

Chapter Four: Recruiting



“If you make a product good enough, even though you live in the depths of the forest the public will make a path to your door, says the philosopher. But if you want the public in sufficient numbers, you would better construct a highway.”

- *William Randolph Hearst*

4. Recruitment

The word “recruit” is derived from a French word, “recroistre” which means to “grow up again” or “fresh or additional supply.” Attracting new people with their new ideas and fresh approach to existing programs is one way to keep your family support growing and energized.

Recruit volunteers through marketing, the process by which you reach customers and persuade them to purchase, use and repurchase, or use, a product or service.

Marketing targets populations, informs them about products and services, and motivates them to use these products/services. Marketing is not only selling or advertising, but also ensuring that the right goods and services are produced and find their way to your consumer. The wide range of marketing activities includes:

- Market research.
- Analyzing the competition.
- Finding one’s market niche.
- Pricing.
- Promotion.

Two effective ways to market are through:

- Public relations (PR).
- Advertising.



VOLUNTEER SERVICES DESK GUIDE

Public relations PR sell an idea or concept that raises awareness and support of programs/services. It helps your customer understand your organization. Your customer feels that you, the service provider, cares about him/her. PR is considered a “soft sell.” Examples of public relations for the Volunteer Services Program include personal networking, briefings/presentations, and media coverage of existing volunteers in action.

Advertising sells a specific product or service by motivating people to try the product or service. The key to successful advertising is promotion – repeatedly bringing the product to the attention of customers. Most family support programs do not pay to advertise. However, short news items and program announcements are appropriate topics for the installation or community newspaper, the family support newsletter, etc. Flyers, handouts, brochures, newsletters, and e-mail/web sites are all marketing materials prepared and used by family support programs from all branches of the service. Advertising is considered a “hard sell.”

4.1 Marketing Plan

Organizations that are successful in marketing invariably start with a marketing plan. It’s important to have a plan when marketing. If you do too much, you will not be able to respond to the demand for services and programs you’ve just created. Your credibility will be lost. If you do too little, no one will know you are there.

Large companies have plans with hundreds of pages; small companies can get by with a half-dozen sheets. Put your marketing plan in a three-ring binder or put it in a shared electronic file. Refer to it at least quarterly, but better yet monthly. Leave a tab for putting in monthly reports on the number of volunteers, the number of hours of service they provided and the areas in which they work; this will allow you to track performance as you follow the plan.

Your plan should support strategic planning goals and needs assessment data. A marketing plan is comprised of several marketing campaigns that highlight your organization’s products or services. A marketing plan is a guide for which programs and services an agency plans to highlight at a particular time. The plan should cover one to two years. For small organizations, this is often the best way to think about marketing. Needs change. People leave. Markets evolve. Customers come and go. Some organizations include a section that addresses the medium-term future - two to four years down the road. But the bulk of your plan should focus on the coming year.

Developing the plan is the “heavy lifting” of marketing. While executing the plan has its challenges, deciding what to do and how to do it is marketing’s



CHAPTER FOUR: RECRUITING

greatest challenge. Most marketing plans kick off with the first of the year or with the beginning of the fiscal year.

Share your plan with the entire staff. Businesses often keep their marketing plans private because they're packed with information which would make them extremely valuable to the competition, but Volunteer Program Managers will benefit from sharing their plan with colleagues.

A marketing plan is not the same as the strategic plan we discussed in Chapter Two: Program Planning. A strategic plan spells out what your organization is about and what your ultimate goals are. It encompasses more than marketing; it can include discussions of locations, staffing, financing, strategic alliances and so on. Your strategic plan is the constitution of your business: if you want to do something that's outside the strategic plan, you need to either change your mind or change the plan. Your strategic plan provides the environment in which your marketing plan must flourish. The two documents must be consistent.

Your marketing plan provides you with several major benefits. It's a:

- Rallying point. Colleagues and volunteers know what products and services are being highlighted. Therefore, they can “sell” your program in your absence.
- Success chart. Choosing which services and programs to emphasize and setting goals to measure success are facts that can be reported to funding sources to demonstrate success.
- “To do list.” A marketing plan with specific marketing campaigns helps you to prepare and focus your marketing efforts rather than doing marketing in a random, chaotic way.
- Program history. Your written document lays out your game plan. If people leave, if memories falter, if events bring pressure to alter the givens, the information in the written marketing plan stays intact to remind you of what you'd agreed on.
- Big picture. Your Volunteer marketing plan is a component of your agency's overall marketing plan. There may be opportunities to market programs in tandem, and at the very least, there should be a system to ensure that programs within your organization are not in competition for the same target population.

Ideally, after writing marketing plans for a few years, you can sit back and review them and check the progress of your program. Although, this is hard to



make time for, it can provide an unparalleled objective view of how you've marketed your program over time.

4.2 Product Definition

Product definition helps define your product, and thus, create your recruitment message. Product definition simply answers the question, "What am I selling?" in the business world. In the volunteer world, product definition answers the question, "What am I trying to accomplish?"

For example, you may find yourself recruiting for several volunteers. Your relocation program, transition program and financial education programs may all need volunteers with varying skills and these volunteers are needed immediately. You might do a general push to recruit a variety of volunteers.

Or you may find you're simply recruiting for a single volunteer to fill a single open position. Your recruitment efforts would be more targeted to people with specific skills you're looking for.

Or you may have decided you'd like to attract more staff members at your agency to utilize volunteers and you develop an internal marketing campaign to reach this goal.

Since the Volunteer Services Program overlaps with every service provided by your family support program it's important to work in tandem with the rest of the agency and recruitment.

4.3 Market Research

Market research includes:

- Finding out what groups of potential volunteers (or markets) exist.
- Defining what groups of volunteers you prefer to reach (target markets).
- Learning what their needs are.
- Developing opportunities to meet their needs.
- Identifying how volunteers might prefer to be involved with your agency.
- Learning what opportunities exist on your installation and in the local community.



CHAPTER FOUR: RECRUITING

- Determining the most effective methods to use to reach your target markets.

Various methods of marketing research are used to find out information about markets, target audiences and their needs, competitors, market trends, customer satisfaction with products and services, etc. Marketing also includes ongoing promotions, which can include advertising, public relations, sales and customer service.

Market research is a prerequisite for effective recruiting. Market research helps you address the issues, design methods for collecting information, manage the data collection process, analyze the results, and communicate findings. Market research is used to determine customer needs and how well the need is being satisfied.

Market research includes primary and secondary research. Primary research data is obtained by observing one's current volunteers and acquiring their responses to specific questions through surveys, program evaluation, focus groups, etc. Secondary research consists of demographic information and past performance data.

Data collection conjures up thoughts of Einstein-level math for many in the helping profession, but data collection doesn't have to be complicated to be useful. Focus groups and surveys have a long history in market research as well as in needs assessments. For recruitment efforts, a focus group can specifically:

- Be used to get a better understanding of the target audience.
- Determine which types of volunteer service will most likely be "bought" by potential volunteers.
- Ascertain how/if information about the Volunteer Services Program has been disseminated.

Marketing data can also be gathered by conducting a survey. Often, surveys are a part of larger data collection and analysis of effort on Quality of Life programs. But a short awareness survey could be conducted by a show of hands during a command briefing, a stand up interview at the exchange, or commissary, or as questions attached to program or training evaluations.

Also, never discount anecdotal information provided to you by current volunteers. Maintain a file of thank you notes. Keep a written synopsis of apprecia-



tive telephone contacts. Volumes of data can easily be forgotten, but one heartfelt success story or thank you letter can be very persuasive.

4.4 Target Audiences

People respond to the same message in different ways. By targeting the message to a specific audience it makes the message easier for an audience to relate to, and thus, support. How do you target a message to a specific audience? There are several ways. The use of words, graphics, fonts, and colors all play a role in how your message is received. Testimonials, or spokespersons your audience easily relates to, can influence the use of products and services. No matter who your target audience is, always answer the question, “What’s in it for a member of the target audience?”

