

Recruiting Trustees and Volunteers

This learning module will help you to

- Understand an effective method to recruit volunteers
- Prepare role descriptions and person specifications for volunteers
- Understand the methods for identifying sources of potential volunteers
- Understand how to carry out the actual recruitment successfully

Recruiting Volunteers – the facts

- Around 22 million adults volunteer each year!
- This is equivalent 90 million hours each week!
- 60% of all volunteers get involved because 'someone asked'
- The economic value of volunteering in region of £40 billion per year!
- 95% of organisations use word of mouth to recruit volunteers

So why is it so difficult to recruit volunteers?

- Many organisations expect volunteers to knock on their door! This is not realistic you need to be proactive with recruitment.
- Many still only advertise with a poster or small paper advert. You need to advertise widely and using a variety of methods. This will ensure you are reaching your target audience and attracting a wide diversity of people.
- Very few organisations sit down to decide what sort of volunteer they need
- Volunteers are rarely given good induction and support
- Many volunteers receive a 'luke warm' welcome and have to spend several months or years before they are accepted into the group!

So how can you change this? By taking a simple 6 step approach to recruiting volunteers you can increase your chances of recruiting volunteers and move towards offering them a positive experience.

1. Analyse and identify the volunteer role

If volunteers are going to feel valued they need to have a role that is important to the organisation. This does not necessarily mean anything complex, just something that is valued. Although there needs to be some induction there is nothing worse than a volunteer turning up on their first morning and you haven't actually thought what tasks they might be asked to do.

The starting point is then to look at your organisation and identify what volunteers could help with.

Make a list of daily tasks - Look at what has to happen every day – are there some tasks that are suitable for volunteers? Remember that these individuals should feel valued so you need to ensure that they are happy with the role they undertake. i.e. some volunteers are perfectly happy to spend hours photocopying, but this would not be appropriate to most people.

Don't be afraid of giving more complex work to volunteers who are willing and capable of doing it.

Carry out a [job analysis](#). You need to understand the role you want a volunteer to do before you can recruit. This will then give you a document that you can use to advertise the volunteer vacancy and be used as a basis for discussion with any potential candidates.

2. Produce a person specification

Now you know what you want your volunteer to do you need to develop a [person specification](#).

This will enable you to get a better idea of what you are looking for in your volunteer and also allows volunteers to see if they feel this is the role for them. REMEMBER – a drive for volunteering is to develop the individuals' skills and confidence, so although they may not be an exact fit for what you need training and development will be of benefit to the organisation and the volunteer.

What you need to identify are the knowledge, skills, qualities and circumstances that your ideal volunteer would need and you could also rank these as essential, important and desirable

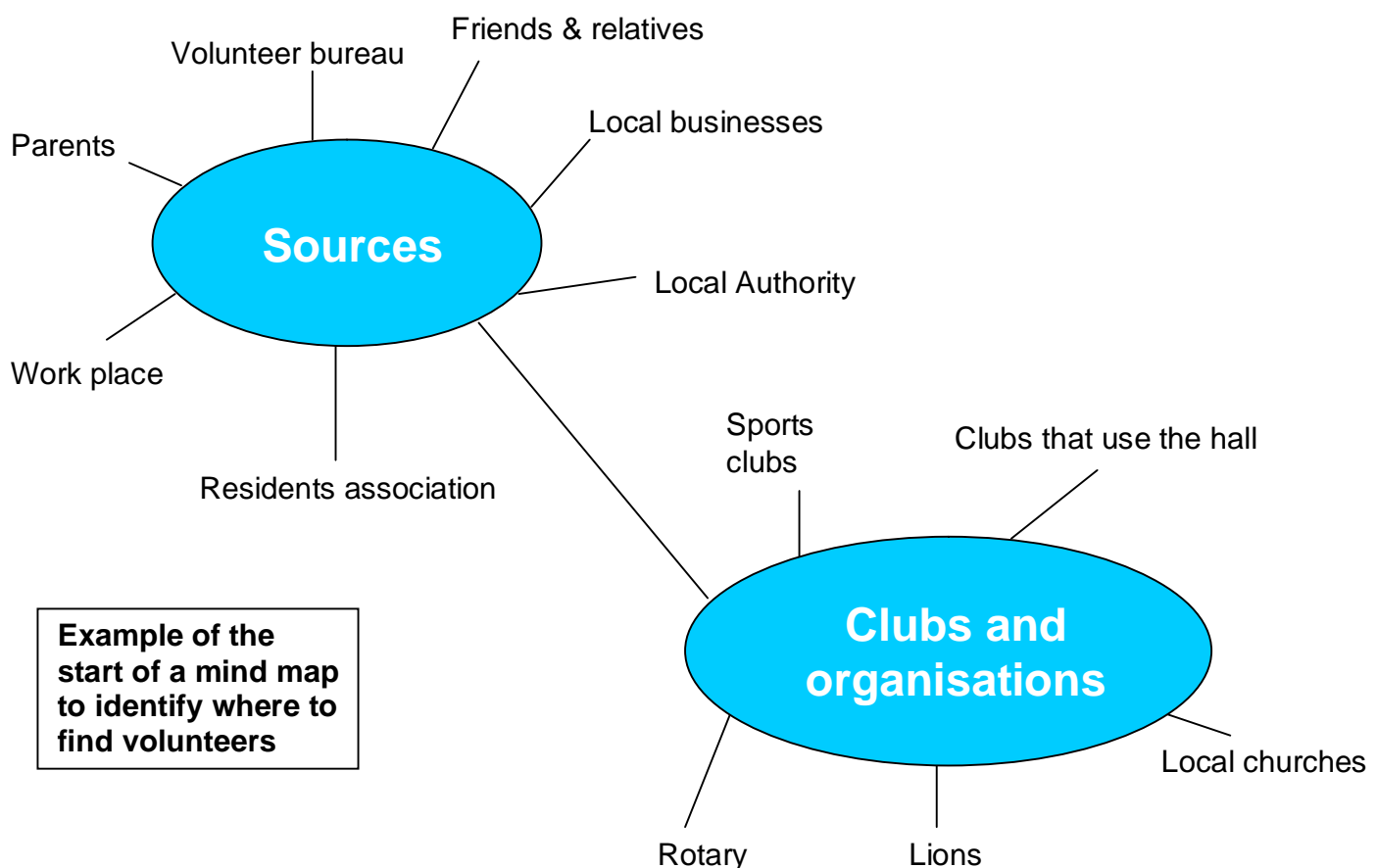
3. Research sources of suitable volunteers

