

Volunteer Engagement Fundamentals: How Your Organization Can Adapt to the Changing Volunteer Landscape

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ServeOhio

ServeOhio is the state's Commission on Service and Volunteerism created to empower local communities to mobilize AmeriCorps and volunteer engagement resources for the purpose of building a stronger Ohio.

AmeriCorps

AmeriCorps is a national service program that engages more than 85,000 Americans in intensive service each year at nonprofits, schools, public agencies, and community organizations across the country.

With more than **\$14.5 million** in funding

27 programs

over **1,000** AmeriCorps members

1.2 million hours of service

\$4.6 million in education awards

Volunteer Engagement

National Days
of Service
Grants

ServeOhio
Awards

Professional
Development

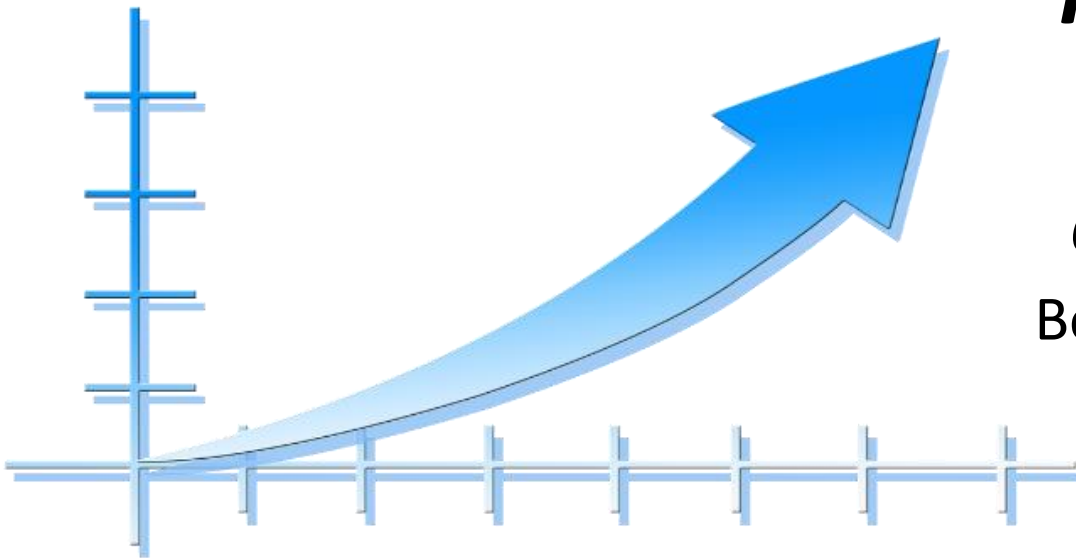
Youth Service
Toolkit

Get
Connected

Today's Agenda

- Trends in Volunteer Engagement
- Creating Strategic Volunteer Roles
- Recruitment
- Retention
- Recognition
- Volunteer Engagement Resources

Trends in Volunteer Engagement



***Ignored trends
equal missed
opportunities.***

Ben Baker, npEngage.com

Who Volunteers?



In the United States

Volunteering Rate:

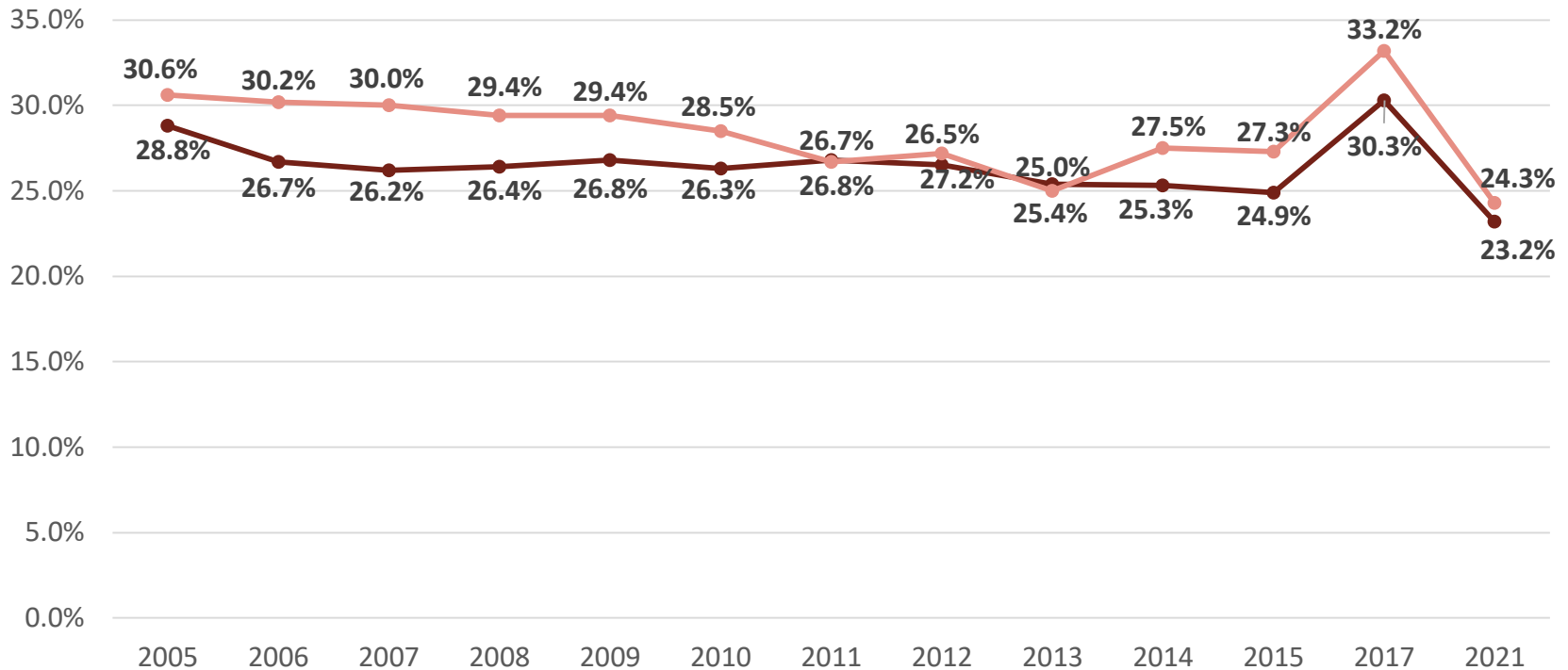
23.2%

Informal Volunteering:

