

Understanding Volunteer Motivations

by Merrill Associates

NOTE FROM EDITOR: Why do you care about what motivates your volunteers?

"Various research-based studies with a range of different organizations have demonstrated that volunteers who find that their tasks offer opportunities that allow them to fulfill their primary motivations are typically more satisfied, and intend to stay at their organizations longer, than volunteers who do not find activities that match their primary motivations." From *The Matching of Motivations to Affordances in the Volunteer Environment*, <http://nvs.sagepub.com/cqi/reprint/38/1/5>

I am frequently asked, "How do we motivate our volunteers?" My response is, "You don't." Volunteers bring their own unique motivations to their work. A good volunteer manager learns to identify those motivations and help each volunteer achieve a sense of personal satisfaction.

We know that volunteers are motivated by a variety of personal reasons and may have different reasons at different times for different volunteer positions. I may volunteer for an event because I am doing it with friends. I may volunteer for a different organization because I feel passionately about the cause. I may decide to serve on a board to develop new skills and meet new people. Overall, volunteers have a variety of motivations for the work they do.

Volunteers indicate they are most satisfied with their volunteer experience when:

- it is for an issue of personal importance;
- they feel needed and valued;
- it is meaningful, interesting work.

Understanding and identifying these motivations does not necessarily mean each volunteer will have a positive experience or feel fulfilled (and motivated) by the work they are asked to do. There are other intrinsic motivations we each have that affect our satisfaction regarding work. In 1968, McClelland & Atkinson (Harvard professors) identified three primary needs we attempt to fulfill through work: need for **achievement**, need for **affiliation**, and need for **power**.

These needs are learned, culturally-based behaviours. Although most individuals have a mix of all three types, one need tends to predominate, and we generally try to satisfy the need that is strongest in any given situation. For example, I may volunteer for an organization because I believe in the cause and need to feel a sense of affiliation with others who share that belief. The need I hope to satisfy in this situation may be different from the need I feel when serving on a fundraising committee where I may have a stronger need to make something happen.

To understand the implications of these needs for volunteer managers, consider the following descriptions:

- **The Achiever:** This person is committed to accomplishing goals, welcomes a challenge, and looks for opportunities to test out new skills and improve performance.
- **The Affiliator:** This person values relations, enjoys working with others, and seeks out opportunities to be helpful and supportive.
- **The Power Person:** This person seeks to influence people and events so that change is realized.

Achievers seek success in situations that require excellence or high performance. Their positive characteristics include being focused on results, setting goals and taking risks, and enjoying challenges and being innovative. They can also be so goal-oriented that they can seem insensitive to people and relationships. They can appear autocratic as they move a project forward. Achievers often prefer working alone and being given the authority to do the job. They like well-delegated tasks, concrete feedback to improve performance, and a "hands-off" management style.

Affiliators enjoy forming alliances and partnerships; they like to work with others, developing friendships. Their positive characteristics focus on relationships, being sensitive to the feelings and needs of others, supportive of others, and wanting to be helpful. They may sacrifice goals by devoting time to trying to keep everyone happy. They tend to need approval and may take criticism personally. They dislike and will avoid controversy or conflict. In a group situation, affiliators are aware of the personal dynamics and often tend to talk about feelings rather than the work itself. This can be annoying for achievers or power people, who tend to focus more on the work and goals rather than the relationships and feelings. Affiliators offer a wonderful balance in a group. They can slow down the "forge ahead" goal-oriented members and help to build a sense of team. They like a supervisor who is caring, personal, and available. Affiliators enjoy receiving input and advice from a supervisor and feeling part of the team.

Power people like to use their influence and skills to bring about change and to shape opinions, and are comfortable working alone. While power can be viewed as a negative, power people, as referred to here, believe in sharing power, information, and control so that change can occur. Power people are concerned with position, title, respect and reputation; they may be charismatic leaders, articulate, and verbally aggressive. They can build confidence in a group, but can also seem autocratic since they are self-assured and confident that their way is the best way. They are seen as "take charge people", focused on the outcome and sometimes indifferent to the people involved. Power people prefer very clear policies, procedures and respect strong leadership.

