

The Power of a Good Story



A friend of mine posted to Facebook this morning that she loves volunteering with her Alumni group.

What she posted was this:
"I find volunteering your time and skills together with a group of high quality people to be the best stress buster"

Who needs an ad agency when you have testimonies like that sitting right under your nose!

Yet, how many of us actually take the time to ask our volunteers to share their stories, anecdotes and testimonials

and then use these to promote and validate the importance of volunteers in meeting our agency's mission and goals?

It's one thing to report to your line manager that you recruited 8 new volunteers this month, and your team of 85 volunteers gave 345 hours in the same period – but if these people simply sat around drinking your coffee, or were not properly engaged to start with, then they should have simply stayed at home.

We often fail to report on the quantifiable outcomes of all of that volunteer effort and even more so, overlook the quality of the experience that our volunteers themselves have. They are our front line!

I often wonder how our understanding about the impact our volunteers have might change if we were able to attach a small camera to their pocket and watch and listen to their interactions as they went about their volunteering?

So a few questions:

When was the last time you asked your volunteers to share a story about

something that happened on their shift that had a positive impact on them or made their day?

If your volunteers work with a client group or other agency staff, do you ever ask for feedback (from those groups) on how the volunteer(s) are going and then feed that back to your team members?

Do you include volunteers and their experiences in your recruitment campaigns? There's great power in having existing volunteers tell new recruits about what a great place your organisation is to volunteer!

The sharing of stories need not always be beer and skittles either. Sometimes learning about those 'less than positive' experiences and sharing those with others can be a powerful and enabling learning opportunity for the whole team.

Make no mistake, creating a culture where this occurs requires some planning, but is easy to achieve.

Here's some simple ideas.

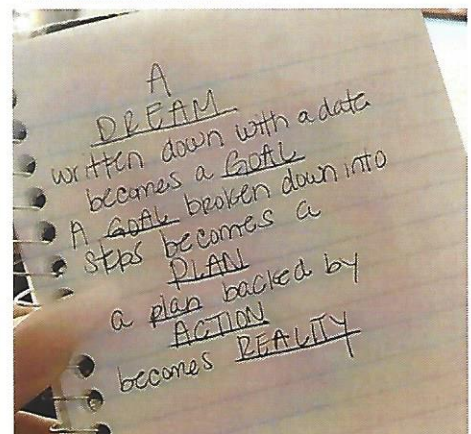
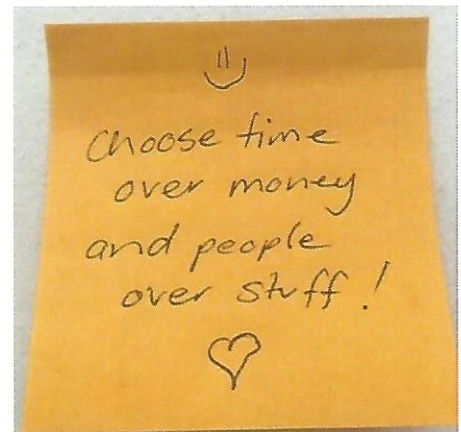
At the time your volunteers log off for the day, have a space for them to also record any stories or funny incidents that occurred on that shift – best to capture these while they are fresh in their mind

Add an item to your regular team meeting agenda for volunteers to be able to feed back the same. You'll be surprised. When one volunteer opens up, the flood gates may just follow!

Be mindful of how you report 'up', and make sure that when you meet with senior staff in the organisation that you also share these same stories alongside your statistics

And finally, remember to place some quotes from satisfied volunteers on your recruitment brochures and website. These days, video testimonies are a really powerful way to convey this same message.

So, go forth and become story tellers – your program and volunteers will thank you!





Resource: Matching Volunteers to Roles

The key to matching volunteers to roles is understanding the specific requirements of the role AND the volunteers motivation...

GETTING THE RIGHT MATCH

The key to matching volunteers to roles is understanding the specific requirements of the role AND the volunteers motivation. The volunteer's values should also align with the core values of your organisation.