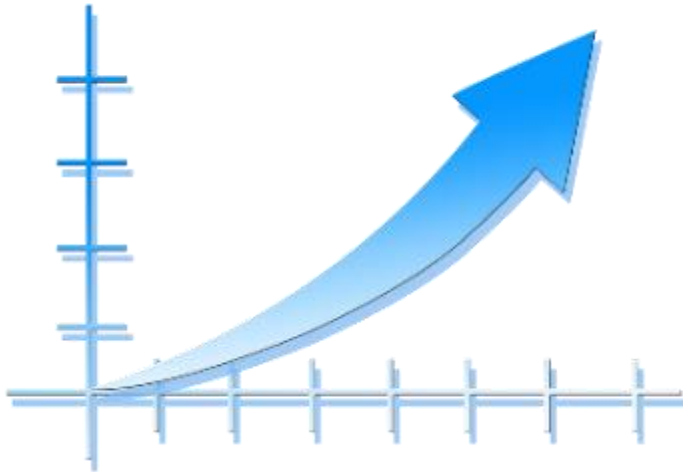
51%

Volunteer Rates

— United States — Ohio



Trends and Issues



Time

Technology

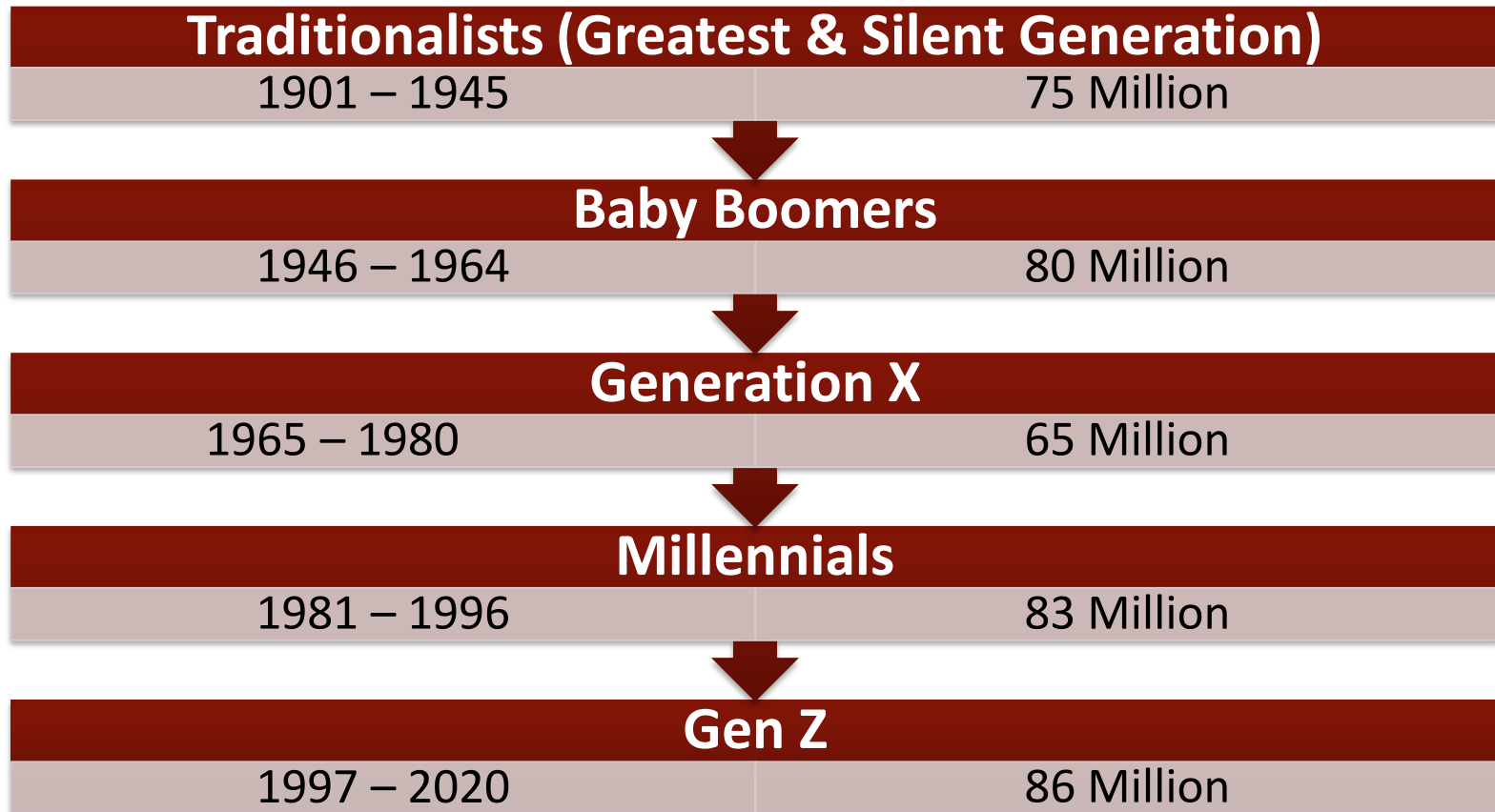
Economics

Philanthropy

Social Trends

Generational
Shifts

Generational Patterns in Volunteering



Volunteers Want To...

