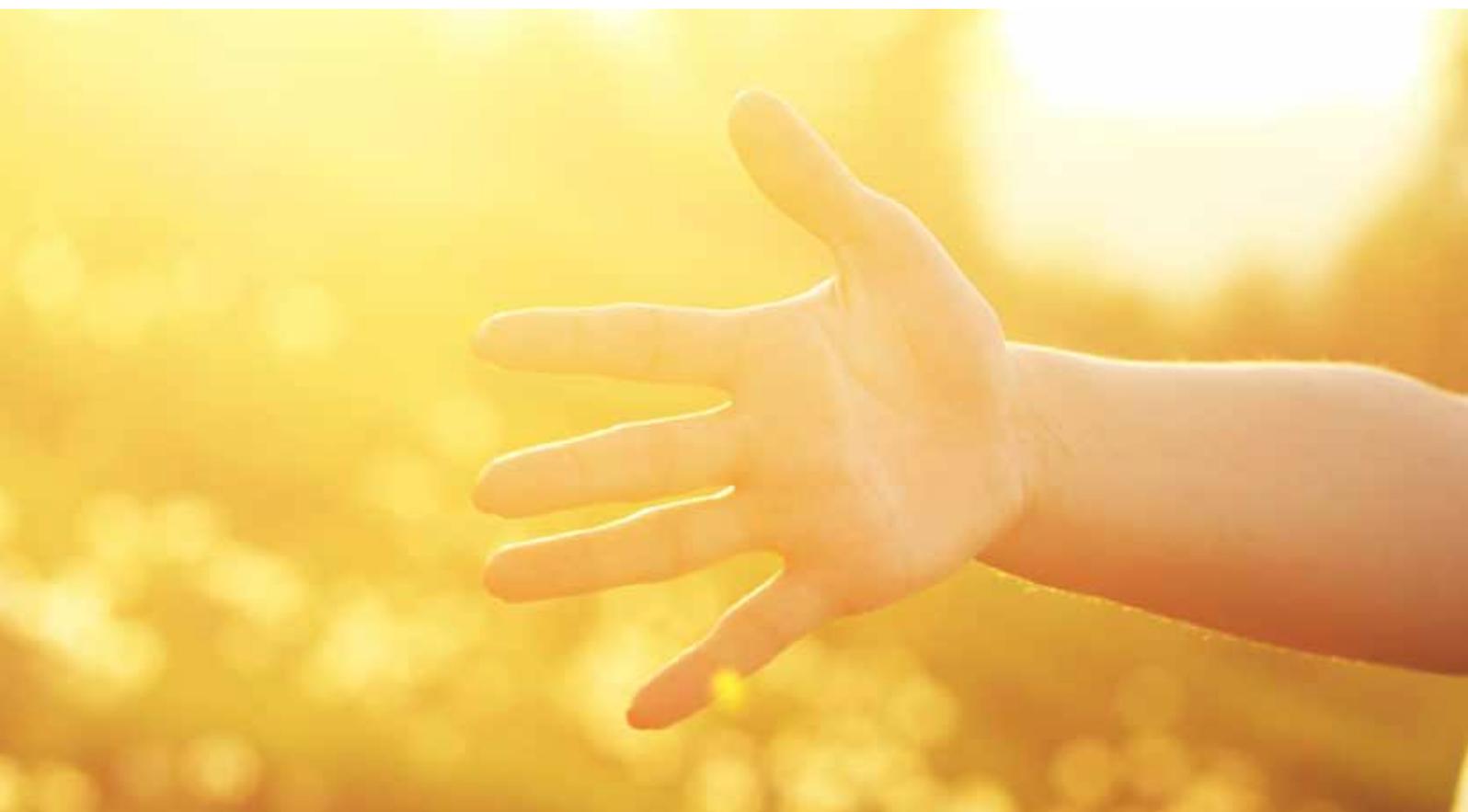


DOING GOOD WELL

Volunteer Management System
A Guide for Non-Profit Organisations



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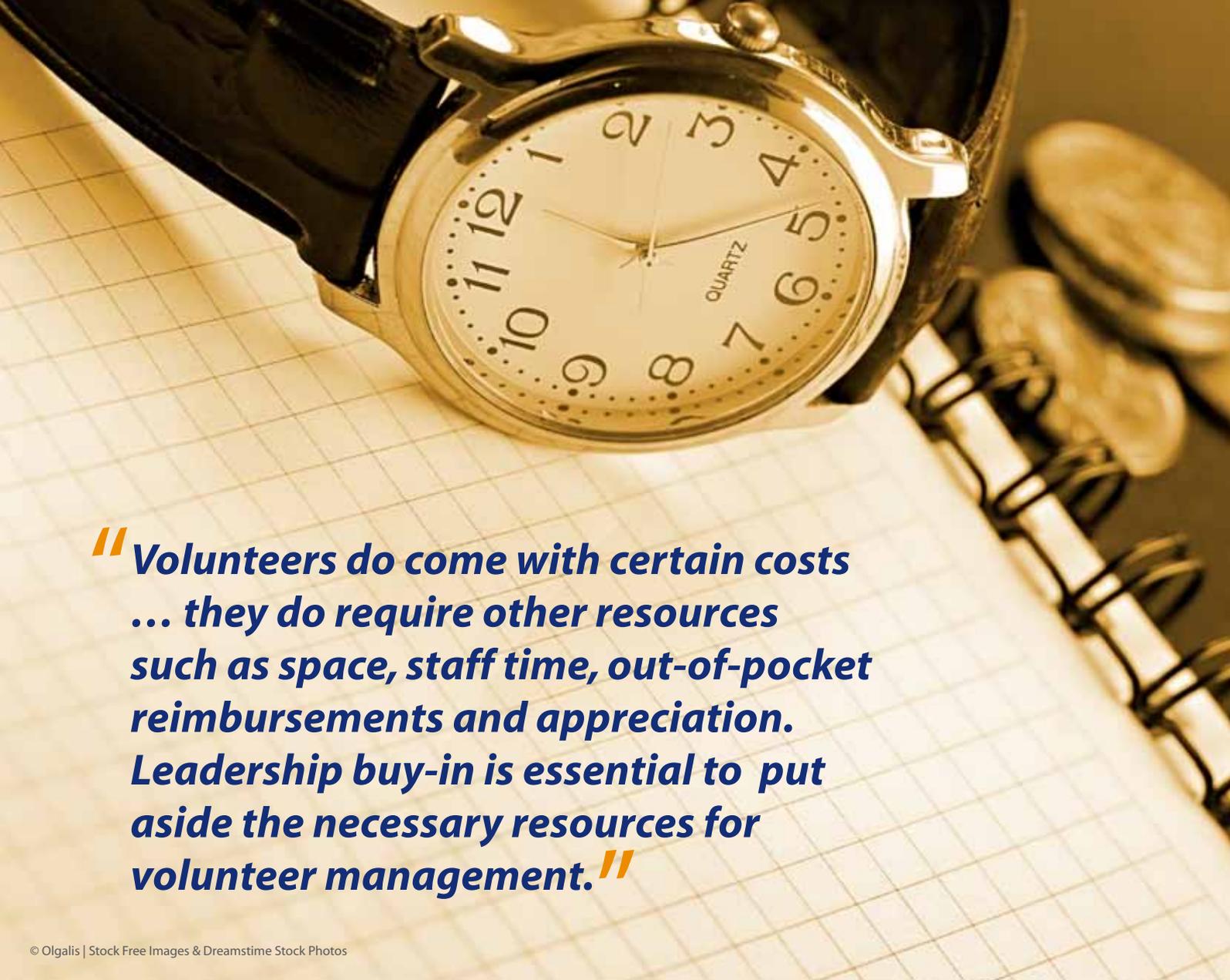
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“Volunteers do come with certain costs ... they do require other resources such as space, staff time, out-of-pocket reimbursements and appreciation. Leadership buy-in is essential to put aside the necessary resources for volunteer management.”

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INTRODUCTION

a. Why volunteer management is needed

Any organisation that runs with the help of volunteers needs to keep their morale high. Two elements in maintaining volunteer morale are:

- Letting them know that the work they're doing matters and that they are important to the organisation
- Showing them that their efforts are making a difference, in the short-term and in the long run

SOME ESSENTIALS TO A SUCCESSFUL VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

VOLUNTEER HOST ORGANISATION (VHO)

1

A Volunteer Host Organisation is any organisation that engages volunteers to help run its operations, programmes or activities. VHOs can be:

- Completely run by volunteers (eg. Cat Welfare Society)
- Employ a limited number of full-time or part-time staff to support volunteer-driven programmes (eg. Nature Society Singapore)
- Part of a specific volunteer-driven programme (eg. National Heritage Board's museum guides programme).

