



# WORKING WITH VOLUNTEERS

TOOL-KIT

**Volunteers are a critical component of any arts organization. From ushers to fundraising, to pro-bono consulting and board service, volunteers expand the capacity of a nonprofit. Volunteers also create an entry point for establishing a relationship with businesses. While this tool-kit focuses on skills-based volunteering, much of the advice is applicable to all types of volunteers.**

## **Benefits to Business**

- ▶ Employees are involved in rewarding community activity that enhances their business and interpersonal skills.
- ▶ Employee involvement builds recognition and good will for a company's image in the community.
- ▶ Support for the arts enhances the quality of life of the community, a factor in attracting and retaining motivated employees.
- ▶ Millennials who frequently volunteer are more likely to be proud, loyal, and satisfied employees as compared to those who rarely or never volunteer. (*2011 Deloitte Volunteer Impact Survey*)

## **Benefits to Business Volunteers**

- ▶ Volunteering provides opportunities to apply and expand professional skills.
- ▶ Provides skills-based volunteers the opportunity to make an in-depth contribution to an organization and to see results.
- ▶ Volunteers are able to develop leadership skills. Often they have a far greater scope at a volunteer position than in their workplace, especially if they are relatively junior.
- ▶ Volunteers gain new perspectives by working outside their field.



## Benefits for Arts Groups

- ▶ Skilled business professionals donate their time and skills to help arts groups with specific, specially-designed management projects free of charge.
- ▶ By serving as advisors and mentors, volunteers can help arts managers improve their management skills and use available resources more effectively and efficiently.
- ▶ Volunteers can become leaders within the organization by joining the boards of directors or becoming members of special committees.
- ▶ Volunteers can often provide access to additional resources both within their companies and through their professional network, including direct financial support and in-kind services.

## Benefits to the Community

- ▶ Helps build a healthy and vital cultural environment by creating strong connections and commitment to the community.
- ▶ Builds new leadership for the arts.

## What arts organizations need to know

- ▶ A volunteer is not a staff person. A volunteer cannot replace a staff person.  
*There are some legal and tax-related rules an arts organization should know about.*
- ▶ Make sure the volunteer project is well defined and an appropriate next step in the growth of the organization. Sometimes a volunteer can help to clarify the appropriate next step.
- ▶ Be sure that you have a staff member dedicated to maintaining the volunteer partnership.
- ▶ Secure your organization's board buy-in before engaging pro-bono volunteers.

## Recruitment Strategies

- ▶ Talk with your business contacts about recruiting volunteers and seek out companies that encourage volunteerism among their employees.
- ▶ Seek out volunteers with specific skill sets. Target companies which have the expertise and services that you need.
- ▶ Seek out and establish partnerships with professional associations like local alumni organizations, Society for Human Resource Management chapters, marketing and advertising associations, etc.
- ▶ Reach out to retired professionals and persons near retirement working with organizations in this arena such as the *Senior Corps RSVP Program* and *AARP*. They are waiting for good opportunities to use their skills.
- ▶ Contact your local *Business Volunteers for the Arts®* or post notices on volunteer websites such as *Volunteer Match*.
- ▶ Create a community for your volunteers by starting up networking opportunities.
- ▶ Find ways to make your programming flexible enough to fit the schedule of a busy professional and market it as such. This may involve allowing your staff flex hours so that they can find common times to meet with the volunteer. Some companies allow their employees to volunteer during business hours.
- ▶ Make it easy - interested volunteers should be able to download and submit their applications online.

## Training Volunteers

- ▶ Take the time to orient your volunteers to the differences between the for-profit and the nonprofit worlds.
- ▶ Create a mentoring program by pairing an experienced volunteer with an incoming one at the outset of their first project.

## Managing Volunteer Expectations

- ▶ Make volunteers feel welcomed and appreciated.
- ▶ Make sure the project is well defined and that the desired outcome is clear.
- ▶ Be sure that you have a staff member dedicated to maintaining the volunteer partnership.
- ▶ Volunteers want to make an impact. Give them feedback that connects their job to program success.

# Recognition

- ▶ Provide volunteer networking opportunities such as behind-the-scenes arts opportunities or social gatherings.
- ▶ Hold recognition lunches at the end of projects.
- ▶ Create annual volunteer awards. But say “Thank You” a lot more often than that!

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## Resources

[Business Volunteers for the Arts® Program](#)

[Catchfire](#)

[Taproot](#)

[National Service Resource Center](#)

Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts. There is no national organization, but many cities have a program.

[Volunteer Match](#)

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