There are many potential target audiences for your Volunteer Services Program. They include:

- Junior spouses.
- Mid-career spouses.
- Senior spouses.
- New arrivals.
- Departing personnel.
- Teenagers.
- Retirees.
- Active duty personnel.
- Civilian personnel.
- College students.
- Senior military personnel.
- Community organizations.

Let’s look at some of these potential target audiences and address the “What’s in it for me?” question for each.



CHAPTER FOUR: RECRUITING

4.4.1 Junior Spouses

Many volunteer coordinators working in family support programs believe junior military spouses are the primary target audience of the Volunteer Services Program. These young spouses often do not have educational or work experience and need opportunities to learn and to gain experience in a professional work environment.

However, junior spouses are often one of the most difficult target audiences to reach. At larger installations younger spouses tend not to utilize many installation services, perhaps due to lack of awareness. They also often tend not to subscribe to a local newspaper or watch the television stations that run public service announcements, such as local cable channels. Information directed to the junior active duty service member rarely reaches the spouse at home.

Success with junior spouses who do not live in military housing complexes may rest on reaching them when they're new to the military, or new to the installation. All spouses are required to get a military identification card, so working with the office that issues these cards may help inform junior spouses not only of volunteer opportunities, but other services such as Welcome to the Military workshops or financial planning services. The ID Card office could distribute information packets and brochures, display posters, and perhaps even show a video about your family support program and volunteer opportunities.

Another way to reach spouses is through command sponsored family 2nd orientation meetings if these are hosted by individual commands at your installation. In fact, a sampling of DOD program managers indicated that family orientation meetings are the most effective way to reach junior spouses.

Navy Ombudsmen, Marine Corps Key Volunteers and Army Family Readiness Group Leaders are also an excellent way to reach new spouses. Keeping these command family liaisons informed and asking them to provide this information through their newsletters, care lines and phone trees can also help you reach young military spouses.

The challenge with using junior spouses as volunteers is they often have young children and would like to volunteer with an agency that reimburses for child care or allows them to bring their children. They may also need transportation which may be a hurdle, but one that can be overcome with effort.

Modern images, bright colors, and informal language on print materials will attract the attention of junior spouses.



4.4.2 Mid-career and Senior Spouses

Spouses whose sponsors have been in ten or more years may be returning to the workforce after raising children to school age and lack the time to volunteer. However, they are often viewed as leaders by command families who may turn to them with questions and concerns. It's good to keep this target audience informed even though you may not be recruiting directly from this pool of volunteers. They may be a good referral source.

Flexible opportunities that allow them to work around their children's schedules may be a priority. They may also feel flattered to be invited to serve on boards or committees where their experience is valued.

Hosting an open house and inviting leadership spouses to your agency for a short presentation and tour of what's available to their command family members can be an especially effective way to get the word out about your program. Briefings to spouse groups, key spouse meetings, and family support groups are another effective way to market to more senior spouses.

Use of traditional symbols, logos and service colors is also familiar to this group of spouses who are used to supporting their military spouse and the installation.

This group of spouses tends to use installation services and would be likely to pick up a brochure or flyer at the commissary or exchange. They also tend to read the installation newspaper, so regularly published articles about your program with photos showing mid-career spouses providing volunteer service are effective with this target audience. They are familiar with the military colors and insignia so brochures, posters and flyers with traditional graphics and colors attract their attention.

4.4.3 New Arrivals

New arrivals are eager for information about their new installation and community. Before the newcomer even arrives, have information about your installation's family support program and volunteer opportunities sent in the Welcome Package. Post information about volunteer opportunities at your agency on the installation and in the local community on your web site.

Ensure the information about your program is current in the Standard Information and Topic Exchange System (SITES) for your installation. SITES is a computerized information system which provides service members with worldwide relocation information on major military installations. The SITES program is continually updated and provides ready access to phone numbers,



CHAPTER FOUR: RECRUITING

quarantine information, tax and license information, as well as educational, housing, and employment opportunities and requirements. The web site is located at <https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/sites>.

Staffs at some family support programs are fortunate to get information about new arrivals well in advance, and they contact the service and family members by telephone or e-mail to assess needs and inform them of services available. This proactive approach is sure to make a lasting positive impression on those being transferred to your installation.

Most installations offer some type of newcomer gathering in addition to those hosted by the squadron, command or unit. Many also offer a gathering for family members. Called “Resource Fairs, Family Indoc, Welcoming Nights,” etc. they provide a forum for new arrivals to learn about services available on base and include medical, educational, legal, recreational, Red Cross and other military support programs. Ensure your family support program is always represented and information about volunteer opportunities are included.

Volunteering is an excellent way for newly arriving personnel and their families to meet and become a part of their new community. Offer to staff a display or speak at these information venues for newly arriving personnel and their families. In addition to accessing potential volunteers, they provide an opportunity for you to network with other installation service providers.

Use professional looking displays, and if possible, have some small token gifts to attract people to gather information. Mouse pads, pens, pencils, small portfolios, calendars, note cubes, and other small gifts with your contact information on them will provide a reminder of your agency to potential clients after the event is over.

4.4.4 Sponsors

An active duty person from the receiving command is assigned to all transferring active duty service members regardless of their pay grade. A sponsor is a service member from the gaining command who is assigned to assist the service and family members who are reporting to the command. In addition to providing information about the new duty station, they are able to provide basic information about the local community and services available on the installation.

Relocation personnel from the family support program typically provide training for sponsors. Ask if you may assist with this training, or at least provide written information about volunteer opportunities to sponsors to forward to the families they assist.



VOLUNTEER SERVICES DESK GUIDE

A well-informed, proactive sponsor is especially critical for families moving overseas, to remote locations, or to recruit assignments. Family members with these assignments often learn that employment is hard to find which can lead to a great deal of frustration. By initially working through the sponsor, you can reach new families and help them see they can maintain existing skills or develop new skills while assigned to a remote duty station by providing volunteer services.

4.4.5 Teenagers and College Students

Teens and college students are just beginning to build their professional resume. They typically need summer volunteer opportunities or after school and weekend opportunities. A brief marketing campaign in late April or early May time frame will prepare military teens for a volunteer focused summer vacation.

Advertise to students through your local schools. Offer to make the morning announcements or appear on a student run, in-school television show. Meet with the local school guidance counselors to get the word out about volunteer opportunities at your agency. Provide posters, flyers and brochures to be distributed at school. Use flashy, eye catching colors with a modern font to catch the attention of potential teenage volunteers.

4.4.6 Retirees

Military retirees have a lot to offer. They may have retired from the military and now, perhaps, retired from a second career. After being an active part of the United States DOD for twenty or more years, they may have a strong desire to “give back” to their service. Volunteering at a military family support program is the perfect way to give back.

The entire Retired Activities Program, located in many Navy Fleet and Family Support Centers, is run strictly by retired military personnel. Retirees volunteer in all facets of family support programs. Recent retirees are often invited back to DOD Transition Assistance Programs to discuss their transition process and provide tips to those about to retire. Military retirees are often eager guest speakers or panel members for family support programs in the areas of financial education, relocation programs, deployment preparation, etc. They are easily able to relate to your audience because they’ve “been there, done that” so they have instant credibility.

Retirees tend to use base services so target your recruitment efforts to places such as the commissary and pharmacy. Use traditional military symbols, logos



CHAPTER FOUR: RECRUITING

and colors. Also, remember to use larger font. Never use anything less than 12 point when designing print materials for target audiences over the age of forty.

