

Good Practice Guides: Building Foundations

No. 7 – Volunteer Recruitment

Key Points

Planning for the recruitment of volunteers is a necessary requirement in finding the right volunteers for your organisation. However there is no one magic solution or guaranteed answer but taking the time to plan will hugely increase your chances of a successful recruitment. This good practice guide will help you to form a plan.

A Checklist Before You Start Recruitment

- What are your volunteers going to do? (See Good Practice Guide Two)
- How and who is going to deal with any enquiries about volunteers in your organisation?
- What information are you going to give potential volunteers? Consider what you need to tell them about your organisation
- What policies do you think volunteers need to know about before they apply?
- Do you have a budget for volunteer recruitment?
- Revisit your equal opportunities policy and seek to meet the same objectives as you would for the recruitment of staff.
- Have you considered the timing of your recruitment?
- Have you thought about how you will manage and evaluate demand?

Where to Advertise

If you have recruited for volunteers before, it is a good idea to perhaps revisit what worked and what didn't for example, how many interested volunteers did that advert in local newspaper produce?

Consider the following recruitment tools for your next strategy:

Use your Volunteer Centre - our service is free and the opportunities are widely publicised on the web and in our centres. You can also request to have a stall at the annual volunteer recruitment fair (usually held in October).

Putting up posters/distributing flyers - Libraries, Doctor Surgeries, Public Buildings, Schools/colleges, Leisure Centres, Places of Worship, Arts Venues, Supermarkets, and Cafes.

Offer to do talks or presentations - This is a great method if you are looking to target a particular client group e.g. young people, business specialists, retired professionals.

Media tools - print media is normally quite costly but don't be afraid to haggle for a deal if you feel a particular printed medium would help you to target. Look into online/web based tools such as Facebook, Gumtree, Twitter, these are all free and if kept up to date, can be a great way to publicise vacancies for your organisation

Community Events and Fairs - Keep an eye on events in your community, or even city wide events such as The Mela, where you can hold a stall that will help publicise your organisation and meet potential volunteers.

Timing

It is possible to recruit all year round, however it is worth noting that there key times throughout the year when there are more volunteers looking for opportunities.

New Year - a very popular time, lots of people looking for a fresh start or making a positive change for the upcoming year.

Volunteers Week - In the first week of June, a very high profile time often when there are lots of news stories about volunteering, a good time to approach the media with some good news stories!

Summer - although for some this is a time for holidays and taking care of the kids, there are many other types of people looking for volunteer opportunities, including students and (especially in Edinburgh) people travelling through.

A word of caution on timing: remember to leave yourselves enough time to complete a selection process and in particular enough time to complete disclosure checks for your volunteers if you require your volunteers to begin around a certain date.

Follow up

Finally, one of the most common complaints we have from volunteers is when they have enquired about an opportunity and an organisation has not got back to them. First impressions often mean that if a volunteer has left a message (email, phone or letter) and they do not get a reply promptly, you will lose them. One of the best preparatory things you can do in a recruitment strategy is to ensure your organisation knows what to do with an enquiry:

- **Use your website**, upload your application pack for volunteers so that it can be downloaded by interested individuals
- **Keep staff and volunteers informed** - make sure that those who answer the phone and pick up the emails know what to do with a volunteer enquiry. Have some volunteer packs made up ready to send out.
- **Situation filled/not suitable** - if you receive enquiries and your opportunities are filled or the enquirer is not suitable for the position, let them know and signpost them to the Volunteer Centre.



Other Good Practice Guides that can help

Good Practice Guide Two: Creating a Volunteer Task Description

Good Practice Guide Eight: Selection and Screening

Good Practice Guide Twenty Six: Marketing Your Opportunities

More help?

If you would like more help or advice in relation to this factsheet please contact the Volunteer Centre Edinburgh on the following details:

Tel: 0131 225 0630

Email: admin@volunteeredinburgh.org.uk

Or you can drop in and see us:

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