

Volunteer Training Initiative (VTI)

Level III – Module II



VTI Level III – Module #II
www.huntingtonsociety.org

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Volunteer Recruitment

“How to Get and Keep Volunteers”

*What you need to know about volunteer recruitment
and the rest of the volunteer management cycle*



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1.1 Goals and Objectives for this Booklet

This is it ... this is what you've been waiting for ... some kind of bible for getting help for you and the group in your area. This manual is intended to expose you to the fundamentals, give you some solid pointers, and let you know you're not alone in your frustration at not finding more help.

However, while this booklet will give you everything that you need to use the "best practice" principles of volunteer recruitment, it will not magically make all of your volunteer problems go away.

Let's face it, getting new volunteers is hard. What this booklet is going to do is to make sure that whatever time and energy you're spending on getting new volunteers is time well-spent, as opposed to time wasted.

1.1 Goals and Objectives for this Booklet

The other thing that this booklet should do is let you know that you're not alone in your worries about getting volunteers. A great deal of information and direction in this booklet is drawn from resources developed across the voluntary sector. In short, the problems that you think are unique to you and your group are often problems experienced by pretty much any organization that uses volunteers.

By using this booklet and its support materials you will learn about the basics of volunteer management (which, as a volunteer leader, is something worth knowing about); the basic steps in implementing an effective volunteer recruitment strategy; and the important steps that need to occur once you've found volunteers who are interested in working with you and your group.

1.1 Goals and Objectives for this Booklet

There should be no stress for you when you read this. Everything you need to move forward is included in this manual, or else can be obtained by calling the staff of the Communications and Volunteer Development team at the Society's office. But, if you want a "recruitment coach," we can do that. If you need help understanding how all this information fits together, we can help with that too. **Whatever happens, don't go away frustrated.** Call us and let us work with you.

Lastly, if you're a volunteer who has been with the organization for a while, there are some things in this booklet that will make you think, "Wait a minute, I never had to do any of that when I got involved. Does this mean I have to do it now?" The answer is no. This booklet is aimed at helping to recruit, screen, and train NEW volunteers.

1.2 The Volunteer Challenge: It's not just HSC

In 2003, a group of research organizations, led by the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, published a report entitled, *The Capacity to Serve: A Qualitative Study of the Challenges Facing Canada's Non-profit and Voluntary Organizations*. The report was the first from the National Survey of Non-profit and Voluntary Organizations (NSNVO), a study designed to provide a qualitative and quantitative understanding of the size, scope and activities of non-profit and voluntary organizations in Canada.

1.2 The Volunteer Challenge

The report made the following observations that should ring true for anyone who has been a part of the Huntington's cause:

- “Among the organizations we consulted, the most serious issue relating to volunteers was recruitment.”
- “Most organizations reported that the number of volunteers has decreased substantially in recent years.”
- “Many organizations need volunteers to perform tasks that require training and specific, sometimes fairly lengthy, time commitments. Yet most organizations are finding that volunteers today prefer short-term assignments and are less committed to their volunteer activities than in the past.”
- “An organization's mission or purpose also appears to have an impact on its ability to recruit volunteers.”

1.2 The Volunteer Challenge

- “Representatives of small organizations and organizations based in rural areas and small towns were more likely to report problems recruiting sufficient numbers of volunteers than were representatives of larger, urban-based organizations.”
- “Most participants were concerned that a shortage of volunteers would lead existing volunteers to burn out and might cause these volunteers to terminate their involvement.”

These comments, in some way, shape or form also came up during the course of the VTI Volunteer Recruitment workshop that was held in Vancouver. The report also stated:

- “Organizations that rely on volunteers appear to be most successful when they manage their volunteers efficiently and effectively and keep them motivated.”

1.2 The Volunteer Challenge



The Huntington Society manages volunteers from its office in Kitchener. Chapters and Area Representatives also manage volunteers in their own communities. Consequently, staff and volunteer leaders in the Huntington Society need to be focusing and standardizing their volunteer management efforts so that the organization is well-positioned to successfully recruit and keep good volunteers now, and in the future.