Have Flexibility

Work with Colleagues

Use Their Skills

Make an Impact

COVID-19



Accelerations & Innovations

Virtual Volunteering and Remote Work

National and State Service

Corporate Shifts

Connecting Formal with Informal

Redefining Volunteer “Community”

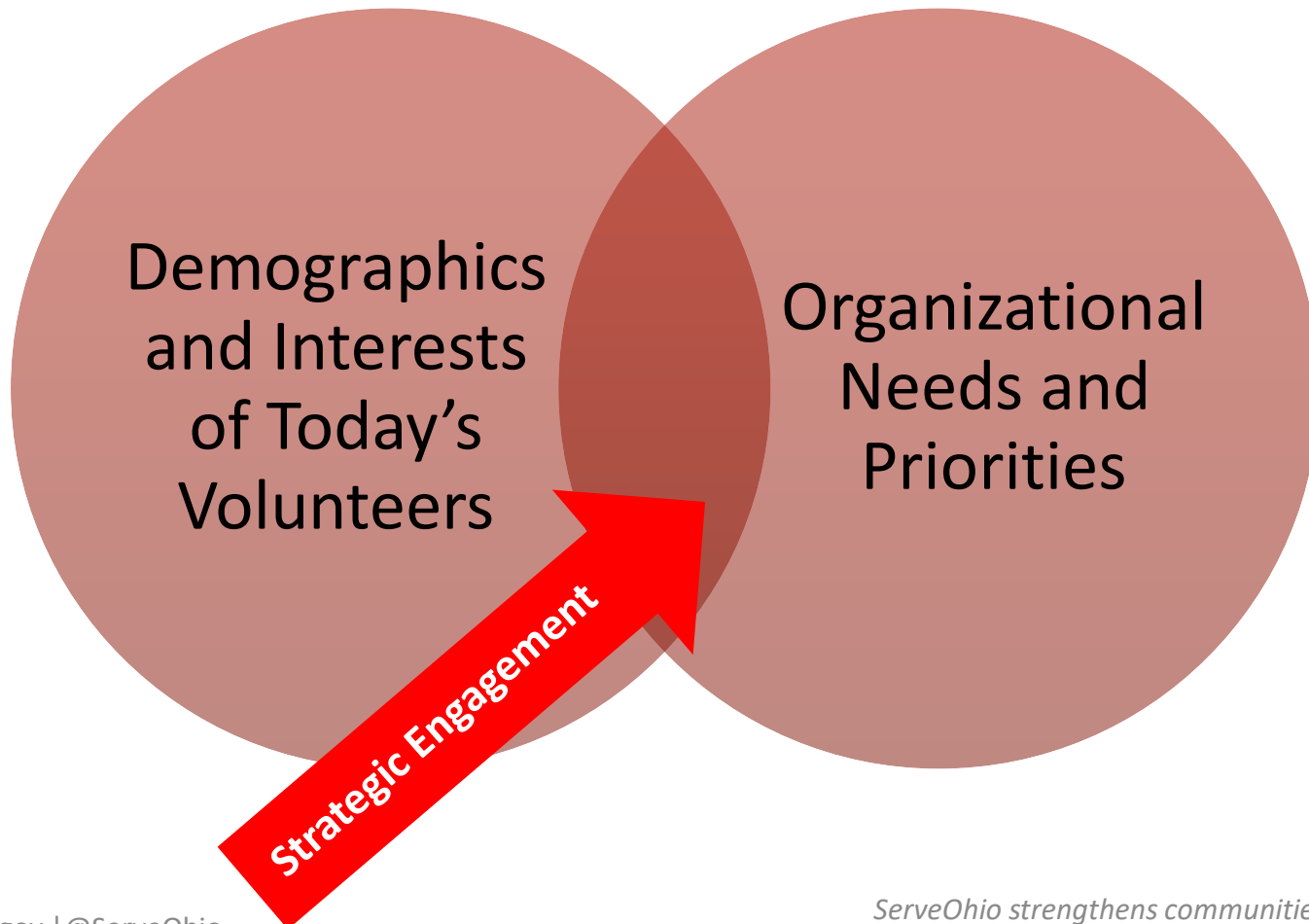


What are you seeing?

Creating Strategic Volunteer Roles



Developing Roles



Creating Opportunities



Giving volunteers the least important assignments is **NOT** an effective strategy for capacity building.

Assessing Needs



Needs Assessment



What are your strategic priorities?

What are your dreams?

What can you realign?

What do you need to do differently?

Position Descriptions



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**How does your organization
handle position descriptions?
We have...**

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Strategic Volunteer Roles

Position Descriptions

- Who is responsible for drafting them?
- Who is familiar with them?
- Who is responsible for ensuring volunteers are familiar with them?

Position Descriptions



Position Descriptions



Position Descriptions



Placement Team Leader

Key Responsibilities

- Create a team of volunteers skilled in talent management (HR, supervision, etc.) to develop and implement a placement program for all new volunteers.
- Follow up with prospects, interview them, and make placement decisions in collaboration with volunteer and staff leaders.
- Semi-annually evaluate the efficacy of recruitment and placement strategies; recommend changes.

Position Descriptions



Placement Team Leader

Initial Impact

- All prospective volunteers will receive follow up and screening within three days of a request, thereby increasing the number of successful placements.
- Volunteer Engagement will be responsive to all requests for volunteers in an efficient and timely manner.
- More departments and programs will have the capacity to fulfill strategic and mission requirements.

Sustained Outcome

- Greater satisfaction of new volunteers will increase productivity and retention.
- Increased productivity will create the capacity to meet the needs of more clients.
- Our organization will have the capacity to survive and thrive in any economy.

Position Descriptions



Placement Team Leader

Training & Support

- Advanced training on interviewing, placement, and mentorship skills.
- Periodic team meetings with a talent management expert.
- Ongoing professional development through organizational training resources.
- Support from the Volunteer Coordinator.

10 to 12 hours per month. Scheduling is at the volunteer's discretion; very flexible, weekdays or weekends.

- Six months is preferred; 60 hours minimum.
- Much of the work can be done offsite.

Position Descriptions



Placement Team Leader

Qualifications

- 3-5 yrs. experience in human resources, supervision, management, talent management preferred.
- 3 yrs. experience with interviewing and placement.
- Previous experience in coaching or mentorship preferred.

Skills

- Excellent communication.
- Basic Office Suite and database management.
- Logistics and planning.
- Management.

Benefits

- Develop and implement a new program.
- Use existing business skills in new ways.
- Mentor volunteers and staff.
- Ongoing professional development.
- Meet new people.

Role Assessment Checklist

Is the role strategic?

- What is the difference that this volunteer role will make?
- What tasks would an individual in this role do?
- How would this role help your organization, program, or committee achieve its priority goals?

