

Motivating, Retaining and Valuing Volunteers



**A happy, motivated team, makes for a more
productive and effective team.....**

Sometimes, the easy bit is recruiting volunteers and getting them interest in your project. The harder bit is keeping them and ensuring that they feel valued and motivated in their role.

Motivating Volunteers

Whilst we aren't all ambitious and looking for new challenges, we all like to feel motivated in our roles, whether we have a paid role or a volunteer role.

Volunteers are giving up their time to support your project, so it's even more essential that they feel motivated whilst they are volunteering with you.

Identifying people's motivations for volunteering at an early stage is *crucial* in ensuring that their needs are being met whilst they are volunteering. These motivations might include:

- Learning new skills.
- Utilising existing skills.
- Giving something back to the community/ helping to make a difference.
- Social aspect; having fun and meeting new people.
- Gaining experience.
- Putting some structure or routine back in the day, getting out of the house.

Keeping volunteers motivated, takes time, effort and planning. It might involve; ensuring that they have a varied and interesting workload, giving feedback on pieces of work, both day to day and during one to one sessions. Checking on progress, taking an interest and asking how volunteers are doing all help to keep volunteers feeling motivated. That said, volunteering is a two street and both the *volunteer* and *organisation* needs to benefit in order for the volunteering relationship to work.

Retaining Volunteers

Volunteers will appreciate a planned and organised volunteer programme. If it isn't organised, if volunteers are sat around with nothing to do and, ultimately you will lose them eventually. It's good to have an ongoing piece of work for them to 'pick and put down' when it's quiet or if you aren't around, or off sick. Ensure that other members of the team are clear about the roles of volunteers and work that they are undertaking so that everyone is clear and volunteers can be supported if you aren't around. This will all help in retaining your volunteers in the long term.

Valuing Volunteers

Recognition and **reward** is *essential* in ensuring that your volunteers feel valued. They don't have any monetary incentives for doing what they do, they *want* to be there and *want* to help. Their motivations are not likely to include seeking formal recognition and reward for their efforts, but we all appreciate credit for a job well done, providing it is genuine and not tokenistic. Such recognition is likely to result in them wanting to continue to volunteer with you, as they will feel that their contribution matters and that they are making a difference.

Final thought....

Ultimately, put yourself in your volunteers' shoes... would you feel valued and motivated in the role that you have provided for volunteers?. Would you feel valued and motivated as part of the team?

For information about motivational theory, visit:
or speak to the Volunteer Centre.