

Engaging Boomers and the New Wave of Volunteers

**Twin Cities Hunger Initiative
Morning Learning Session
December 1, 2010**

**TWIN CITIES
HUNGER
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[Discussion]

Identify symbols or images that represent the Boomer generation (those born between 1946-1964.)



[Plan for the presentation]

- Key research on Boomers and volunteering
- Best practices for engaging Boomers as volunteers
- Discussion: Successes in engaging Boomers? Challenges?

[Frame the Question – Boomers & Civic Engagement]

- Traditional volunteer management was designed for the generations born before 1946.
- Volunteer systems need to be reinvented for the Boomers and generations that follow.
- There is a wealth of resources for organizations who can reinvent to tap what Boomers and upcoming generations offer.



[Frame the Question

The challenge

“...the articulation of a new vision for later life that includes challenging and dynamic volunteer opportunities is outpacing the construction of programs and institutions needed to realize that vision.”



[The traditionalists generation]

Born 1920 -1946, grew up during the Great Depression and World War Two.

- Sacrifice
- Hard work
- Respect for authority
- Duty before pleasure
- Adherence to rules



[The Boomer generation]

Born 1946 - 1964

- Social cause focused
- Hardworking
- Longing for personal growth
- Self-absorbed
- Team orientation



The Boomer generation

Boomers early life experiences very different

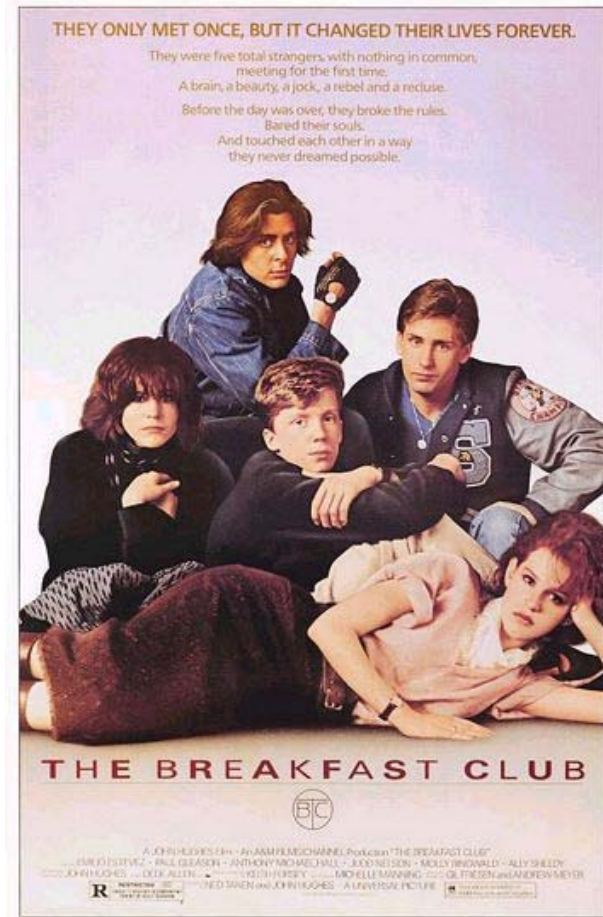
- Post WW II prosperity
- Idealism of JFK
- Experienced protest and change
 - Civil Rights
 - Women's Liberation
 - Vietnam War



Generation X – 1964 to 1980

As volunteers:

- Want flexible schedules
- Expect their time to be used efficiently
- More balanced between work and personal life than Boomers



H-2(b)