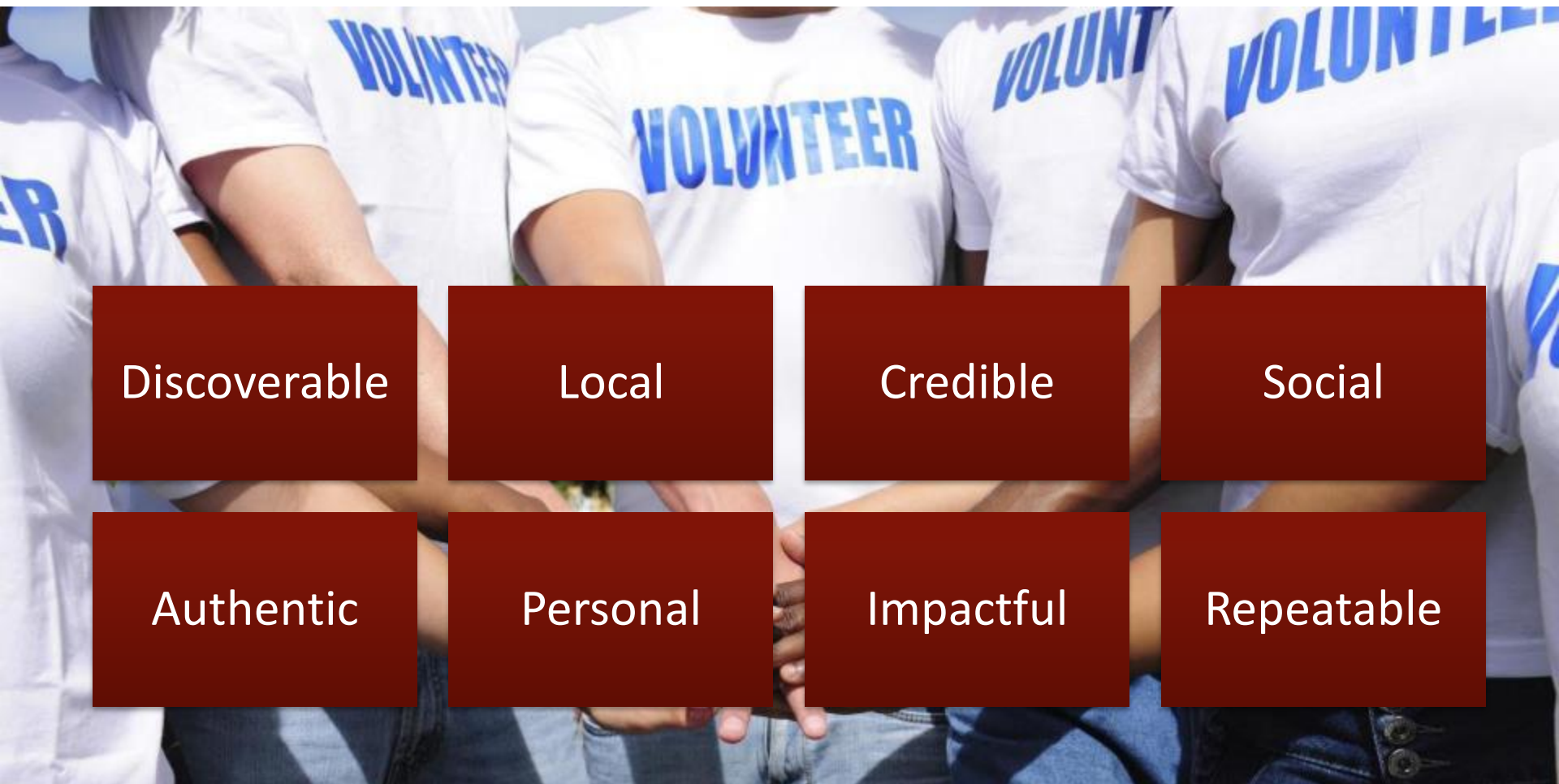
Is the role attractive?

- Would a volunteer find this work meaningful?
- Would a volunteer find this work enjoyable?
- Is the role viable virtual/is the role viable onsite?

Can the work be completed offsite?

- What resources would be needed for the volunteer to complete this work remotely? (Consider technology, access to information or data, equipment, transportation, funds, etc.)
- What skills would the volunteer need to be successful? (Consider not only skills related to the volunteer tasks, but also the communications and/or technology skills to do the work remotely.)
- Are there additional or different security measures to mitigate risks of completing the work offsite?
- Does your organization have the resources and training capacity to equip the volunteer for success?
- Is there an employee or volunteer leader who has capacity to train and support volunteers in this role?
- Which policies and handbooks need updating?
- Is there anything else we should know or consider?