4.4.7 Active Duty Personnel

Service members are easy to reach, but are often a small target population for the Volunteer Services Program as they have paid jobs during the time you most need volunteers. However, many work flexible or non-traditional schedules as well as there are events when you need volunteers in the evening or on weekends.

When you need a group of active duty volunteers it's often most effective to contact the senior enlisted person at a unit and ask for assistance. Be sure to provide date, place, time and type of help you need. Try to include a response to the question "What's in it for them?" even if you have to provide pizza or other refreshments when you're asking for fifteen strong service members to move boxes or heavy furniture. Most service members are willing to assist when asked, but it's nice to show your appreciation. It also makes it easier to recruit volunteers for future needs when service members report back to command personnel they were well treated.

To attract the attention of individual active duty personnel, post flyers and brochures in recreation facilities such as the gym, club or movie theater. Marquees, ATM machines and laundry mats on the installation are also a good place to post information.

4.4.8 Senior Military Personnel

Officer and enlisted senior personnel have the responsibility of looking out for the well being of the junior personnel who report to them. Even though, they, or their family members may also be potential volunteers, focus your marketing efforts on how the Volunteer Services Program can assist junior personnel and their families such as:

- Provide opportunities to meet other people.
- Learn new skills.
- Give back to their community.

Do an information briefing as part of the installation's overall family support program and include information about volunteer opportunities. Offer to provide information about the family support program when new senior military personnel arrive at the installation. This group of individuals must digest a



VOLUNTEER SERVICES DESK GUIDE

great deal of information about numerous topics every day, so keep your pitch succinct, factual and results oriented.

Often military leaders will ask how they may support your program. Have a specific, pre-approved suggestion readily available. For example, “We need a funding source to provide approximately \$10,000 per year to reimburse our volunteers for child care expenses incurred while providing volunteer services.” Or “We need to find a way for volunteers to have access to computers so they can do data entry and thus save 8000 man hours a year.”

Your director may prefer that communication to senior officers on the installation go through him or her. Senior enlisted personnel say telephoning, e-mailing and simply stopping by the office is the most effective way to share information and garner support from them.

4.4.9 Recruiting for Diversity

Diversity describes a person’s race or ethnic background, economic status, lifestyle choice, religious preference or lack thereof, family composition, educational attainment, etc. The Journal of Extension (1996) reports by the year 2050 most Americans will be from a minority group.

Diverse volunteers can reach underserved audiences and can add a spark of new life with creative ideas and provide unique opportunities in existing programs. However, recruiting diverse volunteers can be challenging.

According to Beverly Hobbs in her article *Diversifying the Volunteer Base: Latinos and Volunteerism* from the *Journal of Extension* (August 2001), many individuals consider volunteering as a way of the fortunate helping those not as fortunate. This mindset can be addressed by using terms other than ‘volunteer’. Perhaps you may want to consider the terms ‘help’ or ‘assist’ rather than ‘volunteer’. Many times making simple changes can result in a huge impact.”

Ms. Hobbs indicates that recruiting diverse volunteers can be accomplished through conventional methods. In her article she suggests reaching out to Latinos by:

- Personally extending an invitation.
- Presenting information as an invitation rather than an announcement.
- Using bilingual print information.



CHAPTER FOUR: RECRUITING

- Holding meetings in locations where potential volunteers will be comfortable.
- Offering food, door prizes and music as part of the meeting.
- Including families.
- Explaining how volunteer work benefits the community.

These recruitment tactics can also be used for other diverse audiences.

Ms. Hobbs also suggests, “Do not rely on current volunteers to bring in more diversity. People tend to know only a few people who look and think like themselves. This is an excellent example of why it is limiting to ask: ‘Whom do we know who might want to do this?’ The better question is: ‘Whom don’t we know who might want to do this?’”

4.5 Marketing Campaigns

A marketing campaign is a connected series of events designed to bring about a particular result. A marketing campaign is a component of a marketing plan. The Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps offer a number of programs under the general umbrella of family support programs in addition to the Volunteer Services Program. If all the services are advertised equally, it may become difficult for the customer to remember what is available.

So how do these different programs prevent customer confusion and still effectively market their services? An annual marketing plan is developed to highlight specific programs or services throughout the year. For example, a department store has different items on sale at different times of the year. A restaurant may offer the same food all year round, but the double cheeseburger is on sale one month, and the chicken sandwich is advertised the next. Just as a department store or restaurant highlight “specials”, your family support program may actively market certain programs at specific times of the year.

Some typical times of the year your Volunteer Services Program are marketed include in:

- April during national Volunteer Appreciation Week.
- May recruit youth volunteers as parents are planning their children’s summer schedules.
- September highlight volunteer opportunities to non-working parents whose children are returning to school.



VOLUNTEER SERVICES DESK GUIDE

- December to capitalize on the feelings of goodwill and wanting to contribute during the holidays.

You can use naturally occurring events to create a “buzz” or interest in your Volunteer Services Program or create your own “buzz” by developing a marketing campaign anytime.

There may be several marketing campaigns running simultaneously directed at different target audiences. For example the New Parent Support Program may be sponsoring a campaign to increase attendance at a parent-child play group; while the Financial Education Program is pushing to get service members enrolled in the Thrift Savings Plan; and the Family Employment Readiness Program is encouraging attendance at an upcoming job fair. These can be running simultaneously since they are not mutually exclusive.

It might be confusing for a client to see a marketing blitz for Volunteer Appreciation Week, a Volunteer Recruitment Fair, and volunteers to work in the career services program running at the same time. They might not know which one to take advantage of and therefore, do nothing. Often it is better to focus on one need or event within your program at a time to avoid confusion for your target audience.

Perhaps some services do not need marketing, as resources may be limited. For example, if you routinely have a waiting list for a home buying workshop, and you do not have the resources to add additional workshops, you would be foolish to implement a marketing campaign to increase attendance. It will only result in disappointment, frustration, and anger for the customers that are turned away. The same applies if you need only one volunteer to provide reception services. If you run an extensive recruitment campaign and find five strong potential volunteers the three or four potential volunteers you do not select will be frustrated and possibly forever have a bad impression of military support programs – something you definitely don’t want to happen.

4.5.1 Developing and Implementing a Marketing Campaign

Think of a marketing campaign as setting time-limited specific goals and objectives for a program or service. The six elements of a marketing campaign include:

- The product, service or message you want to “sell.”
- The target audience or who you want to sell to.
- How you’ll measure success.



CHAPTER FOUR: RECRUITING

- The duration of the “sales” effort.
- What tools or strategies you’ll use to sell your product, service or message.
- A report on the results.

Let’s look at each of these elements.

4.5.1.1 Product

“What are you selling?” is the first element to consider when developing a marketing campaign. Be certain that you have a good product or service, and that based on client contact and other needs assessment data, you’re convinced that this product is worthwhile. Many staff members at military family support programs who coordinate the Volunteer Services Program indicate the agency has limited opportunities for volunteers, that, in fact the only opportunities for volunteers are stuffing program packets or shredding documents. While these functions are necessary and there may be individuals who will do this job, it will be a challenge to keep volunteers motivated.

Before developing an external marketing campaign to recruit volunteers it might be more helpful to develop an internal marketing campaign to educate, excite and motivate staff to expand service delivery options via the use of volunteers.

As we’ve already stated there are a number of quality of life products and services available through the family support program including financial, relocation, life skills, counseling, transition assistance, substance abuse counseling, family violence intervention, and more. There are also a number of volunteer opportunities that comprise the Volunteer Services Program. You could even have a volunteer who coordinates your volunteers! Once you’ve determined your product, create a message.

The marketing message positions the product in the mind of the potential customer.

It states the purpose and the benefits of the volunteer opportunity or the Volunteer Services Program in general. The marketing message should be clear, consistent, and integrated across all modes of communication. The message is the underlying theme of all marketing efforts; whether stated directly or implicitly. However, the specifics of the message may differ depending to whom you are marketing.