2.1 What do we use volunteers for?

- Driving
- Garage sales
- Leadership workshops
- Liaise with Doctors
- Communications
- Gourmet dinner
- Camps
- National board
- Service Club Letters
- Coin boxes
- Support for children at risk
- Government relations
- Charity luncheons
- Visiting/Assisting families and patients
- Local contact/information support
- Support to volunteers (ie. Volunteer training)
- Amaryllis
- Fundraising
- Care support
- Accounting
- Indy (teams/coordinators)
- Leadership Media relations
- Directory of services (nationally)
- Public awareness
- Bowling
- Errands
- Mailings
- Advocates
- Hike
- Networks/contacts
- Executive of Chapters
- In-services
- Golf
- Bingos
- Support groups (ie. Speech therapist)

2.2 Where do we get volunteers?

- Friends
- HD community
- Neighbours
- Family
- Who you know
- Other volunteers
- Activities
- Co-workers
- Business associates
- Community/TV solicitations
- Horizon/Chapter newsletters
- Email/Web site
- Donors/sponsors
- Door-to-door solicitation
- Newspaper stories (media)
- Corporate sponsorship (Public awareness)
- Churches
- Universities/colleges
- High schools
- Candy strippers
- Other charities
- Volunteer bureau
- Service clubs

2.3 Why is it hard to get volunteers?

- Too busy
- HD lower profile
- HD symptoms scare peoples
- Not enough information
- Sensitivity of other family members
- Process in engaging people
- Fear of disclosure (concern for privacy)
- Other organizations
- Regional variation (geography)
- Society (awareness/knowledge)
- Fear of commitment
- Overwhelming tasks
Easier to make a donation
- Fear of being turned down
- Competition with other charities
- Willingness to re-approach
- Life reality changes (transitions; migration)

2.4 Here are the facts

Here are some facts and statistics that help to explain why it is more complicated, but not impossible to get volunteers.

(Statistics below taken from the 2000 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating (NSGVP) as prepared by the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy)

- There are 78,000 registered charities in Canada (the Huntington Society of Canada is one of these), and there are another 100,000 unregistered non-profit organizations in Canada as well. Of the 178,000 organizations, the majority of these are looking for volunteers.
- According to the 2000 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating (NSGVP), 6.5 million Canadians volunteered through a charitable or non-profit organization. They averaged 162 hours of volunteered time during the course of the year.

2.4 Here are the facts

- Over one-third (34%) of all volunteer hours were contributed by the 5% of volunteers who gave 596 hours or more of their time. Another 39% of volunteers who gave between 188 and 595 hours during the year. These two groups represent only 25% of Canada's volunteer force (and less than 7% of the total Canadian population) but they accounted for 73% of all volunteer hours given in the country.
- Although volunteers contribute to many types of organizations, most volunteering happens in the following types of organizations:
 - *Arts, culture and recreation organizations (26% of volunteer hours)*
 - *Social services organizations (20%)*
 - *Religious organizations (16%)*
 - *Education and research organizations (11%)*
 - *Health organizations (9%)*

2.4 Here are the facts

- Volunteers undertake a wide range of activities. The percentage of volunteer events by type of volunteer activity are as follows: Although volunteers contribute to many types of organizations, most volunteering happens in the following types of organizations:

Organizing or supervising events	57%
Member of a board or committee	41%
Canvassing, campaigning or fundraising	40%
Office work	30%
Providing information	29%
Teaching or coaching	27%
Care, support or counselling	26%
Collect, serve or deliver food	25%
Driving	20%

2.4 Here are the facts

- Volunteers get involved in the following ways:
 - o 30% get involved because they were asked by an organization
 - o 16% get involved because they actually approached the organization themselves
 - o 15% get involved because they are already a member of the organization
 - o 12% get involved because they already have a child or spouse involved
 - o 9% get involved because they were asked by a friend or relative to get involved

Who are these volunteers?

Gender

- The majority of all volunteers are women (54%) and they contribute 51% of all volunteer hours contributed annually.

Age

- One out of four volunteers is 35 to 44 years old. These Canadians provided 24% of all volunteer hours in the country.
- Only 23% of seniors volunteer, but they have the highest average of volunteered hours on an annual basis of any age group (202 hours).

Education

- 51% of all volunteers have a post-secondary certificate/diploma or a university degree. This group contributes 52% of all volunteer hours contributed annually to the sector.

Labour Force Status

- 48% of volunteers are employed full-time.

