and volunteering are pervasive characteristics of the total society" (p. 5). Further, one of the longest-standing traditions is volunteering for churches or religious causes. According to O'Connell, the number one cause for which people volunteer is religion, which receives 19 % of total volunteering (p. 11).

Although volunteering is a societal and religious norm, the face of volunteerism has changed dramatically in recent years. No longer do volunteers fit the stereotype of people with too much time on their hands. According to a report by the Independent Sector, a not-for-profit coalition of corporations, foundations, and voluntary organizations, in 1985, 48 % of adults and 52 % of teenagers volunteered (*Daring Goals for a Caring Society*, p. 7). According to O'Connell, 31 % of volunteers give at least two hours per week, and one out of ten gives at least seven hours weekly. Further, every economic group is involved, and more young people, men, and elderly are volunteering (p. 9). This indicates volunteers come from a cross section of society. It is therefore incumbent on users of volunteers to evaluate their attitudes and methods. Further, to tap the diversity of volunteer resources, it is essential that users of volunteers offer opportunities to serve during flexible hours. The traditional 9 to 5 approach is nearly obsolete in today's world of working adults.

In general, volunteers are more professional, better educated, and represent a wider variety of skills than every before. To attract and retain these individuals, programs must be designed to utilize their skills, contribute to their feelings of self worth, and foster their commitment to the Unity ministry.

When designing a volunteer program, it is important to consider that there are two distinct categories of volunteers. One group consists of professionals who want to give a limited amount of time, work a schedule that fits a professional life style, and utilize their skills to the maximum. Another segment is more people-oriented, desiring to give direct service to others. The logical utilization of professionals is as part of boards, advisory groups, planning, and task forces. The second group is likely to be more flexible in the types of duties they are willing to do, and more interested in contact with people. They may agree to help with social functions, greet people, provide transportation, or in whatever way they can directly give help and support to other people. Because of differences in types of volunteers, an effective volunteer program design should include opportunities for both types of contributors for maximum use of resources, and to expand the pool of knowledge, skills, and abilities available to the ministry.

For both types of volunteers, it is important that they perceive volunteering as a commitment of time and energy to the ministry. They also want to know the ministry is committed to them, viewing them as a valuable part of the ministry team. Thus, time spent in planning and organizing is essential to the appearance of commitment. Volunteers want to know that the ministry is well managed and worth their investment. Planning and organizing should include a commitment to the program by the minister and the board. Also, a program is best implemented by a professional volunteer coordinator. The coordinator represents a commitment and investment by management in the volunteers themselves and the success of the program. Further, with program coordination as the coordinator's primary duty, many tasks can be accomplished by volunteers that would require paid staff. The coordinator can then focus all his/her attention on program administration, relieving other staff members from the tasks of having enough of the right people in the right place at the right time.

An additional necessary component for successful volunteer program administration is treating volunteers like "unpaid staff." This means a polished approach to recruitment, selection, training, motivation, and evaluation. This begins with volunteer job design. Planners should have a clear understanding of what they want volunteers to do in specific, detailed form. Secondly, they should be able to give a clear answer to why a volunteer should do this, rather than a paid staff person (Brown, p. 5). Some reasons may be to involve the congregation in programs, to expand available services, or to give people the opportunity to learn new skills or have social interaction. Saving money is not enough of a reason. While ministry administrators are expected to be good stewards, other reasons of importance to the membership should be given as well as conserving salary dollars. Besides, volunteers are NOT free. Cost is involved. Estimates are that it takes one hour of staff time for every two hours of volunteer time.

Also, any incentives, tangible recognitions, or reimbursed expenses are costs.

When volunteer programs are professionalized to the extent that people feel they are being treated as valued team members and the focus is on service, an image of professionalism and commitment by management emerges.

In the next *Contact*, consideration will be given to specific program components

*This article appeared in the May, 1990 issue of Contact.*

**PROFESSIONALIZING A MINISTRY VOLUNTEER PROGRAM:  
PART 2, RECRUITMENT  
Martha Mosley**

---

*Most people give their time and talents because they are asked. O'Connell states that 44% of volunteers first became involved because someone asked them to help (p. 10). The message should define what is to be done, and why this is important.*

---

In the previous article, the overall importance of volunteers was addressed as they relate to advancement of the ministry institution. Secondly, a volunteer program should be carefully planned, administered by a professional coordinator, and implemented as though volunteers are staff members -- even though they are not directly paid.