Worthwhile Volunteer Experiences



Discoverable

Local

Credible

Social

Authentic

Personal

Impactful

Repeatable

Activity

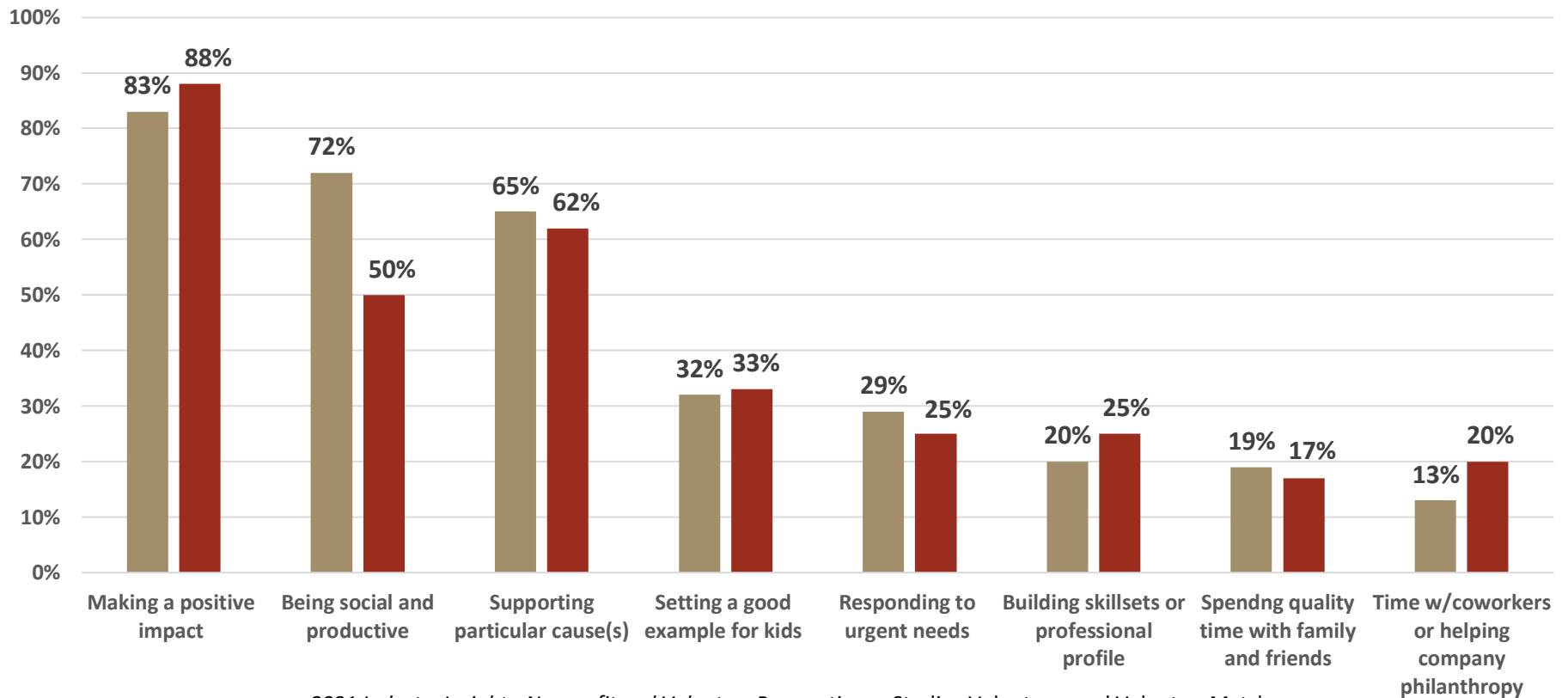
Since many position descriptions typically list tasks rather than key responsibilities and often lack impacts or outcomes, you will have 10 minutes to work in a small group to draft the key responsibilities, impacts, and outcomes for one volunteer position.