It is important to recognize that one style is not better than another. Each person has a preferred style in which they work most comfortably. As volunteer managers, we will have all styles in our volunteer corps. It is important to understand these motivations and how to work with each type of person so they feel their needs are being met.

President's Report

Elaine Glowacki, Wisconsin Nonprofits Association,
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Dear DCAVS member,

Your 2010 Board has already gotten down to business at our annual retreat in January. We focused on ways to strengthen our core services and developed these four goals:

- Increase public and organizations' understanding and valuing of volunteer administration and DCAVS.
- Be more connected and responsive to our members and prospective members to increase membership and strengthen retention.
- Strengthen our web presence.
- Continue to provide high quality training and development opportunities.

We've formed small task groups to develop action plans for each goal and we welcome additional volunteers. Remember - as we work to improve and strengthen the DCAVS organization, you will learn skills and enhance your own curriculum vitae. Some of the ideas we discussed at the retreat include:

- Hold networking events separate from our Lunch & Learns.
- Develop ways for members to communicate with each other electronically (e.g., listserv, Facebook, LinkedIn).
- Create networking and training opportunities for more experienced volunteer administrators.
- Consider more direct and personal ways to welcome new members and to assist those new to volunteer administration, such as with a mentoring program.
- Add functionality to the website to make it more useful to members and the general public.

In my January column I declared 2010 to be the Year of the Member. Notice a theme running through our retreat suggestions above? These are the things we want as members and over the next several months we'll be reaching out to learn more about what is important to you.

Stay tuned.

Elaine

Membership Renewal Drawing Winner

Congratulations to the Friends of the Arboretum for renewing their DCAVS Membership by December 31, 2009 and winning a Free Lunch and Learn Program Certificate!

Beyond Volunteer Recruitment

by Mark Horoszowski, *A Volunteer's Guide to Changing the World*

Right now, there is a stunning amount of effort being put forth by nonprofits to find and attract new donors and volunteers. The storm of activity has resulted in lots of noise, but not much action. In addition to overall decreases in donor giving during a down economy, the shift to online fundraising has proven to NOT be effective: *To date, according to the Center of Philanthropy at Indiana University, email and Internet are considered the least successful fundraising techniques.* And, despite the hype, *Causes* on Facebook provide barely any benefits for organizations, in part due to the 170,000 (and growing) competing causes.

So while small and huge nonprofits alike are putting more and more money and resources behind advertisements and Facebook pages, I think its time to step back and identify some easier ways to create big -wins:

1. Provide value. Give something away, for FREE, that people NEED. It might be a service, book, or just a social opportunity.

2. Build personal relationships. Take some time to build TRUST. Understand what volunteers and donors really want from your organization.

3. Engage committed volunteers. Host ENVISION sessions and create opportunities for volunteers and donors to give more than just time or money.

So, what is an **envision session**?

Sometimes, you might not even be aware of a problem or a challenge that is hindering your organization and cause. At the same time, often times people create solutions for needs they did not know existed.

For these two reasons, I think it's a GREAT idea for every nonprofit to hold *Envision Sessions*: a time where you bring together a diverse group of people and ask them to start sharing ideas in a very open and supportive environment. Make sure to involve great minds from your community, not only people already engaged. And remember, this isn't a brainstorm. What's the difference? Brainstorming sessions are held to solve a problem everybody knows *already* exists. Envisions sessions should be designed to tackle problems that you don't know are affecting your cause.

From: <http://howtorelay.blogspot.com/>



Member Profile:



Girl Scouts of Wisconsin - Badgerland Council, Inc.

Since March 12, 1912, Girl Scouts has been building tomorrow's leaders today. More than 50 million women have been Girl Scouts since our inception and we continue to grow today!

Girl Scouting serves girls; we help girls become the best they can be as they learn lifelong leadership skills along with developing key core values like integrity, courage, and responsibility in a diverse and ever-changing world. Girl Scouting moves at the speed of girl and does so through the committed work of volunteers.