In developing your message consider:



- The concerns, perception or issues that need to be addressed.
- The potential benefits to the target audience.
- What the target audience needs to know to access the program or service.
- What “tone” to take - formal or informal.

For example, you want to increase the number of individuals who are willing to use and supervise volunteers within your organization as you’re convinced there are some very talented individuals at your agency who would make excellent volunteer supervisors. Let’s use the message, “Promote yourself – be a volunteer supervisor.”

4.5.1.2 Target your Audience

The second element to consider when developing your marketing campaign is “Who is your target audience?” There is no such thing as the “general public.” Every individual does not need all of your services or is qualified to provide volunteer services in every area. As a program manager, it might be helpful to think about each “product” (service or program) and develop a specific marketing campaign for that product. Link up the product to the target markets that are going to respond.

Successful marketing targets audiences (buyers), content and media. For our purposes, let’s target current staff members who work at our agency. You may need to talk with management about any constraints specific staff members may have regarding supervising volunteers. Some organizations don’t allow staff members to supervise volunteers if it’s not in their job description or written into the contract.

What strategies have you used to persuade people in the past? Look through your files and see if there are individuals who used to supervise volunteers in the past. Go to them and ask about their previous experiences and ask for their help.

Ask yourself, what individuals on staff would make good volunteer supervisors? Share your observations with them and ask for their assistance. Ask existing volunteers if they would be interested in supervising new volunteers. Ask for support from management to expand the pool of volunteer opportunities at your agency.



4.5.1.3 Establish a Goal

The third element necessary for a successful marketing campaign is to create a measurable goal. What will success look like? Always develop specific, measurable goals as opposed to goals such as “Increase awareness of the Volunteer Services Program.” While it is possible to measure an increase in awareness, you’d have to survey a representative sample of your target audience prior to your marketing efforts and then you’d have to resurvey the same or similar target audience upon the completion of the campaign. That may be more work than your schedule allows.

Let’s say that you currently have only one volunteer at your agency that provides administrative support. You’d like each functional area to have a volunteer who may provide administrative support, but may also provide direct client services such as providing information and referral, assisting clients with computers in the career resource area, leading or co-leading workshops, staffing information tables, answering the telephone, etc. Let’s say our goal for this internal marketing campaign is to recruit at least five volunteer supervisors from our existing staff and volunteer.

4.5.1.4 Campaign Length

The fourth element of a marketing campaign is to establish a time frame for your marketing campaign. Just as a department store doesn’t keep winter jackets on sale in the spring or Burger King only puts double cheeseburgers on sale for a limited time, you establish a time line for your campaign. Marketing campaigns cannot be ongoing or they lose their energy, as do you. For our example, we’ll do a 30-day campaign in the month of January which is often a slower time for staff so it will make it easier to access them. We have our time frame for our campaign, our message, target audience, and goal for success. What tools will we use to achieve results?

4.5.1.5 Tools

The fifth element of a marketing campaign is to select advertising tools and public relations strategies. This is where the real work begins. In order to be ready for a focused staff advertising blitz in the month of January, you’ll probably need to begin in November to do some of the following:

- Develop a marketing campaign and commit to paper.
- Discuss your plans with your supervisor to get approval.
- Since this is an in-house campaign, create a couple of posters to display at high traffic areas in your center. (advertising)



VOLUNTEER SERVICES DESK GUIDE

- Gather materials such as books, flyers, video tapes, web sites, etc. to create an eye catching display about the value of volunteers. (advertising)
- Develop a weekly e-mail to send to staff about the benefits of supervising volunteers. (advertising)
- Create a signature line on your e-mails with quotes about volunteerism. (advertising)
- Do a staff in-service training on being a successful volunteer supervisor. (PR)
- Make announcements about your Volunteer Services Program at staff meetings. (advertising)
- Meet with potential volunteer supervisors and offer to help to develop position descriptions. (PR)

Implement your campaign. Midway through your month-long campaign, check your progress. Retool if necessary.

4.5.1.6 Measure and Report Results

The final element of a marketing campaign is to measure results and report success strategies. Toot your horn. Brag. Management wants to hear about successes. Do a short synopsis of your goals, efforts, and results and FORWARD them to management. Share the results with your colleagues both locally and throughout the world.



CHAPTER FOUR: RECRUITING

A sample Marketing Campaign Worksheet follows:

Marketing Campaign Worksheet

Message or Product: _____

Target Audience: _____

Measurable Goal: _____

Duration: _____

Tools : _____

Measure Success and Report : _____



4.6 Select Marketing Tools

Your Volunteer Services Program can be marketed using a variety of tools and tactics. However, remember, today's consumers are assaulted with marketing messages everywhere they go. To determine the most effective methods to deliver the message, analyze the data from current volunteer feedback, needs assessments and marketing research. Select tools and tactics that are appropriate for the message and the audience. For example, a great deal of detailed information works better in a brochure than on a flyer, and e-mails are ineffective if the target audience lacks Internet access.

The range of tools is as unlimited as the imagination, but there are real world considerations against which brainstormed notions should be weighed.

Among the criteria are:

- Budget.
- Bang for the buck.
- Ease of implementation.

Renting a blimp to fly over a military housing area with neon signs to recruit volunteers may be a terrific attention-getter, but the cost is too high. Choose marketing tools that can be accommodated within your agency's budget. Also choose marketing tools and activities that are practical and require minimum staff/volunteer time to put into place.

Some marketing ideas may be relatively inexpensive, but may not reach target audiences with the necessary consistency or impact. Choose marketing tools that are cost-effective. We discussed advertising and public relations as the two broad methods of marketing. Now we'll look at advertising tools such as the print and audiovisual materials produced to promote products and services. Since most DOD organizations do not have a large marketing budget, tools should be cost-effective and easy to implement. Tools fall into three broad categories:

- Audio-visual.
- Internet.
- Print media.



4.6.1 Audio-visual Tools

Audiovisual materials, including television, radio, and videotapes/CDs are generally effective, but can be expensive. Use public service announcements (PSAs) to advertise and to seek coverage of events. Both television and radio stations are required to do a specific number of PSAs. Although often shown at odd hours, PSAs on popular stations will reach some members of your targeted audience.

The Armed Forces Network and other military produced television and radio stations are often eager to televise your story. A list of DOD media is available at <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/dodnews.html>. Always work with the Public Affairs Officer (PAO) at your installation. Your chain of command will want to be aware that media is doing a story about an aspect of your program. Many overseas and remote locations report that it is particularly effective to use the locally produced military television channel. Segments are often taped and shown many times.

4.6.1.1 Television

Local television news programs and talk shows are the best way to use TV for publicity purposes. The following steps should be taken when employing TV as a publicity tool:

- Send the Volunteer Services Program manager's business card to local talk show producers, along with a letter stating several interesting topics on which she/he can speak. Follow up with a personal call.
- Make sure talk show producers are on the press release mailing list.
- Establish relationships with local television reporters whose beat might appropriately include military issues and community news.
- Send local television reporters a letter/business card outlining your program, volunteer needs, and suggested story items.
- Whenever something new, interesting, or successful occurs with community-wide interest, contact TV reporters with story ideas.

Through television appearances you have the opportunity to spread the message not only about your Volunteer Services Program, but your entire military family support program.



4.6.1.2 Television Tips

Prepare for your television appearance so the audience is focused on your message and not your physical appearance. Your PAO should be able to help.

