

Selling Your Volunteer Opportunities

Would you go to a restaurant which had an ad that read, “Please come eat here because we have all this food we have to sell?” Of course not. You’d prefer the one that described how delicious and reasonably priced their food is, not to mention how great the service and atmosphere are!

But most volunteer recruitment ads read much the same way. They talk about the organization and what *it* needs. “We need...” At best those ads simply blend in with all the other similarly worded ads. At worst they ignore the simple truth that, however sentimental we may prefer to be, volunteers come to you because of something *they* want, not something you want.

The key to successful volunteer recruitment is figuring out what you have to offer the volunteer and selling it. Ask your current volunteers — at least, the happy ones! — what they get out of volunteering. Try to find something unique about your organization. Then make sure you mention it prominently in your recruitment message.

A successful volunteer recruitment message will always answer these questions, “Why *should* I? What’s in it for *me*?”

Other Helpful Recruitment Message Tips:

- ▶ Anticipate and answer their questions (what, where, when, etc.).
- ▶ Reassure — mention training or support they can expect.
- ▶ Avoid “red flag” words. Use “want” instead of “need” and never, never use any form of the word “desperate”! It tells prospective volunteers that nobody wants the job!
- ▶ Ask a volunteer to write the ads — better yet, ask several and pick or combine the best.
- ▶ Whatever you do, do not even think about sending out recruitment ads until you are ready to start interviewing, training, and placing volunteers! Nothing makes a prospective volunteer feel less needed than being strung along.

[from1997 CyberVPM.com]