



Recruiting Volunteers: Top Tips

Image courtesy of
Chiltern
Rangers

1

Presenting Volunteering around the Experience/Soft Benefits to the Individual



- Market the product and mission, not volunteering. Productise your offers in a way that enables targeted marketing
- Where possible, deliver learning and development as part of the volunteering experience. This could be face-to-face or online: it is appreciated that setting up even a simple inhouse course for one area of volunteering, and keeping it current, would take up significant time and resources, although once created it could be reused by numerous volunteers, numerous times.

Example: Young people

Leadership courses which include volunteering and social action activities can make a difference to teenagers' interest in getting involved in their community. When looking to recruit young people, it is important to do the following:

- Provide flexible opportunities, including 'taster' sessions and activities with family and friends
- Highlight to potential volunteers how their volunteering will benefit a particular cause/help people, and how it will benefit them – for example, by having fun, meeting new people and being able to make a difference.

The following factors (in order of importance) encourage teenagers' further participation in volunteering and social action, and should be kept in mind when seeking to retain young volunteers:

- If it was close to where I live
- If it related to my interests e.g. sport
- If it was in my free time
- If I could do it with my family/friends
- If I knew how it would benefit me/my career or others/the environment
- If I could try it once to see if I liked it.

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The Time Poor Challenge and Making Volunteering Appealing



People are looking for more flexible volunteering opportunities that fit around their lives. Since volunteering faces substantial competition from other leisure activities, for example, the increasing consumption of mass media, it is important to respond to this by making volunteering as appealing as possible.

Good ways of engaging time poor people:

- Having a diverse range of good quality opportunities on offer – more regular commitments as well as more flexible roles
- Offering the opportunity to volunteer at different times of the day
- Running volunteering programmes with clearer start and finish times
- Enabling people to volunteer in groups with people they already know/their families
- When promoting volunteering opportunities to young people, tap into their passions to make it as attractive a proposition as possible
- Developing micro-volunteering opportunities consisting of bite-size volunteering actions that are quick to start and complete and do not require long term commitment.

A guide to deciding whether or not micro-volunteering activities are right for your organisation, and how to set up opportunities, can be found here:
www.communityimpactbucks.org.uk/volunteering

3 Engaging those who have Not Heard about Opportunities/Groups that Need Help

This is a barrier to volunteering for many younger adults (16-34 year olds). As the UCAS form now asks for applicants to give examples of volunteering, many young people do have a powerful motivation to volunteer, so it is important to capitalise on this. Even if they do not intend going on to further education, volunteering experiences are key to enhancing CVs and life skills.



- vInspired is the UK's leading volunteering charity for 14-25 year olds, where volunteer roles can be advertised, and young people can apply directly
- Online social networking offers a powerful tool for attracting younger audiences as volunteers, enabling a variety of ways to engage and build online communities
- Additional ideas about how online engagement with young people can lead to offline impact, can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/y8rzsdar>

4 Using Technology to Facilitate Volunteering

Technology can create far greater reach, and improve organisational efficiency and effectiveness massively. Some ideas to think about:



- Develop an app to enable geographically dispersed volunteers to be alerted to the latest opportunities in their local area (it is appreciated that this may be beyond the resources – financial and physical – of the majority of small volunteer-involving organisations)
- If resources allow, follow the example of the National Trust, which has a website where volunteers have their own profile, can claim expenses, record hours and update their rotas. This website also showcases volunteer stories, contains document resources and provides up-to-date organisation news
- Produce a monthly e-newsletter and have a Facebook group (or similar) to help everyone keep in touch and share experiences and ideas. Use Instagram to feature engaging volunteer-related content

- Follow the example of The Chiltern Society which has a fresh, modern, website, which details the volunteering schedule – dates, times, and locations, and enables volunteers to add them to their electronic calendars.

Online brokerage

Community Impact Bucks is delighted to have partnerships with two of the key national online volunteer brokerage organisations:

- **Do-it:** for more general volunteering roles
- **Reach Volunteering:** for specialist skilled roles – short term and ongoing – requiring at least 3 years’ professional experience, and trustee roles. Reach Volunteering also enables recruiters to contact volunteers on a speculative basis, and promotes roles on LinkedIn, which exposes them to a massive additional audience.

