GOOD PRACTICE IN VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT
PART TWO TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to part two of this course on good practice in volunteer management. In part one we looked at how an organisation can create a great volunteering experience by keeping in mind what would help a volunteer in deciding whether your volunteering role could be right for them, and we looked at induction, support, motivations and being flexible.

In this section we'll look at four practical skills that a good volunteer manager needs to have. When we talk about skills, we mean abilities or adeptness. We'll also look at the kind of knowledge that a volunteer manager should possess.

1. Communication

Communicating the difference volunteering makes, within and outside your organisation to different audiences, such as your management team or committee, local businesses or community partners, will mean that you are able to champion and stand up for volunteering by explaining to different types of audiences the difference that volunteering makes to them.

Remember that communication also includes non-verbal communication and people read body language loud and clear. Think about your physical expression and not just the words you choose or the tone which you adopt. Be positive and supportive.

Equally, when you’re supporting volunteers, be aware of how you communicate with them and how you come across. This relates to every aspect of the volunteer journey, right from when you create a role and how you communicate it in writing or verbally and at interview, to being able to clearly explain what the role involves and what your organisation will do to support your volunteers, including how volunteers will be made to feel part of your organisation or project.

2. Being able to identify what’s needed
Volunteers need to know where they stand and what you are asking of them. Creating roles that are not clearly expressed in terms of what they will achieve because you haven’t identified what contribution volunteering can bring, will mean that you attract volunteers who are unable to fully understand the role you are offering, and this may result in a poor volunteering experience.

Being clear in yourself about what’s needed and why, the commitment required to carry out the role and the kind of experience you are looking for, will help you to prepare a role description with clarity.

3. Flexibility

The best volunteer managers are those who are able to demonstrate flexibility in how they approach volunteer management. Thinking on your feet, having back-up plans or a volunteer rota, buddying up your volunteers so they can support one another are all ways that will enable you to be more flexible which will mean you can respond to changes in volunteer availability or shifting interest from volunteers or emerging activities in your organisation that you may not have planned for.

Flexibility is vital when managing volunteers because it will enable you to adapt to different situations arising from working with volunteers. You will never be able to predict every eventuality but being flexible will go a long way to showing your volunteers that you are keen to make their experience as positive as possible and your organisation is responsive to the reality of working with volunteers.

4. Listening to feedback

Volunteer managers are the ears of an organisation. If you are willing and able to listen to feedback and, where appropriate, act on it, this will demonstrate to volunteers that you are genuinely interested in their views and the experience from a volunteer perspective.

Volunteers can offer you all manner of feedback on organisational policies to what life is like for a volunteer within your organisation, and how integrated they feel to support your mission or your beneficiaries. Volunteers can provide an excellent voice for you to get to know the character of your organisation among a community of volunteers.
They are the four core skills we’ve identified for good volunteer managers. Have a think about the kinds of skills or qualities you have, and how they contribute towards being a good volunteer manager.

Volunteer managers should also possess good up to date knowledge of the following four areas of legislation:

1. Health and Safety
2. Equalities Act
3. Safeguarding
4. Data Protection

Whilst volunteers are not specifically mentioned in these four areas of legislation, you need to be aware of them to manage volunteers well. You can find this information on the web pages of this course.

A volunteer manager should keep up to date with the rules around who is allowed to volunteer. People on benefits are entitled to volunteer as long as they continue to meet the terms of their benefit.

People on Job Seekers Allowance, for example, can volunteer as long as they are still looking for paid work. A person must be available to attend a job interview if given 48 hours’ notice and able to start a paid job with one week’s notice.

Volunteers must not be paid money for volunteering. Volunteering-related expenses such as travel or lunch are permitted. Always explain what your organisation will cover as eligible volunteer-related expenditure before a volunteer incurs any expenses. Volunteers should submit receipts and can be reimbursed on that basis.

Citizens from the European Union as well as those from the European Economic Area are fully entitled to volunteer, and so are asylum seekers and people granted refugee status. It’s always best to ask your volunteer to check their status with the Home Office in the first instance.

That’s it for part two. We’ve looked at:

- the skills you need to have to be a good volunteer manager, such as: communication, identifying what’s needed, being flexible and listening to feedback
- including volunteers in how you think about and conduct your activities in relation to health and safety, the Equalities Act, safeguarding and data protection, just as you would paid staff.
- who is allowed to volunteer.

Join us for part three where we will look at reward and recognition for your volunteers.