- Know the color of the set background. If you do not, take two jackets with you. For example if the set background is royal blue and you wear royal blue clothing, your body will fade into the background. You'll look like a talking head!
- Remove large, gaudy, noisy and shining jewelry as it is distracting to your audience.
- Keep answers short. Have 2-3 main points and talk in "sound bites", not long-winded sentences.
- You always represent your program, your agency, your service branch and the Department of Defense when talking to the media. Do so wisely.
- Remove eye glasses unless you have non-reflective lenses.
- Look at the person who is interviewing you. Don't let your eyes wander around the set or shift back and forth to the camera.
- Powder your nose, cheeks and forehead. Even guys need a matte finish so you don't look like you're sweating (even though you very well may be).
- Use gestures if this is something you normally do, but keep them more contained than if you were speaking to a large audience.
- Smile. All the time so you're prepared when the camera starts rolling. Keep smiling and assume you're on air with a live microphone until they tell you otherwise. Smiling will make you seem more approachable and will help you feel confident and in control.
- Ask the interviewer to post your contact information on the screen during the interview so you don't have to worry about forgetting to mention it repeatedly.

And remember, even if your television interview isn't your best performance, all publicity is good publicity if it gets the word out about your program.

4.6.2 Radio

This form of publicity is more accessible and less expensive than television.

You can "advertise" on radio (through PSAs which, as mentioned, may be del-



CHAPTER FOUR: RECRUITING

egated to the wee hours), or participate in radio news programs/talk shows. You may even be able to create a PSA with music in the background and simply send it to local radio stations to play. For radio publicity, consider the following:

- Devise a simple script or two for a 30-second radio spot to be used as a PSA.
- Locate a staff member or volunteer with a crisp, pleasant speaking voice to record the message.
- Contact local radio stations to learn if the spot can be recorded on their premises; if not, find a local recording studio willing to take on the job (pro bono would be nice).
- Reproduce the tapes in suitable number and forward them to the programming director or other key staff member of the local stations.

4.6.2.1 Radio Tips

Unlike television, your appearance is relatively unimportant except for the fact that you're representing your agency.

To be successful with any audio-visual media tools it's important to have a clear message you want to convey. Typically you'll have approximately three talking points for almost any length of radio or television you do. Think of doing a presentation before an audience.

You'll typically be asked your name and what organization you represent. You'll be asked to talk about your program, and finally you'll be asked for contact information.

Since you know your name and contact information, you simply need to focus on your program. Again, the three point rule applies. What is your product or the message you want to convey? The Volunteer Services Program is almost always recruiting, so describe a couple of volunteer positions needed and the skills you're looking for. Give contact information for interested people to contact you. Also:

- Remember to talk slowly and clearly.
- Try to delete the annoying filler words such as “ums” and “you knows.”
- Bring water or coffee to drink to prevent dry mouth.



- Talk in short sentences.
- Sound enthusiastic.

4.6.3 Other Audio Visual Tools

Other audio visual tools include:

- Slide shows.
- Video taped PSAs.
- Marquees.

Computer slide or video presentations are effective. PowerPoint or other computer slide or video programs are inexpensive and easy to access. The presentation can be looped to play over and over at information tables or in lobbies of places such as the exchange, commissary, medical, PSD, newcomer orientations, volunteer fairs, etc.

Many installation theaters will show video taped PSAs before the movie begins. Developing a short script about your program, securing actors, actresses, a camera person and some imagination is all it takes to create a PSA about your program. Staff members who have created these PSAs indicate they are very effective as people comment about them well after they've been shown. Try to record a role play or skit as it's more entertaining than a "talking head" on screen.

Installation marquees are usually posted at entry and exit gates. They are a useful way to get concrete bits of information out to target markets on the installation. Since most people see this information while riding in a car or on a motorcycle the content must be brief and to the point. For example, an announcement may read:

ACS Volunteer Trainers Needed. Call XXXX.

Or

Gain Job Experience. Volunteer at FFSC. Call, XXXX.

4.7 Online Marketing

The Internet is a critical element in publicity and advertising. It is important that online marketing accurately reflect the Volunteer Services Program since a variety of audiences can be reached.



4.7.1 Web Pages

Most organizations have a web page. If not already in existence, create a local web page. Be sure it's linked to your agency's page. Take into consideration the following materials for online content:

- Ensure the page is uncluttered, easy to navigate and loads quickly even on slower computers.
- Contact information including phone numbers, address, directions, and hours of service are posted.
- Announce any training opportunities that are currently available to volunteers. Include registration information. If practical, include a link to registration forms or client information sheets that can be completed on line or downloaded, completed and "snail mailed" back.
- Post volunteer opportunities. Include the types of tasks and hours needed.
- Post any newsworthy items on the web site.
- Provide links to articles on the topic of volunteerism.
- Provide links to other community organizations' volunteer programs. If there are too many to post, post only a few selected sites.
- Be sure the web site is regularly maintained and updated.

4.7.2 Electronic Newsletters

More and more organizations are going to an electronic newsletter format because it's less expensive to produce, saves on postage, and the distribution list is easy to update. Newsletters are especially important to volunteer programs. Newsletters can be used by the Volunteer Services Program to:

- Recruit new volunteers.
- Announce upcoming appreciation or training events.
- Recognize individual efforts or achievements.
- Connect staff and volunteers who may work non-traditional hours or at off site locations.



VOLUNTEER SERVICES DESK GUIDE

You may piggyback your information into an existing agency newsletter or you may create your own newsletter.

Keep your sentences and paragraphs short. Use color and graphics sparingly to make your newsletter easy to open and to read. Remember, most people do not scroll down to completely read a long newsletter, so put your most important information at the top and keep it short! It's better to send a short, simple, electronic newsletter that people are more likely to read once a week, than a long, graphically beautiful newsletter that gets deleted.

4.7.3 E-mail

Customized e-mails are another great way to market. They're also a great way to keep in contact with current and previous volunteers, community organizations, installation leaders, etc.

- Create distribution lists and send information out about your program as well as other useful information related to volunteerism.
- Jazz up your e-mail with graphics and color, but remember to keep it professional looking and easy to open.
- Don't send attachments. Many sites can no longer receive them due to security concerns, and many who do receive attachments report that they do not take the time to download them.
- Keep messages short. You should never have to scroll down to read a message.
- Consider sending out a regular e-mail once per week. Receivers come to expect to hear from you and often will send newsworthy items to you in hopes that you will forward them to your distribution lists.
- Promptly remove anyone from your distribution list who asks.

4.8 Print Media

The Volunteer Services Program uses a variety of print media including brochures, flyers, posters, and other program support materials. All printed material with your agency identifying information on it can be considered a marketing tool. In addition to printed materials, the installation newspaper, community newspapers, leadership spouses' newsletters, etc., can expand printed marketing efforts. Seek coverage of volunteers in action and volunteer events. Send press releases and newsworthy articles. The quality of print and audiovisual products is critical. Whether your agency has a trained



CHAPTER FOUR: RECRUITING

layout/graphics staff to produce audiovisual and print products or relies on administrative staff or volunteers, there are several key elements in producing quality materials:

- The information must be accurate.
- High-quality graphic design integrates words and images.
- The product must be attractive, professional and easy-to-read. It must grab the reader's attention at a glance.
- The look and quality of all materials should be standardized so it is easily identifiable as a Volunteer Services product. Think trademark, logo, and/or slogan.
- Include a call for action: How is the reader to respond? "Call us" and "Register now" are examples of a call for action.

4.8.1 Installation Publications

The installation paper is the most effective marketing tool used by volunteer managers who responded to the survey for this desk guide. Most installation newspapers are well read even though people sometimes do not admit they read them. Part of the reason is that the paper is distributed everywhere. It's at the clinic, at the exchange, at the commissary; it's delivered to housing; it's at the child development center; it's at the dental clinic, etc. Note the distribution locations for the installation paper and try to distribute your print materials there as well. Some papers will include inserts if you provide them. This is generally at your cost, and you have to have enough copies to be included with all copies of the paper, but it can be a great way of getting the word out.