Understand and be clear about the core functions of the role and the prerequisites e.g. skills/experience required, and deal breakers - anything that may exclude a volunteer. E.g. Medical Filing Clerk would need excellent attention to detail, be methodical, previous office experience, knowledge of filing systems, must be a non-smoker.

Know what skills and attributes the successful applicant will need. Be clear and understand what skills/experience an applicant will need to bring and what skills you are happy to teach or for the applicant to learn on the job.

It pays to periodically review all job descriptions to ensure they are still current and relevant. Talk to current volunteers in the role to see if they think the job description is a fair reflection of the actual role.

ROBUST RECRUITMENT

It is wise to interview more than one applicant to ensure you are getting the best person for the role.

The first person to apply might be suitable for the position; the second person to apply might be perfect for the position.

Make sure the recruitment process is inclusive and provides plenty of opportunity for a prospective volunteer to learn about your organisation. Getting the right match is a two way process. Matching the right volunteer to a role is equally as important as the volunteer deciding that the role and your organisation is the right fit for them.

Key points to consider when matching a volunteer to a role include:-

- Needs of your organisation
- Needs and motivation of the volunteer
- Volunteer understanding and belief in your organisations ethos
- Any additional support needs e.g. skills training
- Consistency in approach to reference checks and official checks

PREFERENCES AND 'MUST HAVES'

Some useful tools to help sort out the best candidate for the role:

- Understand the absolutes e.g. must have a full, clean drivers licence
- Understand what the preferred skills/attributes are, break it down in to a skills matrix
- Deal breakers e.g. criminal convictions, lack of experience, smoker
- What support/training can be offered to a volunteer (if any)

It is not uncommon to have a prospective volunteer apply for a role that doesn't fully utilise their skills. Bear in mind that some people choose to volunteer as a way of doing something different to their paid employment. Take care to listen and ensure you are offering a role that will meet the needs and motivation.

To get the right volunteer in the right role, understand and know what the role requirements are and the needs and motivation of the volunteer.

June 2015

Awesome Christmas

An Awesome Christmas is what we need with lots of goodness & a nice feed ☺ To see sparkling lights & lovely decorations too... gifts happiness that's special & true

Yes... Christmas is Awesome when you are with family or friends If you can't be with them on the day... a caring card/email you could send

But... an Awesome Christmas is not just about Santa & the presents he (or Mrs Claus, may bring It's about the birth of Jesus and soulful cards... in church... we sing

Our Christmas is Awesome no matter where we are (and remember to please drive safely if you're travelling on the bike or in the car)

Also... The Awesome Christmas tree can be real or not with it's tinsel... stars & on top

2011 Poem by Wendy Jay Baker NZ

Merry Christmas

So let's wish each other a Merry & Awesome Christmas & a little happiness we may make Then hopefully... because we are good... we all get a piece ☺ of yummy Christmas Cake

Celine Filbee



When Celine Filbee joined the Taranaki Kiwi Trust as Manager, she decided to experience first-hand the work its volunteers do — by joining an egg-lifting mission. The Taranaki Kiwi Trust protects wild kiwi by monitoring birds and embarking on 'egg-lifting' missions. The eggs are safely removed from wild nests and transported to the National Kiwi Hatchery for incubation. When the chicks are big enough, they're taken back to Taranaki to be released in a protected area. This increases the chances of a wild chick surviving by up to 50 per cent. Celine took part in an egg-lifting mission in the Waitaanga conservation area. After "a little bush whacking", team member Sue emerged carrying Winter, a kiwi monitored by the trust. Celine was tasked with holding Winter while Sue did a health check and retrieved two large eggs from the burrow. "They went into the chilly bin in a new burrow of work socks which had been warmed previously using a hot water bottle," Celine recalls. "Winter was returned safely to his nest and we set off sliding down banks, clambering over trees and rock hopping back up the river, but this time I had been entrusted with the cargo, two kiwi eggs!"

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