What do we know about Huntington Society volunteers?

- The majority of people who volunteer with the Society have some kind of **personal connection** with the disease, most often because it is in their family.
- Most volunteers are recruited through personal networks. Word of mouth is your best marketing for letting people know you need volunteers. Remember, talk about the disease, the work of the Society, and that you are looking for volunteers.
- Very few volunteers at the local level volunteer with the Society without some kind of connection to the disease (e.g. knows someone with the disease).
- The level of commitment of HSC volunteers to the work of the Society is incredibly high, but personal circumstance often forces volunteers to step away from their volunteering with the Society.

What do we know about Huntington Society volunteers?

- HSC volunteers contribute time in the following ways:
 - o Fundraising (Indy, Amaryllis, garage sales, golf tournaments, hikes/walks, bingos, etc.)
 - o Public Awareness (providing information, media follow-up, mall displays, media interviews, etc.)
 - o Organizing or supervising events
 - o Member of a Chapter executive or related committee
- Most Society volunteers are involved in more than one category of activity (most often they fall into all categories)
- The level of commitment of HSC volunteers to the work of the Society is incredibly high, but personal circumstance often forces volunteers to step away from their volunteering with the Society.

Putting it all together

Somebody once said that, “nothing in life is free.” That now includes volunteers. All of the information that you have read in this manual so far tells you the following:

- Much is done by the few
- People have less time to devote to volunteering
- People like to be asked to volunteer
- When people are asked to volunteer, they want to know EXACTLY what is expected of them

Organizations that are the most successful in getting and keeping volunteers have volunteer management programs in place

- When you think about it, you probably knew most of this stuff to begin with. What you really want to know is, what to do about it.

The only way to meet all of these challenges is to use a system and approach to getting and keeping volunteers that everyone (that includes the experts) says works the best.



3.0 The Volunteer Management Cycle

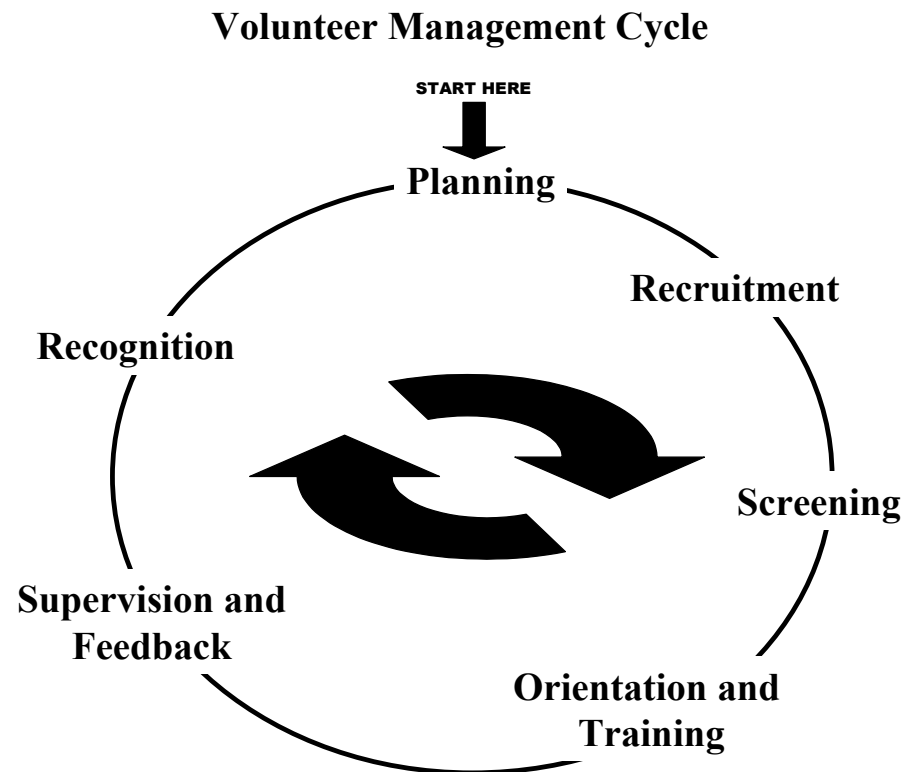
The central idea of volunteer management theory is the volunteer management cycle. The point of including it here is so that you understand a little bit of the theory behind how the Society tries to manage its volunteer program, and how you can and should be “managing” your volunteers as well.

