

Ways to Motivate Volunteers

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INTRODUCTION

- **Motivate**

This means to provide someone with a (very strong) reason to do something or to take action.

- **Volunteerism**

- To offer one's services or help without payment or reward

- To offer to do something willingly without being forced. *"A person convinced against his will is of the same opinion still"*

Benjamin Franklin .



- We have all probably heard that there is nothing we can do to motivate someone because motivation is an inside job. That is a true statement, however there is a lot we can do to stimulate that inner motivation.



Program Structure and Expectations

Motivation

Motivating volunteers is the most important part of any volunteer coordinators' / supervisors' job

People need a reason to give up their time and energy for free ,

Be specific

- People need to know exactly what you want before they can determine how to best get it for you.
- Continually talk about the bigger purpose behind the actions, sell the vision and purpose. *“A person who knows how to do something may have a job but the one who knows why it matters will always be their boss”.*



Give people a reason.

- There has to be a motive if you want motivation. Motives vary from person to person and time to time, but all actions are driven by some motive
- Base it on their wants in relation to your goals



Inspect what you expect.

- Be a good supervisor, show that you are concerned, involved and paying attention, but do not hover over others as they work and micro manage with constant corrections.



Develop Skills and Leadership

- Identify what motivates individual CAs and what they would like to learn, and help them to build those skills (e.g. public speaking, ability to frame issues, advocacy, report writing, time management etc can be useful in many areas of life)
- Work to develop leadership skills in CAs (which also increases recognition and helps activism spread)



Increase Recognition

Award certificates of appreciation

- Another effective way to stimulate the inner motivation is through rewards and recognition.
- **Recognition;**
Recognize a person for the job they were recruited to do.
- **Reward;**
Recognize a person for going far above what was asked (going an extra mile).
- Recognize CA of the quarter/year, award the best performing CA in each parish
- Give certificates
- Get together/ party quarterly

Celebrate milestones

- Plan an annual celebration in which you can reward and recognize your volunteers (CAs).
- Celebrating a milestone reached can give them the boost they need to continue to volunteer their time and energy plus talents.



Have the attitude of gratitude.

Being grateful is the physiological equivalent of magnetism. People are drawn to others who are appreciative.

Thank people publically point out what they have done and how it mattered. Show your appreciation for even the smallest effort.



Collaborate with your volunteers (CAs).

- Treat them as your equals. Show them that you respect them and appreciate the values of what they are doing.
- Ask their opinion you don't have to always follow their suggestions but you should listen to them and seriously consider them



Celebrate their successes.

- When something good is achieved take time to point it out and comment on it. Saying “thank you” and “good work” goes along way to keeping people motivated.
- A specific, personal thank you note says volumes.
- It is also important to take time to thank the family of a devoted volunteer.



Failures and mistakes

- Treat them as teachable moments instead of criticizing. use these occasions to do an after action review of what happened , why it happened and what effect it had, then look for ways to avoid allowing it to happen again.



Trust people a bit more than they deserve.

- Someone with no experience leading others would be ill equipped to take charge without some supervision but with constant supervision, they would never learn to lead. Give people enough room to take decisions and make mistakes but not so much room that you put every thing at risk



Feed your volunteers

- Offering free snacks for volunteers will go along way in motivating and encourage volunteers, it shows that you appreciate their hard work,
- It can be as simple as having coffee or soda available for meetings to feeding them lunch or dinner while they are working for your cause.



Provide them with materials

- Offer regular materials and little gifts to appreciate time allocated (t-shirts, learning materials, condoms etc).
- Offer enough materials that CAs can also give out to other activists they are engaging.



Develop Group Cohesion and Identity

Staff build relations with CAs.

- Volunteers expect to spend time with the paid staff and often the paid staffs get frustrated with the interruptions.
- But spending time with these volunteers will help enormously with their morale and motivation. it can be at any event were staff can spend time interacting with them and comment on the work and how much they appreciate it. Watch group dynamics social net work



Budget to train volunteers

- Send them to conferences to help them better do the tasks you require them or just learn more about the cause for which you are all working.
- This shows the volunteer that you are willing to spend money to better equip them.



Encourage fun.

- Make the job a fun thing to do, while the focus of your organization may be serious in nature, there has to be some fun in it .
- Too often leaders who are passionate about their cause forget to laugh we become so serious about our causes and our mission that we forget to have fun.



Build in opportunities

- Help CAs get to know and trust each other (sports events, time in meetings to get to know one another, encouragement of team building in projects, etc)
- Encourage self-reflection in meetings and trainings about the work and its impact on CAs own lives and neighbors' lives
- Invite CAs for public activities to fully involve them in program work



Keep Records

- Documentation of the actions and out comes. What was done and how it worked , help people have a tracking system to ensure that they know when they are on and or off course .
- Things that are measured tend to improve so be careful to set up measures. Know the progress and document what you have learnt



Value volunteers

- Remember that they originally volunteered because they are passionate about your cause and it is your job to make them feel like a valued member of the organization.

END