Strategic Recruitment



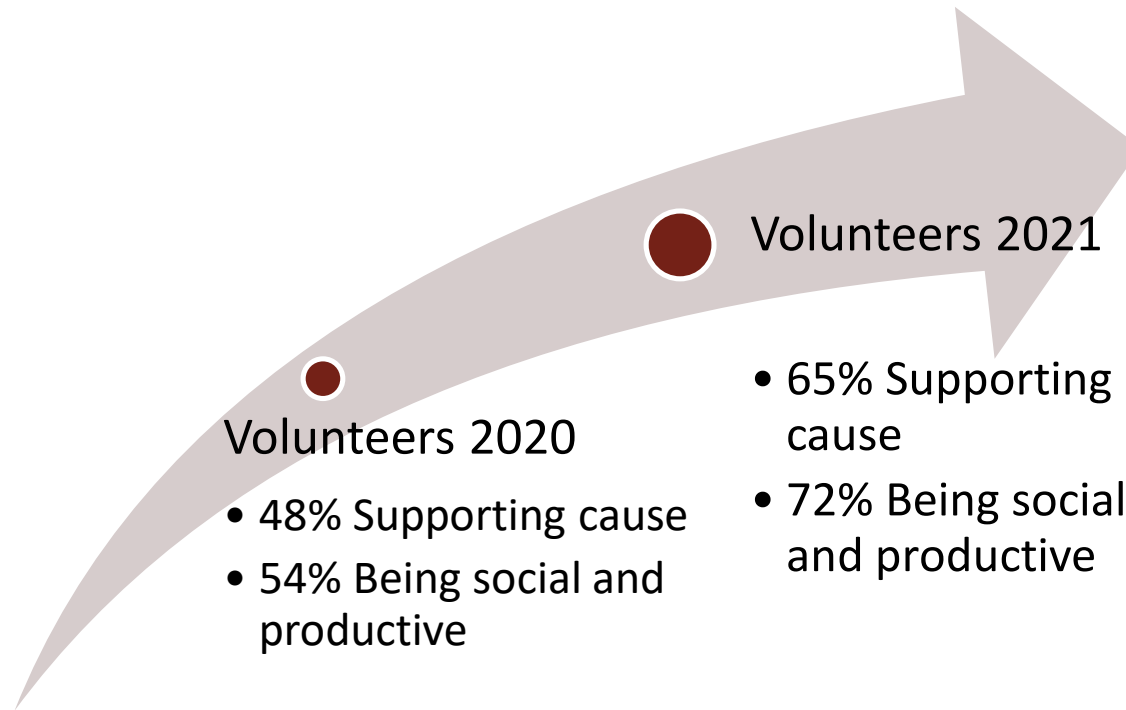
Volunteer Motivations

■ What volunteers say ■ What organizations think



2021 Industry Insights: Nonprofit and Volunteer Perspectives – Sterling Volunteers and VolunteerMatch

What Motivates Volunteers? Notable Shifts

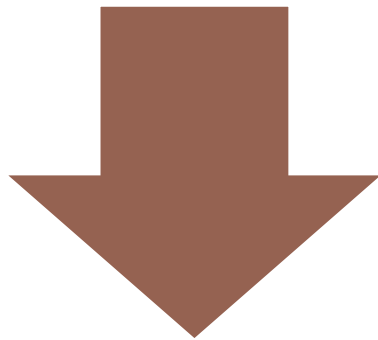


2021 Industry Insights: Nonprofit and Volunteer Perspectives – Sterling Volunteers and VolunteerMatch

Emerging Recruitment Challenges



Demand
for Services

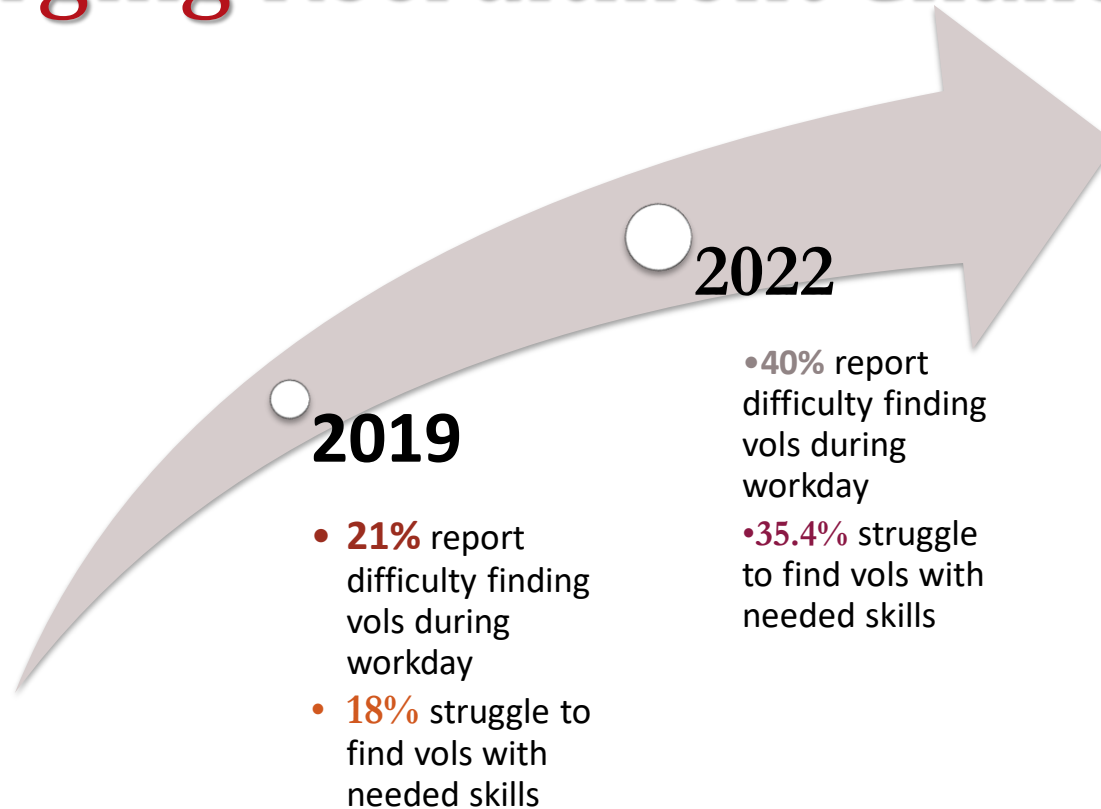


Staff and
resources

Demand for services and staff workload have gone up while staffing and funding have been stable or gone down.

The State of Volunteer Engagement: Insights from Nonprofit Leaders and Funders,
Do Good Institute, 2022

Emerging Recruitment Challenges



The State of Volunteer Engagement: Insights from Nonprofit Leaders and Funders,
Do Good Institute, 2022

Position Descriptions



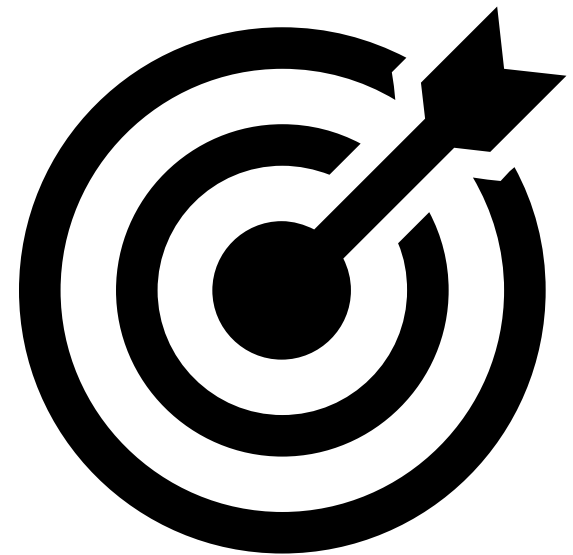
Targeted Recruitment

Who would have the skills and interest to do this assignment?

Where will you find them?

Who knows them?

What information will the prospective volunteer need to make an informed decision?



Effective Messages



3 sentences each

- Impact of work
- Impact of organization
- Description of actual tasks and commitment

Outreach

Potential Partners

- Public health and medical providers
- Community action agencies
- Religious organizations
- Arts & cultural organizations
- Chambers of commerce
- Service clubs
- City or county officials
- Hospital volunteer groups
- Farm groups
- Veterans' groups

Outlets for Recruitment Messages

- Local newspaper
- Local radio station
- Social media (especially for events)
- Flyers
- Coffee shop table tents
- Local hospital and clinics
- Local organization newsletters
- Senior center bulletin boards
- Congregate meal sites
- Faith-based organization bulletins
- Online search engines
- Volunteer centers

Outreach to Rural Communities Tip Sheet, National Council on Aging



Where have you had
success in recruiting
volunteers?

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How do you currently measure recruitment success?