Feature stories about current volunteers, news articles about the number of hours and types of services provided by volunteers, announcements of recognition awards, and coverage of recognition events are among topics suitable for the installation newspaper.

Schedule a meeting with the managing or feature editor of your paper. Learn in what format they'd like press releases sent to them - via e-mail, fax, or hand-delivered. Ask if they'll run stories that are written by you and pictures that you've taken. Invite them over to see your agency. Invite them on a day when there are workshops scheduled and several volunteers at work so that they can observe and do a story with photos about your agency. Try to invite them on a day when there is a lot of client traffic so that they will see your program as vital, "alive" and useful to their readership.



Don't stop with just one meeting. Periodically drop by the office and bring a story or press release. Develop a working relationship. After all, this person can provide an important resource to your program - free publicity!

4.8.2 Community Publications

Local newspapers (feature page, classified, business section), local trade papers, and community association newsletters are publicity channels for your Volunteer Services Program.

Familiarize yourself with the community publications most likely read by your target populations. At small and remote locations there may very well be only one newspaper for an entire county and it may not be published seven days per week. Small town newspapers are often eager to have a chance to do a story involving the military. Network with a small town newspaper the same way you would with an installation newspaper. Remember, your PAO may want all press releases and stories to go through him or her. Unlike the installation newspaper, where there is little risk for negative publicity, it's unlikely, but a new reporter at a civilian paper, or one who is trying to make a name for him or herself, may write a story with a negative slant. The PAO generally is aware of these issues and may suggest that you avoid a particular reporter.

In large metropolitan locations there may be two or three major newspapers in addition to a variety of smaller publications that target specific geographic locations within the city or specific target populations. It is often more difficult to get feature stories published as there are numerous other organizations trying to get the word out about their program. It is, however, generally easy to submit a press release via e-mail or fax. If your PAO allows it, send press releases directly to publications, radio, and television stations. If your PAO wants all material to be distributed through him or her, allow a few extra days to ensure all deadlines are met. It's easy to create a press release distribution list via e-mail, or to program in the fax numbers for all local media sources. Be sure to include the relevant information:

- POC name and contact information. (You're the POC.)
- Title of program.
- Any relevant dates.
- Brief description.



CHAPTER FOUR: RECRUITING

Don't worry about writing a clever press release, just get the "who", "what", "when" and "where" in the first paragraph of the press release. Editors chop from the bottom up, and they don't necessarily notice that you listed the contact number in the third paragraph that they just deleted.

Since many people are timid around the press, let your PAO know that you're eager to work with the press. Ask him or her to provide basic training for you and your colleagues so that he or she will feel confident that you know how to handle the press and represent the Department of Defense in a positive manner.

4.8.3 Family Support Program Publications

Many leadership spouse organizations publish a newsletter. This is a great way to reach military spouses. Start with asking to submit a press release about recruiting volunteers. Write the release. Remember to keep it short as newsletter space is often at a premium because longer newsletters cost more to reproduce and to mail.

Contact ombudsmen, key volunteers, Family Readiness Group Leaders, etc. to see if they do a newsletter and ask them to include your press release. Contact the POC for any Officers' Spouse groups on your installation and ask them to run your release. The staff member who provides information and referral services at your agency would be a good place to start to learn information about family support organizations at your installation.

4.8.4 Brochures, Flyers and Posters

Full color, tri-fold brochures on glossy paper are used by many military family support programs to provide an overview of all the programs and services available. Some family support programs are fortunate to have a professional graphics department to design a product and all that's required is for the Volunteer Services Program manager is to contribute content. Other Volunteer Services Program managers submit products to their administrative staff to design, and still others, develop their own print products.

Flyers are typically one color and advertise a specific program, service or event. They are much less expensive to reproduce and are generally done "in house" rather than sending them to a printer to be reproduced.

Posters can be multi-colored works of art or simply extra large flyers posted in strategic locations around the installation. The bigger the better. A poster should never be smaller than 11 X 14 otherwise it is too difficult for a passer-by to read.



When using print products to advertise:

- Use professional graphics that will attract your target audience’s attention.
- Ensure that information included is accurate.
- Distribute them at locations where your target audience is located.
- Use plenty of “white space” to assure readability.
- Remove outdated materials from distribution points.

Don’t forget to plan placement of print materials in your agency’s lobby and in your resource room. Too much information looks messy and can be overwhelming to the viewer. Rotate materials displayed so that the Volunteer Services Program always looks fresh and exciting.

4.8.4.1 Testimonials

Use testimonials when marketing your Volunteer Services Program. A testimonial is a specific statement of appreciation or of benefits received by current or previous volunteers in your program or about volunteerism in general by highly respected and visible individuals on your installation.

You can gather great testimonials just by asking for them, but do it in the right way. If you simply issue a general request for volunteers’ comments, you’ll be disappointed with the results. Many people will hesitate to respond not because they don’t want to be of assistance, but because they’re not sure what kind of quotes you want or they’re afraid they don’t have anything valuable to say. Help them out by asking one or more of the following questions:

- What do you enjoy most about your duties as a volunteer?
- What’s been the best thing about volunteering here?
- How has your life changed as a result of volunteering?
- If a friend asked you why they should volunteer here, what would you tell them?

For testimonials to be most effective, readers have to be able to relate to them. They need to hear themselves in the speaker’s words.



CHAPTER FOUR: RECRUITING

Include comments from volunteers of different ages, backgrounds and walks of life will make your general recruitment brochure versatile enough to speak to a wide range of prospects.

Further, gathering comments from a diverse group of people ensures that you'll have appropriate testimonials to use whether you're doing a flyer targeting seniors, an insert for a new resident welcome packet or a handout for a Chamber of Commerce meeting. And don't forget to use them on the volunteer recruitment pages of your website, too!

Although most people will feel flattered if you use their comments for marketing purposes, get their permission before you do. Written permission to use a particular quote and credit line ensures accuracy and helps prevent any upsets that could arise after your brochure is printed. A document or e-mail as simple as the following should be adequate:

<p>Dear...</p> <p>Thank you very much for your comments about volunteering with us. We appreciate your taking the time to provide them. May we have your permission to use the following quote and credit line in our marketing materials?</p> <p>(Quote and credit line)</p> <p>To grant us permission, please sign and return this letter. Thank you!</p> <p>Yes, you have my permission to use the above quote and credit line in XYZ Museum marketing materials.</p> <p>Signed _____ Date _____</p>

Your promotional piece will have infinitely more marketing impact if you include some head shots or close-ups of the people you're quoting. Readers identify even more with testimonials when they can see who's giving them.



4.9 Public Relations

The public relations concept is rooted in the delivery of a consistent pattern of information to target audiences through direct contact. The means of public relations within the Department of Defense context are:

- Personal networking.
- Briefings.
- Attendance at installation functions.
- Correspondence.

The strategy which is likely to be most successful in meeting Volunteer Services Program marketing goals involves targeting your advertising and public relations efforts towards “key communicators.” They are your installation commanding officer, senior enlisted representatives, key leadership spouses and community organization volunteer managers. If your goal is to have a strong, effective program these key communicators can help you get what you need, whether it be volunteers to provide services, money, facilities on the installation, or materials and equipment. When you target key leaders, they can speak to others for you. You maximize each contact by creating a ripple effect. Content shared by you with one key leader can easily be spread to ten or more other individuals.

4.9.1 Networking

Personal networking is the most basic and important public relations activity. Networking means establishing relations with key target audience members. It is “marketing by wandering around” – meeting with the chain of command, potential clients, volunteers, etc. to share the latest developments, receive feedback, extend thanks or congratulations. Suggestions for networking are:

- Set up a networking schedule that includes the Director and other agency staff. Each becomes responsible for maintaining relationships with appropriate target audience members. For example your agency Director networks with the Chain of Command. The relocation staff maintains contact with PSD. Clinical staff may take the initiative to liaison with chaplains on the installation. Transition and employment staff network with civilian employers, HRO and the Department of Veterans’ Affairs. Volunteer managers network with colleagues in the local community.
- Establish a record of individuals contacted, what was discussed, follow-up required and completed, and the contact’s special interests.



