MAVA MINNESOTA ASSOCIATION FOR VOLUNTEER ADMINISTRATION

Trends in Volunteerism | 2018
MAVA Research Study

SUMMARY

As Minnesota has entered a time of high employment rate, the Minnesota Association for Volunteer Administration (MAVA) conducted a follow-up study to our 2009, 2010, 2013 and 2014 research on trends in volunteerism. In April 2018, 239 leaders of volunteers across the state responded to the survey. After a decade of rapid change in volunteerism trends, the study found a relative stabilization of the key volunteerism trends, with new trends on the horizon to watch.

What volunteers are seeking
- 47% seeing increased interest in short term volunteering
- 35% seeing increased interest in volunteering on evenings and weekend
- 30% seeing increased interest in using workplace skills
- 19% seeing increased interest in home/virtual volunteering

Who is volunteering
- 35% seeing more inquires from Boomers
- 31% seeing more inquires from high school and college students
- 31% seeing more inquires from Millennials
- 27% seeing less inquires from traditional generation
- 26% seeing more inquires corporate group
- 24% seeing more inquires from job seekers and 17% seeing less inquiries
- 18% seeing more inquiries from immigrant communities

Other trends
- 48% seeing increase in volunteers seeming busy
- 45% seeing increase in older volunteers aging out and hard to replace
- 35% seeing increase in regulations/ requirement related to volunteering
- 18% seeing increase in volunteering due to political climate

Volunteer Availability
- Regarding new inquiries from potential new volunteers, 13% saw fewer, 59% saw about the same and 28% saw more
- Regarding amount of time per volunteer,19% seeing less time, 60% seeing about the same and 22% seeing more time
- Regarding current supply of volunteers compared to need, 16% have more people who want to volunteer than space, 25% have about the right amount, 50% are somewhat short on time for needs, and 8% are very short on time for needs

Organizations are updating their volunteer management practices
- 66% reported involving volunteers in new roles and positions
- 60% increased communication with volunteers
- 57% increased use of social media
- 56% used technology in new ways to communicate with and track volunteers
- 53% streamlined/standardized practices for volunteer intake, screening, placement or training
- 51% reinvigorated volunteer recruitment
- 43% evaluated impact of work
- 43% increased the flexibility of when volunteers can volunteer
- 42% reported involving volunteers in leadership positions or managing projects
- 41% added volunteer positions designed specifically for shorter term volunteers
- 40% stepped up internal advocacy to gain support
- 38% trained staff on how to lead and support volunteers

STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS TRENDS
MAVA 2018 Conference Presentation on Top Trends in Volunteer Engagement

1. **Include some volunteer roles with short term time commitment.**
   - Design roles specifically for positions of three months or less
   - Offer some skill-based short term project roles
   - Create a pool of volunteers that you can go back to for a series of short term requests
   - Scale the time spent on orientation, training and recognition to match the time volunteers spend.
   - At minimum send a thank you email after work is completed

   See additional resources at:
   http://www.mavanetwork.org/content.aspx?page_id=22&club_id=286912&module_id=201963

2. **Include some volunteer roles that are skill based**
   - Create a culture that values skill based volunteers.
   - Define skill based roles for volunteers throughout the organization.
   - Provide training for staff on working with volunteers in skill based roles.
   - Start outreach and recruitment with current volunteers, then recruit through partners and targeted volunteer recruitment

3. **Design volunteer positions and recruitment methods to appeal to Millennials, Gen X and Boomers**
   Millennials
   1. Offer shorter term volunteer position and flexible schedules
   2. Design positions with challenge, leadership and room for ownership
   3. Respect desire to have work life balance
   4. Use social media to recruit and communicate

   Gen X
   1. Design position where time will be used efficiently
   2. Have a fast paced technologically updated environment
   3. Be open to doing things in new ways
   4. Offer family friendly volunteer opportunities

   Boomers
   1. Show impact when recruiting and recognizing
   2. Be aware of tendency to avoid positions that seem menial
   3. Be open to customizing a position for the right volunteer when there is a good mission fit