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Recruitment vs. Cultivation



Recruitment
success is all
about numbers



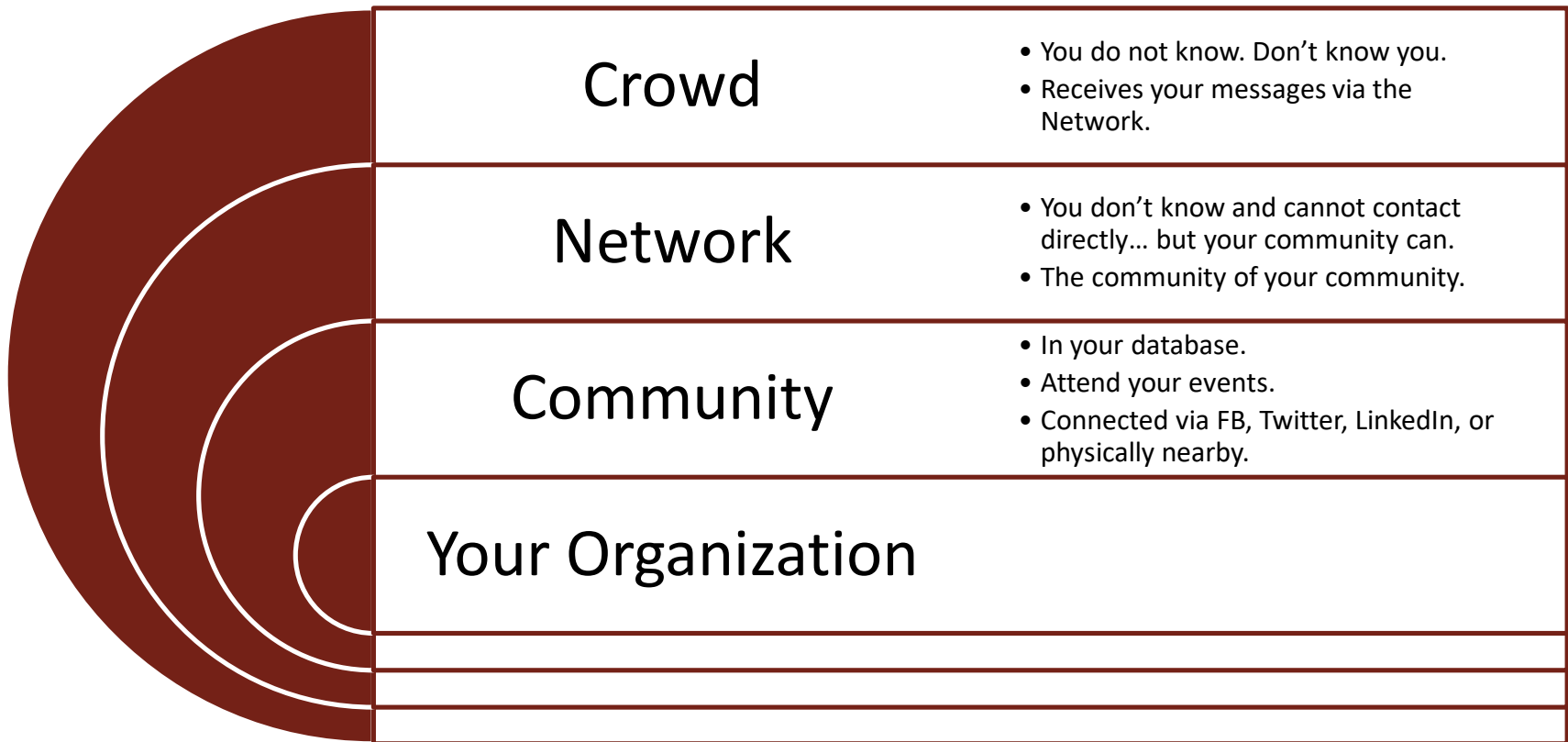
Cultivation success
is all about
relationships



Circles of Influence



Circles of Influence



Adapted from A. Kapin and A. Sample Ward, *Social Change Anytime Anywhere*
(San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2013)

The Power of the Ask



Why consider diversity?



Reflect the
communities we
serve

Welcome new
ideas

Provide more
culturally relevant
services

Relationship-
building

Diverse and
inclusive
organizations
outperform others

Why else?

Engaging Volunteers from Diverse & Immigrant Communities

1. Shift your language
2. Build relationships
3. Understand the importance of socio-economic status
4. Embrace skills-based opportunities
5. Recruit from those who use your services
6. Partner to engage groups of youth
7. Remove barriers
8. Create an inclusive organizational culture



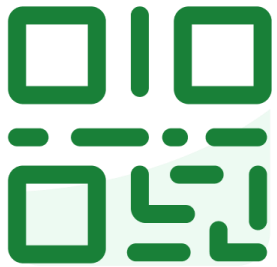
Activity

Pull out your position descriptions and work in small groups to develop a recruitment message for the position.

Retention



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How do you measure retention?

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Retention:

A process to maximize volunteer talent



- Hours/events/shifts
- Years of service
- Fulfilling required commitments
- Consistency
- Maintaining certifications

What Keeps Volunteers Engaged?

What motivates people to volunteer?

- Making a positive impact (83%)
- Being social and productive (72%)
- Supporting a particular cause (65%)

What keeps volunteers engaged?

- Understanding impact (80%)
- Relationships (63%)
- Trusted and safe environment (44%)
- Opportunities to gain skills (42%)
- Gratitude or recognition (41%)
- Serving with family or friends (18%)

2021 Industry Insights: Nonprofit and Volunteer Perspectives – Sterling Volunteers and VolunteerMatch

Retention Research



Volunteer Engagement Scale

- Why do volunteers stay?
 - To help others and make their communities better places to live
- What inspires volunteers to become more involved?
 - Satisfaction with the organization
 - The belief that their work made a difference

NY Cares: The Leadership Ladder

*ServeOhio strengthens communities through
AmeriCorps and volunteer engagement.*

Retention Research

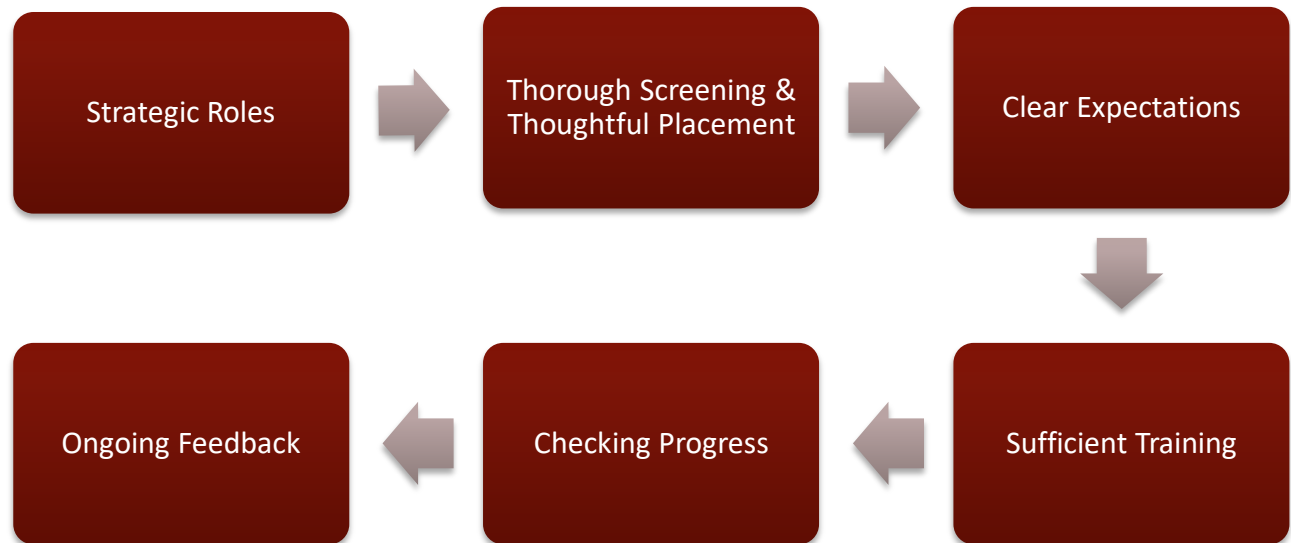


What transforms episodic volunteers into ongoing/return volunteers?

