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If you plan and prepare well, it will help you to attract the volunteers you need. Here are some tips on 'how to'.

How to plan your recruitment

- Decide who is going to be responsible for recruiting volunteers and who will be part of the recruitment team.
- Decide what you want volunteers to be involved with. This is where the role profile comes in.
- List the qualities, skills, attitudes, and interests that you would want from potential volunteers. This is the personal qualities and skills – you can divide this into essential and wish list.
- Outline what your organisation can offer to potential volunteers; what is in it for them? Volunteers may not be motivated by money, but they are motivated – what is so special about your organisation?
- Agree how the number of volunteers you would like to recruit. Volunteers want to be busy.
- When should recruitment take place? One volunteer at a time - which would mean an ongoing recruitment; or in groups once, twice or four times a year – what is most useful to you as an organisation?
- Where and how could you advertise? Where would the sort of people you are looking for look to find a volunteering role?

Marketing your Volunteer Opportunities

Marketing your recruitment is about getting your recruitment message across to individuals who might volunteer.

Your organisation needs to grab the Attention of people, to get their Interest, to bring out a Desire to be involved and to motivate people into Action to join you. This is known as AIDA - Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action.

There are a variety of ways to recruit volunteers. You may be able to identify a budget for recruitment, but probably you will be looking for low cost or free ideas.

- Register your volunteer opportunities with Bury VCFA (Bury Volunteer Bank)
- Use social media such as X, Facebook and other appropriate channels.
- Printing posters, leaflets, and other display materials.
- Give presentations to local groups.
- Take part in Volunteers Week – and any other ‘days or weeks’ relevant to your group.
- Investigate local Employer Supported Volunteering programmes.

What is so special about your group/organisation?

Answering this question will help to design an effective recruitment campaign. Often volunteers do not look at the role, but by the ethos of your organisation. For example, there may be people who want to volunteer with homeless people, environmental causes or helping animals. They could volunteer in variety of roles as long as they feel they contribute to the cause.

Finding something unique about your organisation could attract volunteers that will be committed to the cause and ethos. Do not forget to emphasise how their commitment will help the cause. What is your Unique Selling Point (USP)?

Attracting volunteers

Interesting roles are a magnet to volunteers. Be open to adapt the role to suit volunteers' needs. Can think of a role for a volunteer with a unique set of skills?

Are you offering roles that volunteers will actually want to do?

Before an organisation begins the process of recruiting volunteers, it needs to identify the tasks that are appropriate, and those that are inappropriate, for volunteers to do. A basic principle governing this process is that is that volunteers should complement, not cover, the work of any paid staff.

It may be tempting to identify tasks for volunteers that are easy to pick up and which involve little training (e.g., collating a mailing). The danger in doing this is that volunteers may become bored with the work, and that they feel that they have a low status within the organisation. Conversely, giving volunteers tasks which, they find too challenging may also discourage them from getting, or staying, involved in volunteering. People will differ in what they find too routine or over-challenging. It is important to be as flexible as possible and identify a range of tasks that volunteers could undertake.

Make recruitment effective

Effective recruitment is when you are getting the number or type of people volunteering that you want to involve in your organisation.

You may have regular sessions or training courses which you recruit to, or you may be able to recruit volunteers at any time.

If you find that you are not attracting the volunteers you would like, think about your recruitment process. Might your current volunteer recruitment process be putting up barriers which discourage people from getting involved?

Your recruitment message

The essential core of any recruitment message must be an emphasis on the benefits of volunteering to the potential volunteer. You can overcome the negative perceptions of volunteering by illustrating the range of activities; the benefits in terms of social contact, fun, development of skills, responsibility, and new experiences.

Defining your message:

- What tasks might volunteers do and what might they gain from it?
- Why is the project or their role in it worthwhile?
- What are the aims of the project?
- What is important/exciting/worthwhile about the project?
- What sort of skills, experience, attitudes and qualities are you looking for?
- What should people do if they are interested?

Removing barriers - recruitment tips

If you are not getting the right or enough volunteers to apply for your roles, think about what the possible barriers are.

Below is a list that might help you to establish potential problems:

- A lack of sensitivity to age, race, culture, religion, gender or support needs
- The need for references and disclosures
- Lengthy application forms
- Publicity i.e., posters or leaflets – that do not stand out.
- Using too formal language or terminology – simple English is always best.
- Too general recruitment messages that do not appeal to anyone in particular.

If these, or any others, apply – think about what you can do to lessen or remove their impact.

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