This might sound obvious, but this is where your marketing skills come in. You need to advertise your volunteering as widely as possible. This, of course, includes your newsletter, posters etc. But have you contacted your local volunteer bureau and other organisations that may be looking for volunteer vacancies e.g. MIND

REACH <http://www.volwork.org.uk/> also bring together volunteers with particular skills together with volunteering opportunities, so they will expect you to supply a role description

You need to develop a network and spread your net! Perhaps you could stage a 'Name Generation Evening' This is an event where you bring together as many of the local communities 'movers and shakers', perhaps with some refreshments, and ask them about anyone they know who might be interested in giving some voluntary supporting your organisation.

You could also use this event to create a mind map (below) of suitable sources for volunteers in your area – or why not compile one yourself as a starting point.



You should also identify the right place for your search in order to reach the right people. If you want someone to help with building maintenance, the starting point probably would not be an accountancy company!

4. Identify potential volunteers

Once you have the names of potential volunteers collate those that that may be suitable for the role you are trying to fill. Unless there is a specific reason you should take time to talk to every volunteer who comes forward. They may not want

to do the specific role you are trying to recruit for, but they may offer something just as valuable to your organisation. Be prepared to be flexible and think laterally.

When thinking about the role you have advertised prioritise the names in order of who you think would be best matched to your person specification. Now it is time to ensure that the volunteer and the role are compatible and that the arrangement will be mutually beneficial to everyone concerned.

After you have identified suitable people it is time to arrange interviews or meetings to discuss options with the volunteer.

5. Interview the prospective volunteer

Arrange to meet the individual in neutral location, take time out of the office where you might be disturbed and give your attention over to ensuring that the volunteer feels valued and is able to find out more about what is expected of them.

Explain all the details of your need and why you think that person can help. They may not be comfortable with every aspect of the role you are recruiting for, but this is the opportunity to have this discussion and negotiate what they would like to do. After all, there may be another volunteer who would be happy only doing the things that the first volunteer doesn't want to do. This could also be addressed by training and development in the future and this could also be discussed at this point.

Outline benefits of the role for your organisation and for the volunteer. Tell them exactly what you offer – expenses, training etc. and what they will bring to you.

Invite questions from the volunteer to make sure they completely understand what the role entails and what is expected of them.

Don't let them go without ask if the person is willing to join your team. If they are interested enough to come and talk to you they have made the first step and will most likely want to come and join you. If the answer is yes – talk through and agree the next steps. It is important that they know what happens next so that they understand if there are any delays e.g. whilst a CRB check is returned.

Some volunteers investigate a range of volunteering opportunities and if yours is not appropriate for whatever reason thank them for their time and move on. Don't forget the volunteer must also be appropriate for your organization so you also need to decide if they are appropriate. It is important that this is a positive outcome for the volunteer as they may be feeling vulnerable – is there something else you could offer, or do you know of another organisation that could offer a more appropriate volunteering opportunity for them.

6. Agree next steps for induction

It is important to ensure that new volunteers are welcomed and inducted properly

- Ensure all references have been taken up and any checks e.g. Criminal Records Bureau <http://www.crb.homeoffice.gov.uk/> and Independent Safeguarding Authority <http://www.isa.gov.org/> clearances are processed before allowing volunteers to start working with vulnerable groups
- Arrange structured a induction programme that introduces the new volunteer to the organisation
- Try to arrange job-shadowing and/or mentoring – someone to support and befriend them ([link to managing and developing volunteers](#))

It can take months to recruit a good volunteer and seconds to lose one - GOOD HUNTING