CHAPTER FOUR: RECRUITING

- Network in person, by phone, e-mail, or by regular mail - it's the personal touch that's crucial.
- Keep an eye out for newspaper articles, cartoons, or other printed materials that may be of interest to a key target audience member. Send it along with a handwritten note and business card.
- Sponsor an "open house" or other event. Issue personalized invitations.

4.9.2 Correspondence

Correspondence is an efficient, cost-effective means of public relations.

Electronic-mail and personal letters and notes enable the volunteer managers to disseminate news of current and upcoming events and share successes.

Some ways to use correspondence to network are:

- Maintain a current direct mailing list of key target audience members.
- Make sure they can be called up by subgroup (military leaders, volunteers, community groups, etc).
- On a regular basis send electronic-mail messages or direct mailings to the mailing list, specializing the letters whenever possible to match the target audience's informational needs with the appropriate tone.
- Mailings should be no longer than two pages and graphically easy-to-read.
- Personalized correspondence should be employed in order to convey thanks, as networking follow-up or as updates on issues of particular concern to individuals.
- Maintain files of personalized correspondence by individual contacted; keep track of dates in order to maintain regular communication.

4.9.3 Briefings

Briefings are another excellent public relations tool. Briefings are simply prepared presentations to key target audiences (chain of command, spouse groups, service providers, etc.). Successful techniques include:

- Conduct briefings in small groups for greater impact.
- Provide written material for participants to take away with them. Use quality, designed graphics (slides, charts) for added interest. Package them in an attractive file so those briefed can easily access them for future reference.



VOLUNTEER SERVICES DESK GUIDE

- Keep the presentation concise; leave time for questions and answers.
- Hold briefing in a comfortable, well-arranged room, whenever possible.

Briefings enable you to gain support for your program, recruit volunteers, and build referrals while disseminating accurate, up-to-the-minute information about volunteerism and its benefits.

4.9.4 Special Events

Special events include events you attend and events you host. They range from meetings sponsored by community groups, Chamber of Commerce, professional associations, change of commands, ribbon cutting ceremonies to lunches, open houses, receptions and other events you host. Attending events maintains the visibility of your Volunteer Services Program. Hosting events is a great way to increase publicity about your program.

Maximize your attendance at events sponsored by others:

- Volunteer to speak on pertinent topics.
- Set up a literature table, display or information booth. Bring business cards.
- When available, review the attendance roster and make a point to meet key personnel.
- Greet people you know and make a point to introduce yourself to unfamiliar people.
- Offer to host upcoming meetings and events at your facility.

Attend installation ceremonial and social events such as picnics, change of command ceremonies, air shows, etc. Be an active, visible member of your community.

4.9.4.1 Volunteer Recruitment Fairs

A popular public relations event for your volunteer program is to host or participate in a volunteer recruitment fair. Volunteer fairs and other special events are big, splashy events that:

- Draw crowds.
- Get a lot of publicity.



CHAPTER FOUR: RECRUITING

- Induce good will from installation leaders and participants.
- Require a lot of work.

The primary purposes of a job fair are to recruit volunteers, inform participants about services available, and to get publicity for your program.

Autumn is often a great time for a volunteer fair as people tend to be focused on starting new projects with the beginning of the school year and the fiscal year. Work in tandem with organizations such as the American Red Cross, Navy Marine Corps Relief Society, MWR, the clinic, Girls and Boy Scouts, youth sports leagues, etc. to highlight volunteer opportunities in your community.

How often should you sponsor a volunteer fair? That depends on the size of your target population and the availability of agencies to participate. Most locations offer one volunteer fair per year and tend to hold them in the spring or the fall.

4.9.4.2 Plan a Volunteer Fair

As mentioned, volunteer fairs require a great deal of work as at large installations hundreds of people may attend. Even at smaller installations, it's easy to have a hundred or more people participate in your fair. When planning a volunteer fair it's important to establish goals or a way to measure the success. As the program manager, and host for the event, determine what would make you feel like you held a successful job fair. Success might be measured by:

- The number of volunteers recruited.
- The number of agencies represented.
- The number of participants who attend.
- Media attention for your volunteer fair and agency.

Write down the goals for your volunteer fair to keep you focused on the reason for your efforts. Once you know what you want to accomplish begin planning. A sample comprehensive Volunteer Fair preparation time line is provided at the end of this chapter.

4.9.4.3 Ten Tips for a Hosting a Successful Volunteer Fair

To ensure a successful event:

1. Plan at least 6 months in advance.



VOLUNTEER SERVICES DESK GUIDE

2. Start with a mass mailing to agencies you would like represented at your volunteer fair. Follow up the mailing with a phone call inviting them to participate.
3. Diversify opportunities. For example, don't just recruit military related organizations, but include community organizations too, such as animal shelters and breed rescue groups, programs that work with the elderly and youth, pro-choice and pro-life groups, etc.
4. Try to get organizations that need volunteers from all experience levels - from unskilled to professionals.
5. Keep the length of the volunteer fair short. Four hours, from 10:00 am to 2:00, is long enough since agency staff members often come alone and more than 4 hours is grueling.
6. If it's a warm day provide water to agency representatives. If it's a cool day offer something warm to drink. Give each agency a table and two chairs. Don't put the tables together so they have space on either side to move around.
7. Locate your volunteer fair at a site that has lots of parking, plenty of space for displays and is well known on the installation. Lots of foot traffic or vehicle traffic passing by makes your fair more visible.
8. Make sure you have adequate help. You need people to escort agency representatives, to assist with setting up displays, to offer any refreshments, to clean up, etc. Ask your POCs on the installation for active duty assistance in addition to your agency's staff and volunteers.
9. Network all day. Move from one table to another asking if the agency rep needs anything, asking about their agency, current opportunities available, etc.
10. Publicize.



4.9.4.4 Volunteer Fair Planning Timeline

Volunteer Fair Timeline

7 months prior to event

Obtain management approval to host volunteer fair

Identify facility options:

- Accommodate target number of agencies and attendee foot traffic
- Number of tables needed; ability to procure additional tables
- Access to public restrooms
- Adequate electrical outlets for displays, etc.
- Adequate ventilation, heat, air conditioning for season
- Availability of food/beverage
- Adequate parking for targeted number of attendees
- Adequate off-loading area for supplies/displays
- Handicap access
- “Good” location (easy-to-find, known to target audience, etc.)
- Cost of facility and funding source

Update Agency Master List

6 months prior to event

Negotiate dates of Volunteer Fair with selected facility; submit funding requests

Confirm table layouts allow adequate foot traffic space:

- Create room layout, to be enlarged and mounted on poster board
- Retain copy for later use as handouts to attendees

Develop marketing campaign

4 months prior to event

Design and develop registration materials:

- Tri-fold brochure with tear-off & return registration form
- Master confirmation letter for registrants
- Map for participating agencies (from front gate to facility)



Design and develop publicity materials:

- Volunteer Fair posters/flyers
- Flyer listing participating agencies
- Announcements for e-mail, etc.
- Press releases for installation paper/tv/radio

Review publicity and marketing plan for revision, additions, etc.

3 months prior to event

Mail brochures to agencies. Follow up with telephone contact about volunteer fair.

Upload online registration (if technology supports).

Create & maintain registration database.

Begin assigning tables, according to needs.