The steps in the volunteer management cycle intuitively make sense. The level of effort that you end up putting towards doing some of the steps is determined by a lot of different factors, including: the kinds of activities you and your volunteers are engaged in; how many volunteers you already have and how many more you think you need; the amount of time you and/or your group can devote to “volunteer management” versus other volunteer activities you are committed to; and so on.

3.0 The Volunteer Management Cycle (cont'd)

The one thing you can't afford to do is think that you can get by without paying at least some attention to the volunteer management cycle (see Figure 1). As with all your other volunteer activities here at the Society, staff are here to help you with any or all parts of these processes. In fact, this whole manual has everything you need to go from *zero to volunteer management* in only as much time as it takes you to read and understand its content.

Figure 1: The Volunteer Management Cycle



Planning is essential for the success of any volunteer program and involves

- designing volunteer positions
- creating application forms
- developing applicable policies and procedures
- educating others in the organization about involving volunteers

When you have taken care of these planning items, you have a solid foundation to support your volunteer program.

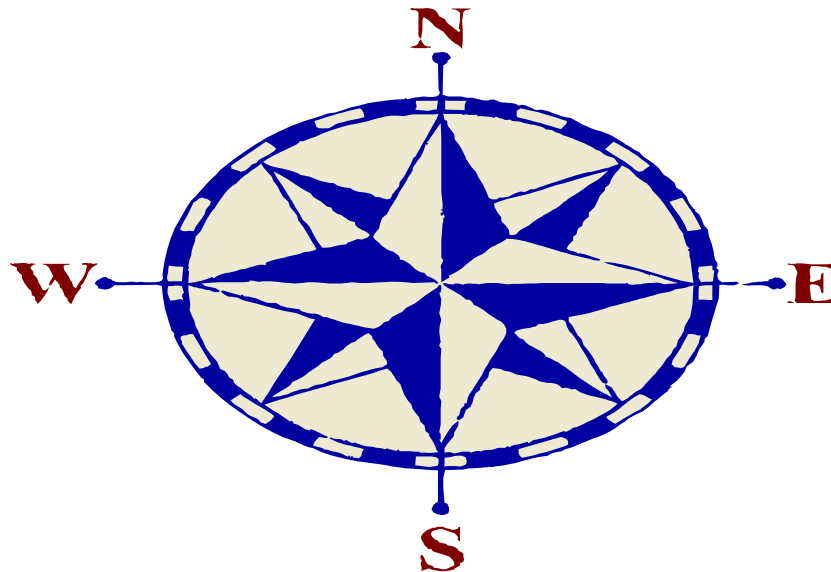


You are now ready for the **Recruitment** stage. Be creative as you brainstorm the who, why, where, when and how. Who would be the ideal volunteer? Why would they be interested in your volunteer opportunity? Where and when can you reach these people? How can you create a recruitment message that encourages potential volunteers to volunteer for your organization?

Once you've had someone express an interest in volunteering, you need to make sure that they are suited for the job at hand. This is what **Screening** is all about.



When you have recruited and screened your volunteers, you will need to provide them with **Orientation and Training** to give the general information about your organization and the specific information about the volunteer position. Orientation and training helps your volunteers feel confident and prepared. You also decrease the chances of problems occurring by helping volunteers know what is to be expected.