Generation Y or Millennials – 1981 to present

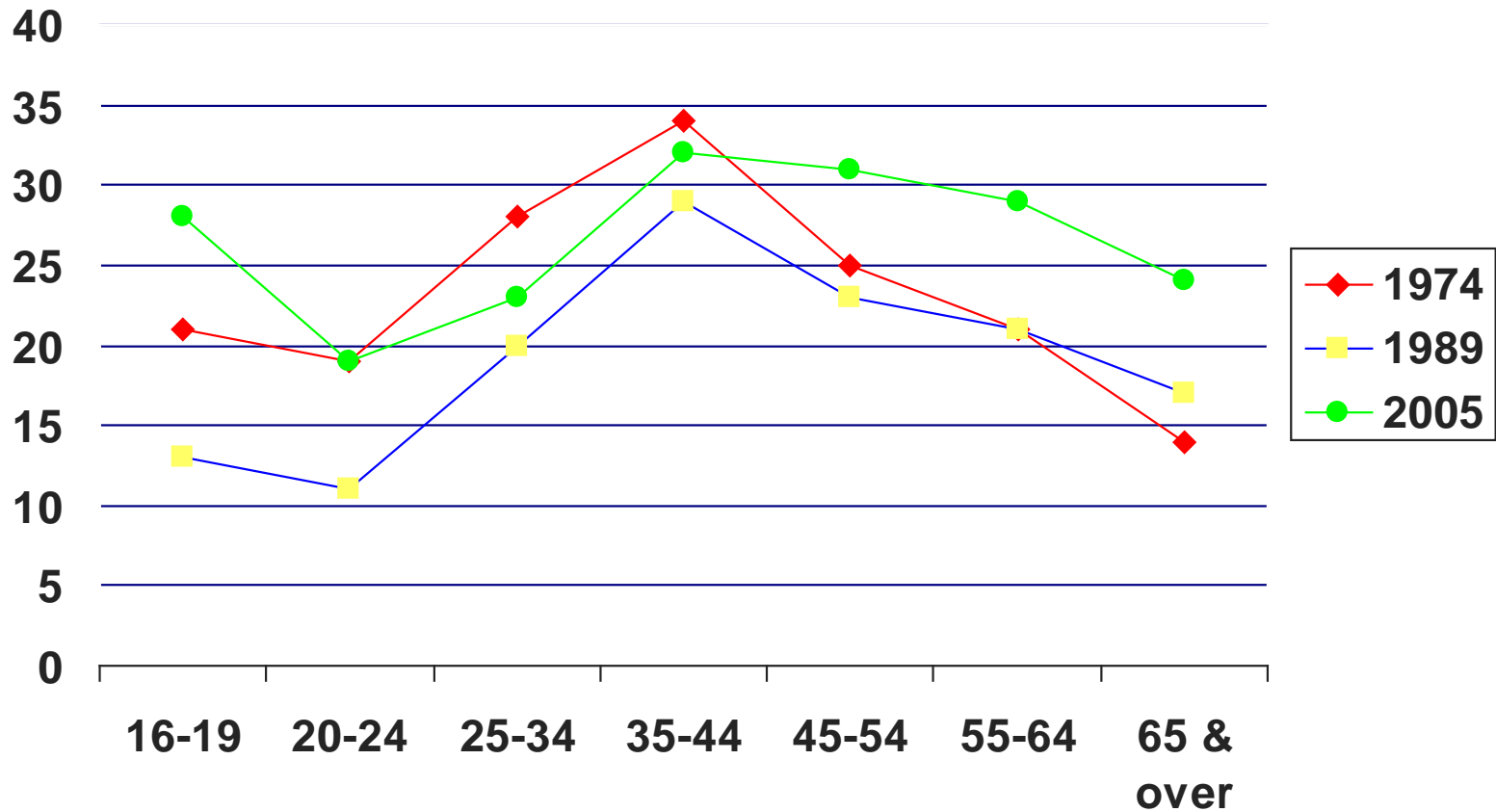
As volunteers:

- Volunteering in record breaking numbers
- Seek leadership opportunities
- Seek challenges
- Like feedback



H-2(b)

Trends in Volunteering by Age (1974-2005)



[Boomer Volunteering]

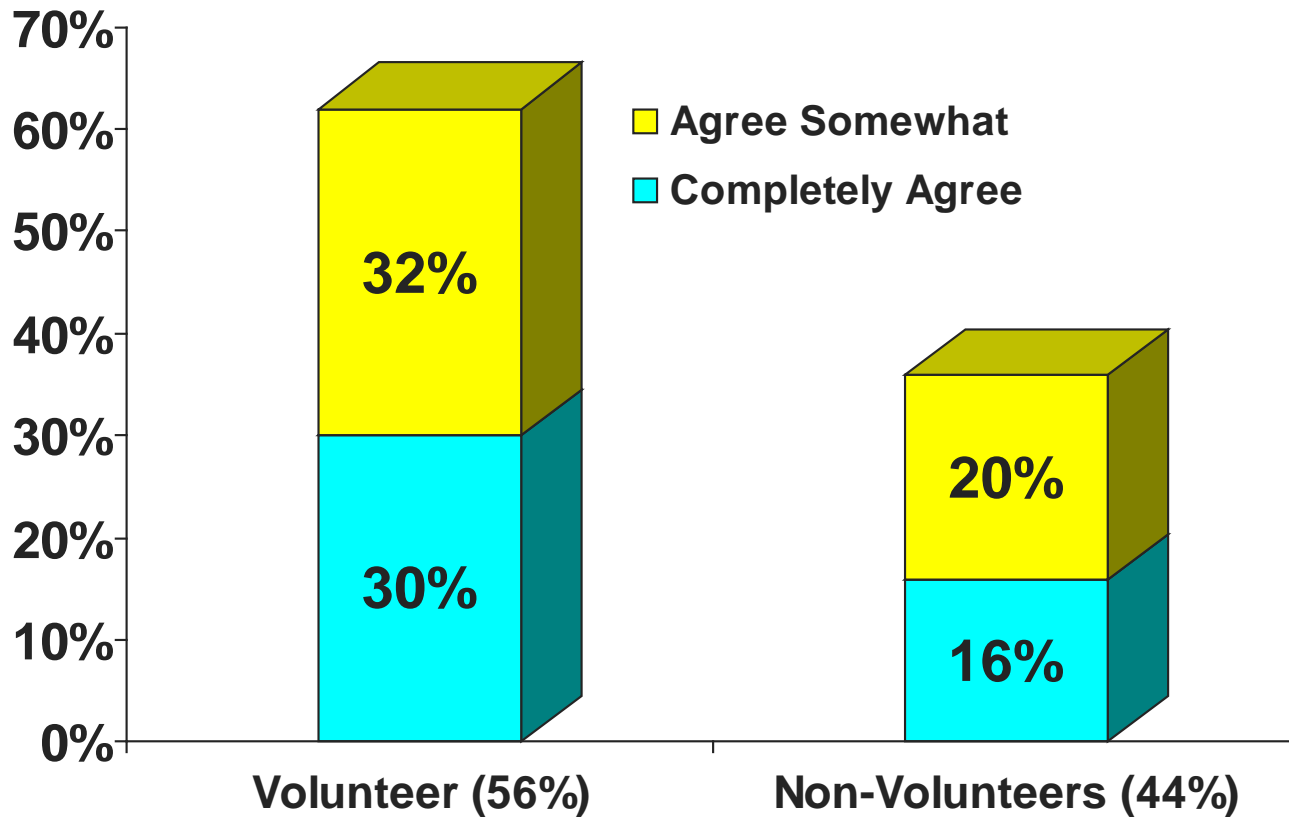
- 37 Million Boomer Volunteers
- Average of 12 hours/month (median=less than 10) or 5.3 billion hours/year
- **Estimated value of over \$100 billion/year**
- Self directed volunteering increased 34% between 2003 and 2009