Once the overall program is ready for implementation, the next step is recruiting people for volunteer positions. An essential component is deciding what group of people will likely be interested in the volunteer task(s). Who is best suited for the unpaid position(s) - the general membership, working adults, retired people, teenagers, or a combination?

Once the "who" question is answered, ideas will probably present themselves for contacting this particular segment. The ministry may already have several avenues of contact such as support groups, friends of current paid staff members with similar skills, and classes for people with special interests.

If there is no current avenue, it is time to create one. This could take the form of beginning a support group, offering a new class, or starting a community outreach program. It is then possible to enroll people in these activities, and perhaps they will become part of the unpaid staff. Any new classes or programs should, however, be legitimate in themselves, not simply an avenue to enroll people in unpaid staff activities. If they are to view the ministry as well run, the classes and programs must reflect this.

Once the decision is made of who to contact and how, it is necessary to communicate the opportunity. Most people give their time and talents because they are asked. O'Connell states that 44% of volunteers first became involved because someone asked them to help (p. 10). The message should define what is to be done, and why this is important. Specific information about the tasks can be communicated when people respond. Remember also, to ask those who respond if they know of anyone else who might be interested. O'Connell also states that 29% of volunteers started volunteering because of family members and friends who were involved, and 31% through participation in groups (p. 10).

A number of recruitment methods are available to ministries. The membership is a somewhat captive audience, particularly attuned to the needs of the ministry. Yet, ministries easily fall into patterns of using the same people for the same tasks repeatedly. This develops a broader base of support and skills, and is less likely to produce volunteer burnout.

One recruitment method, depending upon the job design, that may be appropriate is to issue a general invitation to the membership to participate. This may be done through the bulletin, newsletter, or oral announcement. This can make selection difficult if a large number of responses are received, but it can also broaden the base of new participants and foster the general feeling of ownership among members. A second method is to observe new members for particular interests and abilities (*Youthworker*, p. 28). This can lead to a form of "elitism," but can also reduce training time, getting particular tasks done quicker and easier. The same rationale may apply to recruiting from special interest classes or support groups. Yet, if the job is critical and time sensitive, this may be an approach to consider.

This method of observing and recruiting for specific talent may also be particularly valuable in recruiting candidates for committees or board positions. If current leadership has identified the need for a particular skill or combination of skills, it is appropriate to look for someone with these particular skills.

These are only a few of the methods of recruiting unpaid staff. Recruitment methods vary with the person doing the recruiting and the ministry environment. It is essential, however, to determine what works, and put it to use consistently to develop a cadre of unpaid staff.

In the next article, training and selection will be the subject of discussion. Check the next issue for further development of a volunteer program.

*This article appeared in the June/July, 1990 issue of Contact.*

## **PROFESSIONALIZING A MINISTRY VOLUNTEER PROGRAM: PART 3**

### **Martha Mosley**

---

*The assumption is that the program has been planned and volunteers recruited in a carefully developed, professional format. Selection, placement, and motivation should be equally well planned and professionally executed.*

---

This is the third in a series of articles on volunteer program administration under the general theme of institutional advancement. It will focus on the processes of selection, placement, and motivation. The assumption is that the program has been planned and volunteers recruited in a carefully developed, professional format. Selection, placement, and motivation should be equally well planned and professionally executed.

#### **Selection & Placement**

Unpaid positions, like paid ones, should be filled selectively. When individuals apply for staff positions, they are carefully screened for qualification that fit the job. A similar approach is essential to an effective volunteer program. Once people contact the ministry about giving their time, an information sheet or application is created to capture data necessary to contact that person and identify particular skills and abilities. This includes experience and ability in both paid and unpaid positions, as well as any special interests. Even though a person has talent in a particular area, he or she may be interested in broadening experiences. If so, it is usually best to place them in the area of interest, even though initial productivity may be less.

In addition to the application, an interview is appropriate. Some characteristics do not show up on paper. Just as an applicant for a paid position is interviewed, so should the applicant for an unpaid one. This is particularly important for positions involving interpersonal, leadership, and/or people skills. For instance, if the ministry's receptionist is to be unpaid, an interview is the best way to determine what image the person will portray and what impression people will receive of the ministry through this person.

With this approach, just as with paid positions, it will probably be necessary to say "no" to some people. If possible, redirect them to positions for which they are more suitable. If this is not possible, be honest. In giving reasons, be careful to speak to skills or experience needed for the position rather than an indictment of the person's intrinsic worth.