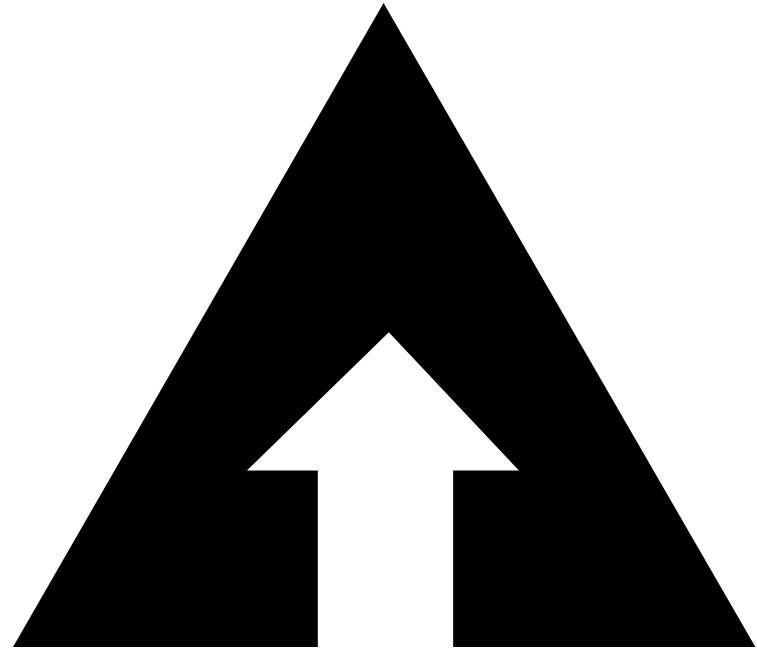
The **Supervision and Feedback** stages are for your benefit and the volunteer's. You need to know that the volunteer is fulfilling their role effectively and the volunteer needs affirmation too. Routine opportunities for feedback provide you and the volunteer time to assess how the volunteer placement is going and if changes could be made to improve the volunteer's satisfaction or performance.



Recognition is the next stage in the Cycle and it happens in an informal way every time a “thank you” is said. Formally, volunteers are thanked through celebrations and recognition events planned in their honour. It is important that the thank you fits the volunteer; you need to know your volunteers so that they can be thanked in a way that leaves them feeling truly recognized.

With good planning and management you will retain your current volunteers and be ready to involve new volunteers as the cycle begins again.

The next step is to learn more about each of the elements in the volunteer management cycle, and to adapt the processes so that they work for you.



4.0 Volunteer Recruitment

There is no magical answer about how to get more volunteers. What we can give you are principles that will give you an above average chance of getting more help. And, while you may look at some of the steps and decide to do one or two of them slightly differently, please don't think that you can really afford to skip too many of them. The information that is here IS the bare minimum. The Kitchener office is here to provide you support. Please call the office and the Volunteer Development Department can help brainstorm ways you can recruit volunteers in your area.

4.1 What is volunteer recruitment?

NOTE: The material below is adapted from “Volunteer Synchronicity,” prepared by the Kelowna Women’s Resource Centre, British Columbia.

Volunteer recruitment is quite simply the steps you take to find volunteers to help you with activities in your area. While recruitment is an important activity, it is always important to keep in mind that it is only one part of a process for finding and keeping good volunteers.

4.2 What are the steps in recruiting new volunteers?

While the needs of various Chapters and Area Representatives will differ somewhat, the basic steps involved in volunteer recruitment remain essentially the same. You must be sure to:

- identify your volunteer needs;
- create clear volunteer job descriptions;
- define target volunteer groups;
- develop a timeline;
- brainstorm and implement recruitment ideas;
- and practice on-going marketing and recruitment.

4.3 Volunteer Recruitment:

6 Steps to Success

1. Identifying Needs

Volunteer tasks/jobs should be meaningful to you and your group, and to a new volunteer. You need to determine exactly what needs to be done before trying to recruit volunteers, rather than recruiting first and then scrambling to find jobs (see appendix #4 for ideas)

When identifying your volunteer needs, there are several questions you need to ask yourself:

What tasks, specifically, do I need volunteers for? Rank the importance of these tasks.

- What orientation/training (think about it ... there is always some amount of orientation/training needed) is needed for these tasks?
- Can you (or someone in your group) make the orientation/training happen?

2. Creating Job Descriptions

Before recruitment, it is necessary to develop clear volunteer job descriptions. This does not need to be a lengthy task. After all, simple is usually better than complicated! When creating job descriptions, you need to define:

General tasks/responsibilities involved with the job

Time commitment

Any special skills that are needed/preferred

Number of volunteers needed

Anything else that would be useful for a potential volunteer to know

Staff in Communications and Volunteer Development at the Society's office can help you with this process. The best part is, a job description we create for you, could be a job description used by someone else in another part of the country, and vice versa. It is always time well-spent!

3. Defining Target Volunteer Groups

Whether you do it consciously or subconsciously, you probably tend to have a “vision” of the kind of people you are looking for as volunteers. For instance, a seniors home may envision youthful volunteers to interact with residents. A women's crisis centre may envision women who have experienced violence in the past to connect with women currently using services.