Design and develop any internal documents:

- Convenience map for agencies (restrooms, food, smoking, etc. – handout to be left at assigned table)

Prepare agency participant follow-up contact letter to send after the Volunteer Fair:

- Thank you letters
- Agency evaluations

6 to 7 weeks prior to event

Begin Publicity Campaign:

- Place large poster in front lobby of agency
- Distribute flyers at all briefings, especially spouse employment and deployment briefings
- Add Volunteer Fair flyers to sponsorship packages
- Hang banner outside front entrance
- Distribute flyers with list of attending agencies as soon as possible
- Coordinate and submit articles to base newspaper, Civilian Personnel newsletter, Retired Activities Office (RAO) newsletter, spouse newsletters, and any other identified media outlets
- Use e-mail distribution
- Informal e-mails to selected target audiences



CHAPTER FOUR: RECRUITING

- Formal e-mails to agencies, base representatives
- Submit PowerPoint slide to Director and other staff for Commander's Call
- Send e-mail detailed information to all Volunteer managers in the region

Explore possibility providing light refreshments for agency participants.
At least have access to drinking water.

4 – 5 weeks prior to event

Distribute flyers to high traffic areas.

1 month prior to event

Verify tables on hand and acquire additional tables if needed

Coordinate assistance in picking up, delivering, and returning tables

2 - 3 weeks prior to event

Examine timeline for things left to do; create task lists as necessary

Coordinate the loan and use of four 2-way radios or cell phones for use on site.

Continue Publicity Campaign

- Send another e-mail message, as allowed
- Arrange for use of Base Marquees
- Distribute updated flyers across the base
- Submit press release to the bas/local paper

1 – 2 weeks prior to event

Invite base newspaper photographer to Volunteer Fair

Provide room layout instructions to facility staff (placement of tables, trash cans, chairs, refreshment stations, etc.)

Make Volunteer Fair Staff name tags



Finalize all printing of internal signs for Fair:

- Welcome to Volunteer Fair
- Directional signs (pointing hands, arrows, etc.)
- Table numbers
- Agency name banners

Begin to gather needed supplies:

- Maps
- Welcome Signs
- Agency Signs
- Numbers For Tables
- Masking Tape
- Materials for your family support boot
- Cell phone
- Stapler/Staples
- Tape Measure
- Markers
- Pens
- Sticky Note Pads
- Name Tags
- Microphone
- Check(s) to pay facility if necessary

2 days prior to event

Marquee publicity:

- Volunteer Fair Tomorrow ...
- Volunteer Fair Today ...

1 day prior to event

Provide list of expected agency representatives to Security

Day of event

Volunteer Fair Team convene at facility at least two hours before event

- Tape numbers and agency banners to table
- Verify access to electrical outlets as needed
- Post all signs
- Greet agency reps as they arrive



CHAPTER FOUR: RECRUITING

- Help set up
- Do head count to estimate attendance

Day after event

Send thank you letters and evaluation form to participating agencies

Compile data from employer evaluations (feedback, ratings)

- Registration procedures
- Directions and map(s) provided
- Parking, off-loading areas
- Assistance from Volunteer Fair staff during event
- Table assignments
- Access to electricity, etc.
- Location of air
- Number/caliber of potential volunteers attending fair

Hold meeting to discuss employer feedback, etc.

Write report to forward to your chain of command

Compile after action report including lessons learned

4.9.4.5 Incentives

In marketing at fairs and other events, giveaways are primarily used to attract people to a display or information booth. You frequently see very nice giveaways such as coffee mugs, mouse pads, pens, and key chains at trade shows and job fairs. With budgets tight and the likelihood of hundreds or more individuals passing by a volunteer booth the cost of giveaways can be prohibitive at many installations.

People like “freebies”, but they don’t have to be expensive. An eye catching display can also be effective. Try to have a token, inexpensive item to use in your marketing efforts. Pencils, rulers, emery boards, sticky notes, and magnets can be purchased relatively inexpensively. For children, a coloring page of people volunteering and a couple of crayons can serve as an inexpensive token from your booth. If nothing else, have a bowl of candy available. Anything that attracts attention to your product or service is worth considering.



4.9.4.6 Luncheons and Receptions

Many installations host volunteer luncheons, dinners or receptions to recognize volunteers. Funding for these events is always challenging, but most people don't volunteer for a free meal. Volunteers understand that funding is limited. Some installations host informal potlucks held at the agency where everyone brings a dish to share. Other installation host more formal events held at the officer's club or another restaurant where everyone pays for their own meal. Many agencies host a reception as it's less expensive. Sometimes senior leadership spouses offer to host the event at their home and you as the volunteer manager only need to fund a cake and punch.

While recognizing volunteers is the primary goal of most of these events, don't miss the opportunity special events create to market your program. An entire marketing campaign can evolve around a volunteer recognition event. Invite a high visibility guest speaker. The commanding officer of your installation is ideal. Your event creates an awareness of your program for him or her, and they are often a draw for your volunteers. Be sure the installation and local community publications are invited. Ask them to send a photographer too.

Use installation marquees, targeted e-mails, newsletters, posters, etc. in advance of your event to invite participants to attend, but don't quit there.

If the installation and community paper do not send a reporter and photographer, you write a story and take photos and immediately submit them for publication – within 48 hours as these types of events quickly become old news. In your article, briefly describe the luncheon and recognize any volunteer achievements and then shift the focus of your story to volunteer recruitment to make the story relevant to all readers.

4.9.4.7 Other Special Events

It's easy to create a special event almost any time by:

- Hosting an open house.
- Celebrating building renovations.
- Acknowledging an agency anniversary.
- Offering agency tours.

In conjunction with your colleagues and with approval from management plan a special event. Select a date with a late morning time slot and develop a marketing campaign to get people in your doors.



CHAPTER FOUR: RECRUITING

Prepare your agency by having colorful displays, tidying up, encouraging staff members to be available to make guests feel welcome and answer questions, offering some light refreshments, agency brochures and incentives.

Again, take advantage of media to advertise your event in advance and to document and gain media exposure after your event. While you may not have a budget for your Volunteer Services Program specifically, management has probably dedicated some funding to marketing the agency overall and you can take advantage of this funding to highlight your volunteer program.

4.10 Evaluate Marketing Results

Just as programs and services are evaluated, so should a marketing campaign. It is wise to schedule a new round of market research at approximately 18 to 24-month intervals to learn if the Volunteer Services marketing materials and activities have raised awareness and/or increased motivation to volunteer. New trends affecting service delivery are also revealed through market research. Necessary adjustments to marketing materials and activities can be developed and implemented as a result of the evaluation process. If indicated, new opportunities can be developed based on market research discoveries. Then, those services can be added to the roster of items to be marketed in the future.

The reason you pick measurable marketing objectives is to have the ability to track your progress toward reaching them. Many marketing efforts aren't quantifiable; with the result that the achievements of your marketing campaigns aren't satisfactory, or they're just plain illusory.

All your marketing efforts will benefit from the classic feedback loop:

- Act.
- Observe.
- Adjust.
- And act again.

You will no doubt find the need to adjust the timing, the budget or the tasks themselves in some marketing efforts. At these points you must decide whether to intensify your efforts, add more tactical steps to pick up the pace, or scale back your objectives. Make your changes in an organized manner. Your plan must be dynamic, but it shouldn't lose its sense of history. Historic



VOLUNTEER SERVICES DESK GUIDE

information will be extremely useful when you create next year's marketing plan.

Marketing isn't a science, but it is a skill in which you can make steady incremental improvement.

A sample evaluation tool follows:

Marketing Campaigns Evaluation Chart

Marketing Goals	Objectives/ Task	Results					Goal Achieved
		Service Demand Before	Service Demand After	Image/Attitude Before	Image/Attitude After	Difference	

“Marketing is not an event, but a process . . . It has a beginning, a middle, but never an end, for it is a process. You improve it, perfect it, change it, even pause it. But you never stop it completely.”

- Jay Conrad Levinson

