

Volunteering Don'ts Pitfalls when recruiting Volunteers:

Expecting a volunteer to stay longer to finish a task – When a volunteer completes the time block they made a commitment to, you need to, thank them and assure them that they are free to leave; you're welcome to say that they may stay if they like, but again they have met their commitment and they are free to leave.

Providing no public recognition, Or worse, hogging it for yourself. –

Your event was successful because of the people who helped and did the work. Let everyone know who made it successful. Keep a list, do not try to do this off the top of your head, you will undoubtedly forget someone.

Limiting your list of potential volunteers to your friends and current volunteers – Creating a diverse group of volunteers that represents all segments of your membership is a vital part of forming a pool of volunteers. A large diverse group of volunteers for a job will help avoid burnout by having different crews alternate performing the task.

Assuming that everyone will volunteer when asked to sign a sheet or raise their hands at a meeting –

Many people will volunteer this way, however... To some people this indicates that "*anyone*" can do the job, it does not make anyone feel "*special or best qualified*". It's best to "*ask*" one on one and let them know why you think they are best for the job.

Failing to be flexible with task assignments – Whenever possible have more than one task from which the member can choose; be flexible and willing to adjust your request to meet the member's needs.

Thinking that because a member says no now, that he or she will not say yes in the future – If members are not available when you need them or are not interested in doing the tasks you suggested, perhaps they will agree to other tasks in the future. Ask them what they would be interested in volunteering for and keep this in mind for future tasks.

Assuming that people will say no – Instead, assume that people will say yes, people like to be asked and it shows that you respect their work and what they have to offer.

Feeling that asking a member to volunteer was a waste of your time if your request was denied – No is an acceptable answer.

Even if a volunteer declines at this time, thank them, let the volunteer know that there is a need for them to volunteer in the future.

Asking the person first who is most likely to say yes – The best person for the job may not be the person most likely to say yes; go for quality and let the person know that they were your first choice and that it is important that they get personally involved and why, making them feel flattered to be asked.

Asking everyone to volunteer – Narrow the field; make a list of names and telephone numbers of five people you think would be good for the task in order of who would be the best fit for the job, who would be second best, and so on.

Letting new volunteers loose on a project – Assign low risk tasks to new volunteers until they prove to be dependable; don't assume they understand how to complete a project after providing one training session or explanation. Continue to train them and build on their responsibilities based on their capabilities and productivity.

Thinking volunteers cannot be fired – Volunteers perform essential tasks and jobs. They must be responsible and produce the agreed upon work, and must be given an opportunity to improve, but if they do not, then they must be relieved of their job.

Preferred Practices – Do's Good Ideas when recruiting Volunteers:

Take time to plan and get organized – Before volunteers are asked to work on a project, the project team leader must take time to think the project through and do adequate pre-planning.

Design a worksheet for each project – More complex projects will have more detailed planning sheets; features may include task descriptions estimated completion time, risk levels, deadlines for completion and evaluation and assigned volunteers.

Determine what information skills and tools the volunteer must already have and what training you will provide – Think about the needs of your project beforehand, and if a volunteer lacks certain skills necessary to accomplish that job, be ready to provide the needed training.

Determine how many volunteers you will need – Having a job description for each task in the project will give you a baseline to determine the number of volunteers you will need. Several things to keep in mind are:

- Will the project last long enough that you will need a relief person(s) to give the volunteers a break every so often.
- Strive to have enough volunteers that the task will not be hectic and overwhelming to the volunteers you do have.
- Do not have too many volunteers – you do not want someone with nothing to do, standing around in others way and feeling un-needed. If you can split up the duties of a job and still have enough to do that each is kept busy, then fine, but don't split a jobs duties just to make room for extra help. If you have a full crew of volunteers for a project and someone else volunteers, thank them, explain to them your crew is full, take their name and tell them you will call them for the next project – **OR** – seize the opportunity to have an experienced volunteer train a new volunteer.

If your project is smaller, create small tasks that are achievable in a short period of time and will not intimidate new volunteers – For a one-day telephone fundraiser, small tasks may include preparing call lists, securing a site, planning food and reporting progress.

Break the project down into groups of major tasks to be done – If your project is large or complex, break the project down into several work groups with each being responsible for a task or group of tasks and assign less experienced volunteers to assist each work group leader.

Don't wait for members to volunteer – ask them – Recruit the best people for the job and don't wait for someone to offer.

Recruit experienced volunteers to be project team leaders – Experienced volunteers can often oversee and coordinate volunteer teams of newer and less involved volunteers.

Assess a member's interests for volunteer activities – Prior to calling someone to volunteer, use your LCL.net member employment information as a resource, maybe focus on tasks relative to that field, but also ask them for their task preferences. You may find out some new talent for this person. And if you do, get it entered into LCL. These steps will help you to be more organized and to create the best fit for the volunteer.

Fill high-risk tasks with experienced volunteers first – Concentrate on assigning your most experienced and proven volunteers to large and more important tasks first, then assign smaller tasks to less experienced members.