#### **Training**

How someone is inducted into the organization of the ministry is a major key to his or her success and longevity with the unpaid staff. Therefore, an initial orientation appropriately includes an introduction to the work area and other staff members, paid and unpaid. Next an orientation to the overall philosophy and culture is necessary. While unpaid staff members are usually conversant with Unity philosophy, this is the time to convey the vision and mission of the ministry along with the work style, human relationships, quality and quantity notions, and other general behavior standards. Often the administrative

operation is quite different from what congregants expect. This orientation helps familiarize the new volunteer with his or her working environment.

A second component of training is the job description. This sets out the objective expectations of the position, and the standards by which the volunteer will be viewed. The job description conveys to the unpaid staff member what the purpose of the position is, what responsibilities there are and/or tasks to be performed, the qualifications necessary, the expected time commitment, and who he or she reports to. The training period is also a key element of motivation. This is an excellent time to discover any interest not mentioned on the information sheet that may apply to other positions. If there are other interests for which training may be available, or specific training is needed and available for the current position, this is an ideal time to state that. Additional training is a benefit that appeals to many people. Also, if other benefits are available, these should be stated. These may be expense reimbursement, free parking, an incentive program, free child care, or any number of other possible benefits. People give their time and talents because they receive something for it, whether a sense of personal satisfaction or something more concrete.

The training period length and complexity depends on the task to be performed. New board members obviously need longer, more in depth training than someone who delivers flowers. It may be determined that the time and complexity of the job is greater than the ministry is prepared to offer training for. If so, prerequisites for qualifications should be specified in the recruitment and screening process (*The Journal of Volunteer Administration*, p. 27).

### **Motivation**

Many unpaid staff members are self motivated. As stated, they experience self-fulfillment. This may be because they support the philosophy of the ministry, or they may be committed to a particular program. Whatever the reason for giving time, finding out the reason or reasons may be the means of keeping motivation high. Placement in an area of interest, additional training, and a variety of unpaid positions can keep the interest and commitment going.

Secondly, treating unpaid staff members as valuable members of the team is important. This includes asking for their input, and listening to suggestions. Today's volunteers want to know they are making a worthwhile contribution. An additional way to assure them is to give them responsibility. The supervisor should assure him/herself that the volunteer is capable of following through, of course. Once assured, the volunteer will respond to increased responsibility and the increased level of trust demonstrated by it.

Another often used motivational technique is recognition. This can be as simple as a smile, a word of appreciation, or as complex as an entire recognition program. Whatever is done, it should be significant to the unpaid staff member. Some ministries have reported sending volunteers to Unity Village retreats, giving Unity books and tapes, and sending them to regional or national conferences. This could be considered an investment in internal marketing of the Unity message. Again, whatever the recognition, it must be significant to the unpaid staff member, and the recognition must be genuine.

*This article appeared in the August/September, 1990 issue of Contact.*

**References** (for all three articles):

Brown, Kathleen M., *Keys to Making a Volunteer Program Work*, Richard, Arden Publications, 1982. (This is a book I borrowed from a fellow staff member. It should be available from libraries or from the publisher in Richmond, Virginia.)

"Daring Goals for a Caring Society," *The Independent Sector*, 1986. (Independent Sector was founded in 1980 to explore the possibility of stimulating giving and volunteering. It is a nonprofit coalition of 650 corporate, foundation, and voluntary organizations. One of its founding members was Brian O'Connell, author of *The Board Member's Book*.)

Gaston, Nancy A., "Easy Does It: Initiating a Performance Evaluation Process in an Existing Volunteer Program," *The Journal of Volunteer Administration*, Fall 1989, pp. 27-31. (This is a professional journal published by the Association of Volunteer Administration, P.O. Box 4584, Boulder, Colorado 80306. Membership is available, but not required, for journal subscription. Current subscription price is \$24 per year.)

Koenigsaecker, Scott, "How Do You Spell 'Volunteer?'" *Youthworker*, Winter, 1986, pp. 28-33. (*Youthworker* is a journal for youth ministry available from Youth Specialties, Inc., 1224 Greenfield, El Cajon, California 92021.)

O'Connell, Brian, *The Board Member's Book*, New York: The Foundation Center, 1985. (This book addresses the role of boards of directors as well as some general information on volunteers. It is available from The Foundation Center, 79 5th. Ave., Ne