- Authenticity and impact of the work
- Opportunity to serve with others who care about the same things
- Opportunity to form meaningful relationships around the cause and service they care about

Repair the World

Setting Up for Success



Feedback

Feedback provides information about how an individual is doing in their efforts towards achieving a goal.



Volunteer Recognition



In a Culture of Appreciation:



Volunteers are...

- **integrated** into the organization's work
- **valued**
- **celebrated** for their impact

Organizations...

- build and acknowledge **teams**
- **include volunteers** in meetings
- **celebrate** together

Recognition Research

Volunteers want to be recognized

- 80% Hearing how their work made a difference
- Close to 70% would like to be thanked in person on an informal basis

Volunteer Recognition Study 2013 (Canadian)



Conduct Your Own Research

How meaningful would this recognition be?	Very	Somewhat	Not At All
A sincere “thank you” from the staff or volunteer leader with whom I work			
Invitation to a volunteer lunch or dinner			
Nomination for a volunteer award			
Opportunities for training or professional development			
Opportunities to increase my leadership role			
Profile on our website			
Receiving a certificate or pin for hours or years of service			
Receipt of a small token of thanks (e.g., mug, tote bag, t-shirt)			
Selection for a special project			
Getting noticed and thanked by leaders of my team, program, or organization for something specific about my work			

Keep it Going



Annual
Recognition

Ongoing Formal
Recognition

Ongoing Informal
Recognition

Planning

Annual Recognition

- Big events

Ongoing Formal Recognition

- Training certifications
- Service milestones
- Opportunities to present results of work

Ongoing Informal Recognition

- Thank you notes and kudos cards
- Brown bag lunches with CEO
- Appreciation gifts

Rethinking Recognition

Opportunities to share the impact of their work:

- Have the volunteer make a presentation to the board
- Invite the volunteer to write an article on the project for the newsletter
- Ask the volunteer to represent you at meetings
- Offer to write a letter of recommendation or commendation to the volunteer's workplace, school, or other appropriate organization



Rethinking Recognition

Opportunities to gain or develop new skills:

- Offer to send the volunteer to a conference
- Provide the volunteer with training on new software or be mentored by an expert
- Send the volunteer to a lecture or program by an expert in a field related to his/her volunteer work



Rethinking Recognition

Fun and memorable ways to show appreciation

- Create humorous awards such as
 - Best attendance in meetings
 - Most outrageous idea
 - Best food at a meeting
 - Cutest pet to make an appearance on Zoom
- Create a photo album or digital slide show with pictures of the volunteer activity, program, or event



Rethinking Recognition

Small but meaningful tokens of appreciation:

- Donate a book to a library in the volunteer's name
- Order and distribute cute gifts such as...
 - Miniature flashlight with a note, "Thanks to a bright light"
 - A package of tea with a note, "Since you became a volunteer, things are really brewing around here!"
- Print and place yard signs in volunteers' yards or neighborhood
- Create a survival kit and distribute before an event, including things that will help the volunteers thrive even under stressful conditions, such as an energy bar, a water bottle, a throat lozenge, etc.



Group Brainstorm

- How has your organization recognized volunteers and how do you know if those efforts were successful?
- What recognition tactics have been especially well-received in your organization?

In Summary

- Strategic Volunteer Roles
- Recruitment
- Retention
- Recognition

In Summary...Strategic Volunteer Roles



Volunteers are motivated by the chance to make a tangible impact.

Volunteers seek flexible opportunities to serve.

A strategic volunteer role addresses a real organizational need and is structured to appeal to today's volunteers.

Position descriptions are a vital tool to designing strategic volunteer opportunities.

In Summary...Recruitment



A well-crafted position description should inform your recruitment plan.

Determine your recruitment goals and identify metrics that will help you evaluate your efforts.

Leverage cultivation to not only recruit but sustain relationships with prospective volunteers.

Inspire and equip current volunteers, donors, and program participants to act as ambassadors and talent scouts

Use effective techniques to tune into your prospect's motivations.

In Summary...Retention



Retention success can be measured in many ways. Be strategic about your retention goals.

What brings people to engage is often the same thing that keeps them volunteering: The chance to make a meaningful impact.

Feedback fuels accountability and staff and volunteer leaders benefit from training in how to provide effective feedback.

In Summary...Recognition



Understand the research around recognition

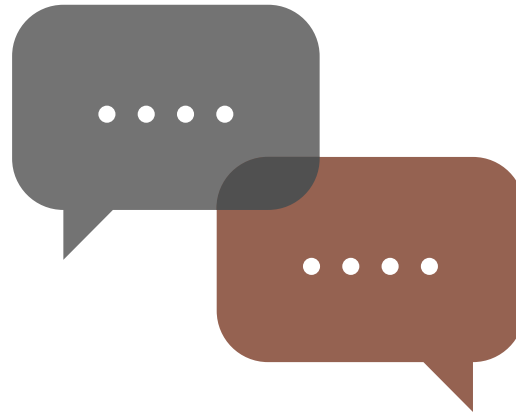
Recognize volunteers by sharing their impact

Appeal to varied motivational styles

Train colleagues to nurture a culture of appreciation

Develop a recognition strategy

Reflections



Volunteer Engagement Resources

Comprehensive list of local, state, national resources on ServeOhio's website:

<https://serve.ohio.gov/volunteering/volunteer-administrator-resources>

Additional Resources

- [Volunteer Engagement Fundamentals](#)
- [Ohio Conference on Service & Volunteerism](#)
- [National Days of Service Grants](#)
- [AmeriCorps](#)
- [Get Connected](#)
- [ServeOhio Awards](#)

Thank you