

# GROWING VOLUNTEERS

Growing Volunteers is the theme for this issue of “ie” and, yes a shameless plug, for the 2019 National TRS Volunteer Management Workshop series. You can participate in person or online throughout the year ... All the way until the wrap up in November with our IFEA Webinar on “The Path to Volunteer Growth on November 14th!

## Looking for a Little Teaser?

The ‘Growing Volunteers’ workshop is designed to help organizations recruit and retain the right volunteers for the right positions by building mutually beneficial relationships.

We start with The Expectations. Yes, you’ve heard about the changing needs of millennial volunteers but we explore trends for all volunteer ages and the tremendous growth of volunteer groups. Topping the charts is a well-known list. Are these expectations included in your volunteer development program?

- Personal growth. It is fair that the volunteer expects to gain from the volunteer experience.
- Making a difference in my community. What does it mean to ‘Make a Difference’? Many volunteers expect that their volunteer time will have broader meaning.
- Giving voice or recognition to an important cause. Is this experience worthy of a post on my social media account?
- Making new friends and serving with my family, friends or colleagues. Yes, it is about my tribe. I want to share the experience with people I know as my time is limited.
- Easy to register. Understand position. Well organized activities. Good communication. I expect all these things. Please don’t waste my time. If you do, I won’t be back.
- Fun. Friendly. Fabulous. Atmosphere counts. Remember this is my leisure time!
- Recognition. Yes, that “Thank You” is always critical!
- Celebrating and Communicating Success. Why was my volunteer time important? Tell me.

Next we explore The Motivation. Why should people give up their leisure time to volunteer for your organization?

The question is NOT why volunteers are important to your organization. It is understood by most people that volunteers are a great mechanism to accomplish a lot at a reduced cost. But that isn’t a motivation point for many volunteers.

Can you describe what your organization does that is so important that I should care? And care so much that I will give up

my personal time to help? And then care so much that I will share my passion with others?

Our team helps guide your search for the WHY and helps you refine the communication of your mission and your goals. The WHY is what makes your organization exciting and engaging when recruiting and yes, retaining volunteers.

We also consider group volunteer trends as there has been tremendous growth in corporate social responsibility programs. “Deloitte’s “2017 Volunteerism Survey” of working Americans found that creating a culture of volunteerism may boost morale, workplace atmosphere and brand perception.” Yet most organizations struggle to articulate a relatable message to attract general volunteers and organization leaders.

**“74% think volunteerism provides an improved sense of purpose.”**

Am I going to outline the entire ‘Growing Volunteer’ workshop in this article? Of course not.

If I give you the entire program, why would you come to the workshop?

Yes, this is a just a sampling of some of the topics and exercises. A little food for thought as you consider the following:

- Does your organization understand and respond to the expectations of increasingly selective potential volunteers?
- Is your organization following and able to adapt to the changing volunteer trends?
- Can your organization clearly articulate why a volunteer should give time, talent and/or treasure to support your mission?
- Why should a volunteer select your organization, what is in it for them?

And there is one more item to consider. Perhaps the most important and challenging portion of the workshop, The Impact.

**“75% of working American millennials surveyed said they would volunteer more often if they had a better understanding of the impact they were making.”**

In the first section we mentioned that volunteers increasingly want to make a difference. They want their time to be meaningful. They want their time to have an impact on making the world a better place. Our sessions help our participants with developing an understanding of impact.

What does impact mean in the context of your organization? Do you have concrete impact examples to share? How do you measure impact? How do you communicate and demonstrate impact?

Interested in learning more? Join the IFEA Webinar "The Path to Volunteer Growth" on Thursday, November 14th. Registration information can be found here. (Link to: <https://www.ifea.com/p/resources/shopifea/shopifea-non-members/livewebinars-nm>)

**Florence May** is the Founder and President of TRS Volunteer Solutions. Her company provides myTRS Software for hundreds of Festivals, Conventions, Non-Profits, corporations and Sports Commissions. Among these support for 26 Final Fours, 5 Super Bowls, 2 Republican National Conventions, 2 Democratic National Conventions, 18 F1 Races, 12 Special Olympic Organizations, Indy 500 Events and so many others.

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