Volunteers are at the heart of Girl Scouting. The best programs in the world sit on bookshelves and are nothing but words on paper without the life that volunteers breathe into them. Because of Girl Scout volunteers, a whole world of opportunity and possibility opens to girls.

Girl Scouts of Wisconsin - Badgerland Council is headquartered in Madison and houses service centers in Beloit, La Crosse, and Platteville. The council serves 21 counties in south-central and southwest Wisconsin and 1 county each in Illinois, Iowa, and Minnesota. More than 14,500 girls are served annually by 4,500 dedicated volunteers.

Often when people think "Girl Scout volunteer," they think "leader." While it's true that the majority of volunteers are leaders, Girl Scout volunteers serve in many positions from working directly with girls like leaders to assisting with committees to training adults to serving on the Board of Directors. Episodic/short-term volunteers assist in a variety of ways from helping with programs to sharing interests with troops to committee work. The ability to impact the lives of girls through Girl Scouting is great when one volunteers - regardless of type of service.

To learn more about Girl Scouts, the Girl Scout Alumnae Association, or to volunteer with Girl Scouts, contact Ella Benson, Volunteer Coordinator, at bensone@gsbadgerland.org or call 608.237.1163 or 800.236.2710 X 1163. You can also get more information from our website, www.gsbadgerland.org

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No one management style works for all volunteers in all settings. Volunteer managers need to have flexible styles at work to meet the needs of a variety of volunteers. Affiliators are looking for chatty supervisors who care about their feelings about the volunteer assignment, and may perceive criticism as a personal attack rather than a simple suggestion to enhance performance. Achievers believe everyone wants to improve performance and welcome feedback. Both affiliators and the achievers may find power people too honest and "pushy." The power person loves political intrigue; the affiliator hates it. Affiliators chair meetings that attend to the needs of the group with the decisions secondary; achievers are happy only if the agenda is covered, decisions are made, and the meeting ends on time.

While these are described here as three distinct personality types, it is important to remember that volunteers rarely fit nicely into one category. Many people are a blend of these styles or may exhibit certain styles in certain situations.

How can we learn what motivates our volunteers? Information can be gathered through careful interviewing. Some questions that can help uncover personal style and needs include:

- Describe a situation that gave you great satisfaction or a sense of a job well done.
- When working in a group, what do you like and dislike?
- Do you prefer working alone or in a group setting?
- What type of supervision do you prefer?

How do you motivate your volunteers? Be sure their motivational needs are being met. Know them personally, understand what is important to them, and help fill their need for **achievement, affiliation** or **power**. Make every effort to first understand their style and the potential conflict or negative effects this can have on volunteers with different motivational needs. Understanding motivations leads to good volunteer management practices (interviewing, placement, management and recognition) that lead to volunteer satisfaction and retention.

DCAVS January Lunch and Learn Program

Meaningful Volunteer Recognition – It's Important!

Are you looking for creative ways to recognize your volunteers? Are you tired of using the same old volunteer recognition strategies? If so, join us to hear from an United Way Volunteer Program representative and learn about great ideas on how to recognize your volunteers. For many of us, volunteers contribute so much in helping us continue the mission of our organizations and often times don't get the recognition they deserve. Learn from a leader in the field. Come with questions and information to share about your recognition program.

Day/Date: Wednesday, March 17, 2010
Time: 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.
Location: Madison Concourse Hotel, 1 West Dayton Street. Participants are responsible for their own parking expenses.

Registration Deadline: Thursday, March 11, 2010 by 4 p.m.

Register by contacting Ella Benson (608.237.1163 or BensonE@gsbadgerland.org). Registrations will be closed after 4 p.m.

The cost for this DCAVS Lunch and Learn Program is \$10.00 for members and \$15.00 for non-members. The cost includes meal and seminar fee. Payment is required, once registered, whether you attend or not. Everyone registered by the deadline and in attendance at the program by 11:45 a.m. is eligible to win a free Lunch and Learn Program certificate for a future program. A meal cannot be guaranteed to those arriving past 12:10 p.m.





