

Top Tips for Recruiting Volunteers

In recruiting volunteers, you want to find the people who are attracted by the challenge of your volunteer role and by achieving the results highlighted in your volunteer role description. Put simply successful volunteer recruitment happens when the needs of a prospective volunteer match the needs of an organisation.

1. Create Interesting Volunteer Roles

Designing a position that people want to do is the key to successful recruitment. Consider if your role gives volunteers a sense of responsibility and purpose. Will it give them a sense of personal satisfaction, challenge, reward and a sense of achievement?

2. Be Clear about Why the Role is Needed

A general message such as “volunteers are needed” is not going to motivate potential volunteers to apply. The most important part of your advert is to clearly state the purpose the position is to accomplish and its impact on the organisation’s goals.

3. Be Flexible

Make roles as attractive as possible by being flexible, maybe a “try before you sign-up” experience might be more attractive to some people.

4. Accessibility and Diversity

Always keep accessibility in mind when recruiting volunteers and be conscious of the many barriers that might get in the way of attracting a wider and more diverse mix of talent. Put yourself in the mind of different people like a student, wheelchair user, single parent, someone who works full time, someone who doesn’t have a car, someone who needs a place to pray at various times throughout the day, or someone who isn’t very tech savvy, etc; would your role appeal to everyone? Anticipate questions people may have. Demonstrate what you’ve done to make the role inclusive and try to use images that can be relatable to a diverse range of people.

5. Chose the Right Recruitment Method

Depending on your volunteer role, some recruitment methods will be more successful than others. If your role can be done by most people then spread the message to as broad an audience as possible. Using social media/local Volunteer Centres (like [York Volunteers](#))/websites/mailling lists/leaflets/posters/brochures to spread the word can be very effective. An alternative method is to target recruitment to the kind of person you would really like to fill the position and then work out the best way to reach them.

6. Chose the Best Recruitment Channels

Think about where potential volunteers are likely to see your recruitment materials and messages. For example, put brochures/posters and leaflets where people are likely to pick them up; why not try Volunteer Centres (like [York Volunteers](#)), libraries, cafés, supermarkets, shop windows and community notice boards. Why not try promotion via local radio or press; some newspapers such as The Guardian: www.guardianjobs.co.uk offer free advertising for volunteer roles.

7. Make the Most of Digital Advertising

Chose the most suitable digital marketing channels for your role. For e.g. Twitter and Facebook might be best for more general roles and LinkedIn could work well for more specialist roles. Make sure to create secure links for each channel to direct audiences to your application process. Create an interesting advert on your website and promote your opportunity via your local volunteer centre (for York, that's [York Volunteers](#)). National recruitment sites may offer free volunteer adverts like [Indeed](#), which may appeal to people trying to build experience for employment by volunteering.

8. Use your Existing Volunteer Force

Your existing volunteers are your organisation's ambassadors, your outreach in communities and they can play a vital role in helping to attract new volunteers. Consider sharing volunteer stories and case studies, photos or online videos to highlight the benefits of volunteering with your organisation. Publicly recognising your volunteers is also a great opportunity to get others interested in volunteering too. Make sure to ask your volunteers to spread the word too about any new opportunities when they occur.

9. Promote the Benefits of Volunteering

Attract volunteers to your organisation by letting them know about the many benefits of volunteering. Highlighting the opportunity to make new friends, gain knowledge, new skills, have a sense of purpose and be happier, could be just the thing to encourage new volunteers to come forward.

10. Enlist Trustees to Recruit Specialist Volunteer Roles

Trustees will often have a wealth of experience and valuable contacts in a variety of sectors. Why not enlist their help to recruit specialist volunteers as sometimes this is best achieved by targeting and hand-picking volunteers.