LEADERSHIP

2

Leadership plays a pivotal role in the success or failure of volunteer programmes, whether it comes from the senior management, chief executive officer or the Board.

There are two common misconceptions some people have of volunteers. Firstly, they see volunteers as secondary and secondly, as free help.

Volunteers bring diversity, additional knowledge, passion, energy and experience. Some volunteers may have skills which salaried staff may not have. Together, volunteers and staff can do more for the organisation.

Volunteers do come with certain costs. While they require little in terms of cash, they do require other resources such as work space, staff time, out-of-pocket reimbursements and appreciation. Leadership buy-in is essential to put aside the necessary resources for volunteer management. They will, if they recognise that to do so is to invest in a resource that can bring them returns many times over.

VOLUNTEER MANAGER OR COORDINATOR

3

To have a successful volunteer programme, a VHO must have a designated volunteer manager or coordinator role. Even if that person does not carry the title of volunteer manager/coordinator (although it is encouraged), the job responsibilities must be spelt out clearly and included in his or her performance appraisal.

The volunteer management position could be full-time or part-time, salaried or volunteer, but without it proper volunteer management would be difficult to achieve.

An effective volunteer manager/coordinator is one who understands the responsibilities and demands of the job. It is not enough to "recruit, interview, train and recognise" volunteers. A volunteer manager/coordinator must understand the scope of the work, be able to do the work well, and truly believe in the value of volunteer involvement.

The title "volunteer coordinator" or VC, as commonly used, does not properly describe the job. Coordination is often a minor aspect, as the duties can extend to those of a manager, service provider, HR officer, training officer, administrator, public relations officer and fund raiser. The title "manager of volunteers" or "volunteer manager"¹ better describes the responsibilities and range of duties. In this document, the commonly used term "VC" is used interchangeably with "manager of volunteers".

¹ While this term has been used, it is also subject to debate, as some may think it refers to "a manager who is a volunteer".

SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTION OF A VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR (VC)

SCOPE

Manage, nurture, train, sustain and motivate the volunteers and coordinate their efforts with the work of the Hospice's professional staff whether medical or administrative, for the betterment and well-being of the patients.

MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES

Recruitment and Selection of Volunteers

- Recruit, interview and select volunteers
- Organise programmes for orientation and induction (training) of new volunteers
- Maintain close follow up for the first 6 months

Organisation and Support of Volunteers

- Liaise with Hospice staff to define volunteer tasks
- Allocate tasks to volunteers, and volunteers for tasks requested
- Determine training needs of different groups and organise suitable training programmes to equip volunteers with desired skills
- Evaluate volunteer performance in association with Hospice staff
- Counsel volunteers when required
- Conduct exit interviews for retiring volunteers.

Administration

- Maintain records of volunteer bio data, individual volunteer performance and volunteer activities. Set up procedures for regular updating or records
- Collect statistics and prepare reports for regular updating
- Produce and update the Volunteers' Manual
- Write correspondence, articles for newsletters and notices for volunteers
- Organise venues and refreshment for volunteer activities
- Monitor budget for volunteer services/ programmes to ensure adequacy of materials and support activities
- Provide mechanism for the improvement of the Volunteer Programme
- Coordinate community service programmes eg arrange hosting of visits, educational projects, entertainment for patients etc.

Communication / Motivation

- Liaise with staff and volunteers in matters relating to patients
- Maintain regular communication with volunteers through newsletter, meeting etc.
- Attend meetings relating to volunteer activities eg Volunteer Committee, Public Education, Hospice Link etc including NCSS meetings relating to volunteers' activities
- Plan regular Support Group meetings and Volunteer Get-Togethers, Volunteers' Appreciation parties etc.