4. **Diversify volunteer pool to more closely reflect the cultural diversity of your community.**
   - Shift your language to "help," "benefit" or " support" instead of volunteer
   - Build relationships with diverse communities
   - Develop cultural competency in your organization
   - Understand socio-economic status and make adjustments such as offer transportation stipends, child care, food, etc.
   - Partner to engage groups of youth

   See MAVA's Inclusive Volunteerism at:
   http://www.mavanetwork.org/content.aspx?page_id=22&club_id=286912&module_id=283483

5. **Build capacity to attract Gen Z as volunteers.**
   Why:
   Gen Z is showing amazing capability with the anti-violence movement, is moving into the prime ages for volunteering and is a quarter of our population.
   We cannot assume the volunteer structures developed for previous generations will align with their interests

   Gen Z - Characteristics
   - They are more engaged in global affairs than previous generations
   - Optimism is a driving force in their interest in positive change, and the optimism is curbed by a sense of realism
   - More focused on solving a problem than meeting a need
   - Are highly self directed
   - If they cannot find nonprofits willing to work with them, they will strike out on their own

   Gen Z – Strategies
   - In recruitment include examples of how their efforts would have incremental progress in solving a problem and why their particular age is needed.
   - Use multiple forms of social media in recruitment and communication.
   - Give opportunity for ownership of projects
   - For students:
     - Design positions that fit their schedule: weekends, summers, flexible, short term
     - Create good positions that meet their needs (connected to coursework, etc.)
     - For recruitment:
       - Students recruiting peers
       - Partnerships with schools and student clubs and presence at schools
       - Share how service can impact future success
       - Agency website indicates what ages are welcome to volunteer

6. **Boost use of technology for volunteer recruitment, communication, tracking and recognition**

   Why:
   Because some volunteers expect it and it has the potential to maximize results and to save time.

   Basic strategies:
   - Include in volunteer recruitment social media and online recruitment such as volunteer centers and/or Volunteer Match
   - Have a good database for volunteer tracking
   - Use online sign up tool such as Sign up Genius
   - Have webpage for volunteers that is appealing and includes a way to sign up online
   - Strategically use email and texting for volunteer communication
   - Have options for volunteers who do not want to use technology
   - Balance use of technology with attention to building relationships and face time with volunteers

Advanced strategies:
- Offer volunteer orientation/training online
- Use two more types of social media for volunteer communication and recognition as well as for recruitment
- Strategic use of video and blogs for visibility and communication
- Use distance technology (webinars, live stream, Google Chat, etc,) for training and volunteer communication
- Apply technology developed for business/sectors to volunteer management. For example:
  - Learning Management Systems (LMS) such as Inquisiq for volunteer training
  - Talent Gather app for college volunteer recruitment
  - Basecamp project management software for volunteer team communication

7. **Include roles for virtual volunteers or volunteering from home.**

Why:
Because technology allows it and it will appeal to volunteers who are too busy to spend time commuting your office and/or used to telecommuting for work.

Strategy:
Brainstorm mission focus volunteer roles that could be done remotely.

8. **Pay attention to offering transitions to volunteers as their lives change.**

Why:
You may unnecessarily lose traditional generation volunteers or other volunteers who have life changes such as getting busier.

Strategies:
- Increase communication with volunteers so that you are aware if something is changing for them.
- For volunteers who are aging:
  - Pair volunteers to make the most of abilities
  - Design positions that require less lifting or stamina as options
  - Consider shorter shifts as an option
  - Ask what would help them be able to continue to volunteer

9. **Be ready to reinvigorate volunteer recruitment if needed**

Why:
We may be entering a period of shorter supply of volunteers, at least for some organizations.

Strategies:
- Redesign volunteer positions to more tightly align with the trends of what volunteers seek
- Look at volunteer pool. Is there some group missing? Set up a task force to help plan recruitment
- Ask current volunteers to recruit new volunteers. Provide cards to pass out with key information about volunteering at your organization
- Develop strategies to reach the 60% of the population that does not regularly volunteer.