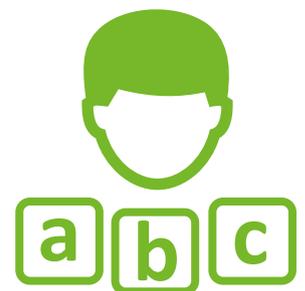
Do-it is free for both volunteers and organisations. The majority of Reach Volunteering’s services are free, although charges may apply depending on the type of organisation, annual turnover and level of service required.

- **MediaTrust:** a national organisation which enables volunteer-involving organisations to post opportunities for creative and media volunteers online, and for volunteers to apply directly. It also regularly organises face-to-face speed matching events for both volunteers and organisations, with registration taking place online. Again, the service is free for both volunteers and organisations.

5 Dealing with the Childcare Issues many Face when Seeking to Volunteer

- Give consideration as to how roles might be fulfilled at different times. For example, shop roles requiring more volunteer cover at the busiest time from 10-3pm, rather than from the traditional 9-5pm. Better for parents (and grandparents) of school age children
- It is perfectly legitimate to reimburse volunteers for reasonable expenses incurred due to caring for dependants – including children – whilst they are carrying out their roles. Further information here:

<https://knowhownonprofit.org/people/volunteers/keeping/volunteer-expenses>



6 Engaging the Pre-retiree Community in Volunteering

Employer Supported Volunteering (ESV) can be a useful way for employers to prepare employees for retirement:

- Approach local employers with a view to providing information about suitable local opportunities and their benefits via soft/hard copy, or short presentation slots. Opportunities might be skills-based, providing retirees with the opportunity to continue using their professional skills, or a chance to try something completely different



- Don't assume that older volunteers will want to do structured roles as they often have a wealth of experience and can shape their own projects. Ask them what matters in their community, and enable them to set up and participate in their own volunteering activities. A fun example is knitting groups, which are growing increasingly popular with over 5,000 social action knitters across the UK producing in excess of 50 big bin-bags worth of knitted goods per month!

Further examples of similar projects can be found here:
<https://volunteermatters.org.uk/pillars/older-people/>

7 Engaging the 'Newly Located' in Buckinghamshire



- New Neighbours is a free local information service for new residents/home movers across Buckinghamshire. It connects with around 6,000 new residents each year, including the provision of hard copy packs. Get in touch with the service as an additional route to promote your volunteering roles:

<https://www.bucksfamilyinfo.org/kb5/buckinghamshire/fsd/service.page?id=tFhTDTYP1c4>

8 Harnessing the trend towards Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)



Skills-based volunteering:

- Offers mutual gain for both the employees who offer their time, and those who benefit from their skills and ideas
- It is good for team building, and provides a starting point for employees to engage further as private individuals.

Cause related marketing (CRM) involves a volunteer-involving organisation linking more intrinsically with a business, enabling it to reinforce its CSR policy, increase sales, raise mutual brand awareness, and strengthen brand loyalty through demonstrating its commitment to the local community.

This greater connection with a business may lead to increased volunteering from employees due to a heightened understanding of a charity's work, particularly if it is family- or health-related.

Rennie Grove Hospice Care has a comprehensive Corporate Partnership programme, and further information can be found here:

<http://www.renniegrove.org/support/companies/cause-related-marketing>

Steps to take:

1. Approach the HR departments of local businesses with consultative or project-based placements that professionals can carry out within their working hours

Examples include:

- A simple rolling company commitment to a lunch club, with individual employees signing up to one lunchtime per fortnight, or more ambitious rolling placements involving more focused support on research, finance, HR or marketing
- 2. Advertising volunteer roles requiring specialist skills on **Reach Volunteering** – a partner of Community Impact Bucks. Reach Volunteering promotes roles on its own website, and the roles are also streamed on Community Impact Bucks' website. As the vast majority of these roles can be carried out remotely, with perhaps a limited number of face to face meetings, Reach Volunteering's practice of advertising on LinkedIn also put these opportunities in front of a huge additional working age audience.

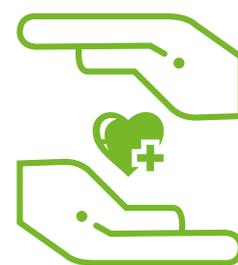
Don't forget to also regularly ask existing volunteers for what additional skills they would like to share, as sometimes people with the requisite skills and experience are right under your nose!