United Way Volunteer Center

Celebrate Volunteerism with United Way!

Volunteers are essential to achieve the goals and missions of non-profits everywhere. Our community is stronger, safer, and smarter thanks to volunteers that give countless hours of their time to the cause. Please join us in thanking these wonderful people through the United Way Community Volunteer Awards. This annual event recognizes individuals, groups and businesses of Dane County, acknowledging their accomplishments that are making positive change in our community. These volunteers take time out to help children achieve in school, seniors remain independent in their homes, ensure people have their basic needs met and much more.

This year is the 20th annual Community Volunteer Awards hosted by United Way of Dane County. In the past we have heard many awe inspiring stories of dedication and support for our community. Nominees have been leaders, capacity builders, teachers, and much more. We look forward to this year's event to learn about the amazing people who are making a difference and thank them for their hard work and effort. Volunteers LIVE UNITED on their own and as part of something bigger, they play a vital role in our community.

This year's Community Volunteer Awards will be held on April 22nd from 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. at the Madison Concourse Hotel. Please note that anybody can attend the event and you do not have to nominate a volunteer to celebrate. Join us for this special recognition by visiting our website at www.unitedwaydanecounty.org to RSVP, or contact Kayla Bechtel at 608.246.4384 or kbechtel@uwdc.org.

Nomination deadline extended! March 5th is the final deadline for all nominations. If you haven't already nominated that outstanding volunteer or volunteer team, please contact Kayla Bechtel at 608.246.4384 or kbechtel@uwdc.org.

Register Your Project For Youth Service Day 2010!

The 2010 Youth Service Day Committee formally invites your agency to participate in the 13th annual National and Global Youth Service Day on April 23-25, 2010. Your agency can assist youth in creating positive change in Dane County by hosting a service opportunity for youth. Each year thousands of Dane County youth join together throughout the Youth Service Day weekend to complete service projects with agencies like yours! Projects can range from visiting with older adults to park and grounds clean-up to organizing food pantry donations to writing letters to officers serving overseas. Whether the work is clerical or labor intensive, any youth-appropriate project your agency needs accomplished is ideal for Youth Service Day! By participating in these projects, area youth can see the value of community service and begin the life-long joy of volunteering.

Project registration is open beginning March 1st. To register your project, go to www.VolunteerYourTime.org, login as your agency, click on Events and then Youth Service Day. Volunteers will be able to register with your project beginning Monday, March 30th.

If you have any questions with registration or Youth Service Day details, please contact Nicholas Wagner at 608.246.5487 or nwagner@uwdc.org. Also, if you have ways to get the word out to youth about participating in Youth Service Day, we appreciate your assistance! Please contact Nicholas to discuss ways you can help spread the word.

Thank you for supporting youth volunteerism in Dane County!

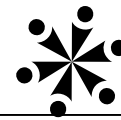


National Volunteer Week, Celebrating People in Action, is a time of celebration and inspiration as volunteer program managers across the US celebrate the thousands of individuals who take action year round to strengthen their communities.

Established in 1974, National Volunteer Week has grown exponentially in scope each year, recognizing the incalculable contributions that volunteers make every day and challenging all Americans to step forward to help wherever there is need.

We encourage all programs that engage volunteers to make a special effort to honor those who solve problems in their communities and draw attention to the impact and power of volunteerism and service as an integral aspect of our civic landscape.

One good source of useful materials on volunteer recognition, including quotations, stories, poems, recognition items, and a collection of real-life recognition ideas, submitted by other volunteer program managers, is Energize, found at : <http://www.energizeinc.com/>. Celebrate your volunteers!



The Network is published bimonthly by Dane County Administrators of Volunteer Services (DCAVS) as a benefit to its members. DCAVS promotes successful volunteer administration by facilitating the professional growth of its members through networking and training opportunities, as well as providing support through advocacy for the profession of volunteer administration in specific, and volunteerism in general. Visit us on the Web at <http://www.dcavs.org/>

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We welcome your contributions, comments and suggestions. Next deadline: April 6. Contact editor at sminkoff@wisc.edu or 608.263.7760.