



RESTORE

strategies

Five Ways Your Nonprofit Can Improve Volunteer Recruitment **By: Garrett Clawson**

There isn't just one type of "volunteer recruitment." According to *Volunteer Management: Mobilizing All the Resources of the Community*, there are five major strategies that nonprofits can use to reach prospective volunteers.

Warm body recruitment is typically used when the role your organization is trying to fill can be done by just about anyone and doesn't require any unique skill sets or knowledge.

- *Strategies:* Because this type of recruitment allows your team to cast the widest net possible with few or no restrictions, you can simply use communication channels that allow you to reach the largest number of prospective volunteers possible. This can be done through bulletins, posters, or television/radio ads, but today this type of outreach is probably done most easily through text messages, social media, or speaking engagements.

Targeted recruitment gives the organization greater control over the types of people to which the call to action is extended. If the nonprofit already knows that they want volunteers with a particular belief system or skill set, this allows the team to refine their search and sharpen their pitch to appeal to those groups explicitly. Unlike the warm body recruitment strategy, this approach allows recruiters to "tailor" the message to directly address the hopes, fears, and concerns members of each group have about working with your nonprofit.

- *Strategies:* Recruiters should identify institutions from which desired volunteers come, which communication mediums they utilize, and the language they use to connect with causes. For example, if a nonprofit believes Christian college students make ideal volunteers in their context, they should speak at campus ministry gatherings and state the Biblical concepts being promoted (justice, reconciliation, etc.).

Concentric circles recruitment involves using existing volunteers and clients to find new volunteers. This approach's greatest advantage is its heavily reliance on the positive testimonies of those already familiar with the organization. Studies show that an overwhelming percentage of those that volunteer do so because a friend told them about a particular opportunity or encouraged them to get involved with them. Former clients may also make incredible volunteers (as they are already familiar with the goods/services you provide as well as the quality of your work). Using the concentric circles recruitment strategy is a great way to find bring more of these individuals into the fold.

- *Strategies:* Members of the organization should equip current volunteers and former/current clients to “evangelize” on your behalf. This can be done by providing these individuals with language to use when talking to friends/family members or simply keeping them updated on volunteer openings that exist. This could be accomplished through something like a routine newsletter.

Ambient recruitment is most appropriate for entities like churches or in-house ministries that seek to recruit volunteers from within their own ranks. This approach may be used when the serving entity wants to take on the task of shaping the culture of the larger organization in a way that promotes generosity, volunteering, and community engagement.

- *Strategies:* Volunteer recruiters should articulate why they believe members should get involved and how getting involved dovetails with their beliefs and values. This narrative, shaped by the service organization, should be shared with members of the larger organization shared with members shortly after joining and reinforced frequently with existing members so that they understand the importance of the work being done. Support systems should also be put into place so volunteers receive the feedback and encouragement needed to persevere and perform their duties well.

Brokered recruitment brings a third party into the mix that serves as a liaison between “volunteer pools” and organizations seeking individuals passionate about the mission and ready to serve. This form of recruitment takes the burden off of nonprofits by allowing another entity to recruit on their behalf.

Restore Strategies serves as this kind of bridge by connecting Christians ready to live out their faith with nonprofits looking to expand their impact on communities in need of healing and restoration.

Restore Strategies seeks strengthening collaborative networks between churches and local organizations that have already put incredible amounts of time, money, and effort into building the relationships and infrastructure needed to care for vulnerable people well. Because we want to see your nonprofit’s capacity to promote restoration enhanced, we’re also rolling out a variety of free resources and exercises for you and your team to think through together. Visit www.restorestrategies.org/nonprofit to learn more!