Trustees:

- Local businesses are also potential sources of trustees with a wealth of professional skills. Approaching HR departments is highly recommended as a trusteeship provides an additional approach to bolster employees' management skills
- It is important to offer a flexible approach to the location and timings of Board meetings in order to embrace the skill sets of people of working age. For example, the option to Skype in to meetings (helpful if they are during working hours, or in the evening when physical representation is not possible due to childcare responsibilities)
- Trustee roles can be advertised on Reach Volunteering (free for organisations with a turnover of less than £1 million). Community Impact Bucks also live streams these roles on its own website, and runs a Trustee matching event directly after its annual Trustee Conference, which has led to many successful matches between local business people and volunteer-involving organisations.

9 Group Volunteering – Making Friends and Spending Time with Family

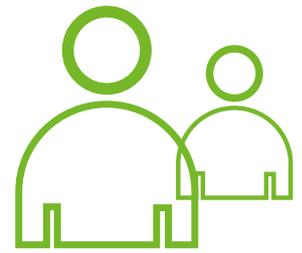
- Volunteering experiences that provide educational experiences for children and the chance to do something different together as a family, provide an excellent opportunity for organisations to connect with entirely new audiences. This also enables children to develop an interest in volunteering from a young age and for it to become a lifetime habit
- The National Trust's family volunteer days are an excellent example of combining leisure and charity.



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Engaging Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities

The inclusion of more BAME individuals occupying volunteer, employee, or trustee positions within charities provides young people from ethnic minority communities with positive role models. For many organisations, it is also vitally important that volunteers reflect the communities in which their services are based.



Examples of methods to spread the word about volunteering within BAME communities:

- Organisations specifically designed to serve a particular community
- Local shops serving the needs of a diverse community, for example clothing or food shops
- Local specialist restaurants
- Places of worship like mosques or temples
- Local schools
- Hold an open day within the local community
- Make links with local ethnic media
- Form links with organisations and associations that exist to serve specific groups
- Find out if there are local radio stations broadcasting to specific ethnic groups
- Get in touch with local councillors from BAME communities to see if they will help promote volunteering
- Establish links with representatives of BAME communities at the National Union of Students (NUS).

Other things to bear in mind:

- It is important to get to know the ethnic mix of the community in which your service is based. If you already have volunteers from different ethnic groups, enlist their help to develop awareness of volunteering opportunities
- Do not be afraid to ask questions if you are uncertain about particular ethnic traditions, and explain that you want to offer whatever support people might need to volunteer, whilst respecting their cultural differences
- It is very important to have a flexible approach, so that volunteers feel comfortable and supported.

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Engaging Individuals with Disabilities

- The Disability Volunteer Charter is a national initiative. It was developed by the Disability Action Alliance (DAA), and launched in Buckinghamshire in December 2014
- The Charter's aim is to increase the number, value and accessibility of opportunities for disabled people to volunteer their time, skills and experience. It sets out the core principles that organisations should adopt when recruiting and involving volunteers with disabilities
- All volunteer-involving organisations in Buckinghamshire are encouraged to think about how they might support volunteers with disabilities and sign up to the Charter, so that they can benefit from this additional rich source of skills and experience:
<http://disabilityactionalliance.org.uk/projects-3/volunteering/volunteer-charter/>

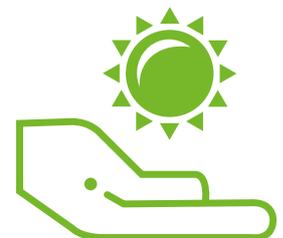




Image courtesy of
Age UK
Buckinghamshire

Has this piqued your interest? Do you want to discuss your thoughts with an expert?

Then we're here to help! Please book a free place at one of our 1-2-1 Finding & Supporting Volunteers' advice surgeries, or sign up to our extremely cost effective Attracting & Keeping Volunteers' training days. Find out more here:

<https://communityimpactbucks.org.uk/events/>

Further resources from Community Impact Bucks can be found here:

<https://communityimpactbucks.org.uk/volunteering/we-need-volunteers/>

www.communityimpactbucks.org.uk

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