Other Duties

- Give talks/lectures and topics related to the role of Hospice volunteers to external organisations when requested to do so
- Participate in orientation of employees, volunteers and students as assigned
- Any other duties as required by the Council

EFFECTIVENESS OF A VC

To be effective, a VC must:

1. Be willing to work with people
2. Believe in the value of volunteer involvement
3. Be absolutely clear about the nature of the VC job (i.e. the role and functions of a VC; expectations of the VHO and the volunteers; etc)
4. Understand volunteers and the volunteer tasks/ assignments (eg why do people volunteer; what can the volunteers do and what do they want to do, how to match the right volunteers to the right tasks assignments etc)
5. Be committed to develop the necessary skills for the job (eg ability to manage volunteer and staff relations, plan and organise, lead and evaluate, etc)

BECOMING A MORE EFFECTIVE VC

<p>CULTIVATE ABILITIES OF AN EXCELLENT VC</p> <p>1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• See the big picture without missing out the details• Focus and have the determination to complete the task• Think creatively and out of the box to achieve success• Be flexible and able to adjust and respond quickly to changes• Sense what others are feeling and thinking, and respond appropriately• Motivate self and volunteers• Coach volunteers to successfully perform their jobs• Lead volunteers to work within boundaries, yet challenge these boundaries appropriately for continuous improvements• Be there for volunteers and share the human side behind the official VC role• Introduce elements of fun and learning to the work
<p>EMPOWER VOLUNTEERS</p> <p>2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Invite and actively involve volunteers in setting volunteer programmes and goals• Communicate expectations, work instructions and/or guidelines clearly• Encourage volunteers to think creatively, take ownership of their roles and to suggest better ways of doing their jobs• Listen and acknowledge volunteers in a positive and affirming manner• Be interested in growing and developing volunteers• Coach and train volunteers to develop the skills to complete their work• Trust and support volunteers in their decisions, and help them to learn from mistakes and failures as a result of bad decisions
<p>DELEGATE TO VOLUNTEERS</p> <p>3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• List everything in the volunteer programme that can be delegated• Identify who the work can be delegated to• Set expectations and ensure volunteers understand and accept them• Give appropriate authority to match the delegation so the job can be done• Delegate by stages, which is most appropriate for new volunteers, so they are not overwhelmed. Give them regular feedback to help them get accustomed to the work• Write down the details of the delegation for reference• Allow volunteers to do their work and be available to answer their queries• Give support and direction and keep track of progress via pre-agreed checkpoints with volunteers• Review and evaluate performance and results at agreed times• Expect results and accept different work styles in carrying out assignments• Praise volunteers for jobs well done

VCS should continue to attend relevant training to keep abreast of trends and developments and to learn about other volunteer management techniques. Such training sessions and other occasions also provide opportunities for VCs to network with, learn from and support one another.

VOLUNTEER-STAFF RELATIONS

How your staff views volunteers translates into how volunteers are treated in your organisation. Volunteer-Staff relations is often the area that requires the most training and consulting for organisations committed to working well with volunteers.

HOW DOES YOUR STAFF PERCEIVE VOLUNTEERS?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Free labour• Competition for their paid positions• An additional burden to their work		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Valuable resources• Important parts of the organisation• Additional helping hands
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SAMPLE PROMPTERS FOR VOLUNTEER-STAFF RELATIONS

1. What are the procedures when a volunteer does something wrong?
2. If a dispute develops between a volunteer and an employee, is the employee always presumed to be right? Is the employee presumed to have more rights?
3. Are there clear channels for volunteers to give suggestions, feedback etc?
4. How many members of the staff have ever had formal training (not just on-the-job experience) in how to supervise volunteers?
5. Has any member of staff recently refused to work with volunteers? (This means refusing to develop a job description for possible volunteer assistance; it does not mean turning down a specific applicant who was not appropriate) Why? Did anyone question that staff member about the refusal?
6. Has any employee ever been evaluated on ability to supervise volunteers?
7. When was the last time an employee was given any tangible recognition for working successfully with volunteers?
8. Have volunteers left the agency in the past year due to dissatisfaction with their acceptance level in the organisation?

From The Top Down by Susan Ellis, 1996

SAMPLE GOOD VOLUNTEER-STAFF RELATIONS METHODS

1. Include a statement about volunteers in the job description of staff. In some cases, the job descriptions will indicate the responsibility for supervising volunteers personally, while others may indicate that the organisation is one which volunteers are active and important, and staff will need to interact positively with them.
2. Have job descriptions for volunteers too, and the staff working directly with volunteers need to be involved in preparing these descriptions. This completes the circle of understanding and documents that volunteers fulfil roles that are different from, but parallel to those of the employees.
3. Be a role model. Explore how volunteers can help you directly and set yourself as an example of a good staff-volunteer team.
4. Train staff in good volunteer management skills.

From The Top Down by Susan Ellis, 1996

b. Volunteer management components

Volunteer management has four components or stages, which match the chapter numbers in this manual.

EFFECTIVE VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