Boomers, Work & Retirement



- 12% of Boomers are retired and not working
- Almost half (43%) of these retired Boomers plan to return to the workforce
- Only 17% of Boomers currently working expect to retire completely and not work at all

Boomers Who Agree They'll Volunteer More in Retirement





Best Practices

**For Engaging Boomers and
the New Wave of Volunteers**

Best Practice

1. Understand volunteers' deep-seated need to have impact.
2. Focus the volunteer interview on learning the prospective volunteer's passions, mutually designing his/her volunteer role.



Best Practices

3. Offer a wide choice of volunteer opportunities in all aspects of the organization's operations.
4. Include some short term and seasonal volunteer positions to align with Boomer availability.

Restructuring positions for Boomer availability

Strategies:

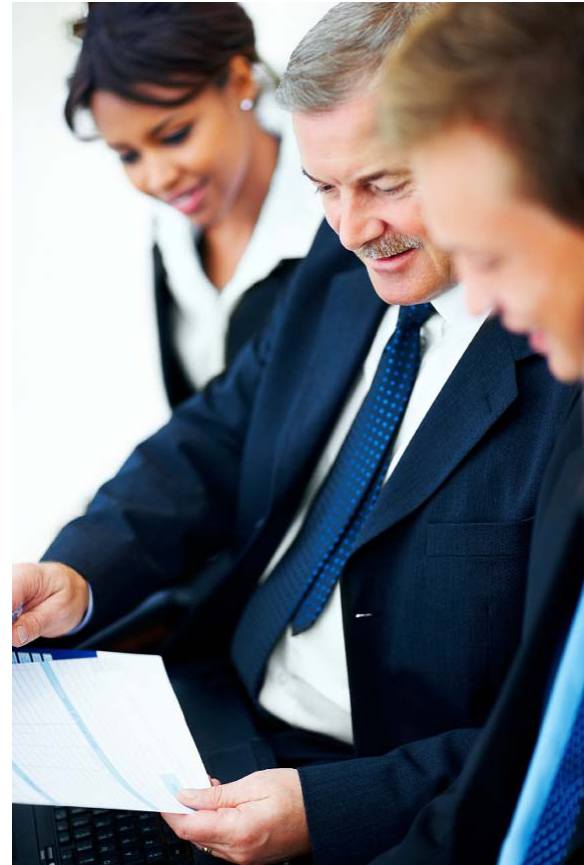
- Substitution
- Job Sharing
- Rotation
- Segmentation
- Team Volunteering
- Telecommuting

From "Creating Boomer-friendly Volunteer Opportunities: Restructuring Existing Opportunities" by D. Scott Martin.

<http://www.nationalserviceresources.org/node/17770>

Best Practices

5. Offer skills-based volunteer opportunities.
6. Develop volunteer position descriptions that are engaging and show impact.



Best Practices

7. Move volunteers into project leadership roles.
8. Recruit Boomer volunteers by developing appealing recruitment messages, working networks and being highly visible on the web.



Know the right messages for your audience: Personal Descriptors



Good	Bad
Experienced	Elderly
Advisor	Third Ager
Coach	Retired
Wise one	Older people
	Older Boomers

Source: Recasting Retirement (2002)
Civic Ventures/Temple U.

From TPT presentation

Best Practices

9. Change traditional volunteer supervision to leading volunteers and offering collegial support.
10. Reframe volunteer recognition to respond to the value Boomers place on having impact and being life-long learners.



[Best Practices]

11. Obtain organizational buy-in.
12. Become a learning organization.



[Your experience]

**What successes have you had
engaging Boomers as volunteers?**

**What challenges have you
experienced?**

[Thank you]

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