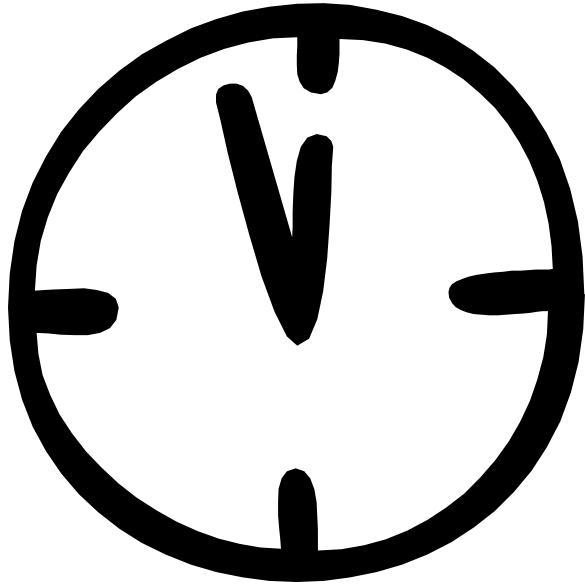
Defining target volunteer groups allows you to market and recruit volunteers more effectively and efficiently. As a charitable organization in the voluntary sector, we are in a competitive market. The more you can target who you are looking for, the better results you are likely to get.

Remember, you know your community best ... make use of that knowledge when you develop a strategy for recruiting.

4. Developing a Timeline

You probably want more volunteers starting yesterday. No matter how badly you need volunteers NOW, recruitment does take time. Don't rush yourself, and don't rush potential volunteers. Most importantly, do not set yourself up for failure by planning spur of the moment events.

Promotion of “events” such as training, orientation, etc., should begin at least six weeks before the actual event (not including the time it takes to create job descriptions, etc.). Six weeks will give you enough time to put up posters, hand out brochures, contact the media, and do all of the other things you planned to do. Naturally, the more time you have to prepare and promote, the more successful you will be. If you can plan three months in advance, do it! It will reduce the pressure of a tight deadline, and will allow more opportunities for getting your message out. Time lines may not be as appropriate for on-going promotion. In this case, a simple list of goals or “tasks” may be more helpful.



Time lines will differ greatly, depending on the extensiveness of the orientation, the number of time allotted each week for promotion, the number of times training/orientation is run each year, and how familiar one is with promotion. Time lines should be flexible; new ideas will pop up, and some seemingly good ideas just won't work. Don't be afraid to add items- the more you promote, the better you will become at it!

5. Brainstorming and Implementing Recruitment Ideas

There are many ways to advertise volunteer positions. Some organizations create volunteer brochures, business cards and posters. Some create media releases to fax to local media and applicable organizations or centres. Others enter volunteer fairs, write letters to the editors and/or work with local volunteer organizations.

There is no single “right way” to recruit volunteers. However, when possible, it is best to utilize a variety of means because the more people see or hear of something, the more likely they are going to remember it, and perhaps want to get involved! This is a fundamental advertisement strategy. However, unlike many businesses and corporations, the Society doesn’t have a budget for advertising.

Don't forget networking! Using your personal networks is also one other way of recruiting new volunteers. Remember to mention your need for new volunteers to anyone you see, word travels fast and soon you might be receiving phone calls from a “friend of a friend” who is interested in volunteering. You will never know unless you try!

Volunteer recruitment is very important to every volunteer, just as it is in getting the word out about HD and the Society. Remember that whenever you meet a new person and you find yourself explaining the disease and how the Society works, remember to mention that you are always looking for volunteers.

Low cost and no cost advertising is possible if one is prepared for a little work (the good news is that it gets easier the more you do it!). Most communities have places for organizations to advertise for free. Each agency will have different recruitment and marketing ideas and abilities.

6. Practice on-going recruiting

Let's face it: it takes a kind of critical mass to get the ball rolling on the recruitment side. If you also factor in the fact that it takes time, you've got a strong argument for why you and your group should be doing some kind of recruiting all the time.

The reality is that most HSC volunteers are always on the lookout for fresh faces that they can maybe get involved. If you add on just a little more time and energy to that effort, then the law of averages begins to work to your advantage and you may begin to see more routine interest in what you and your group are doing in your community as well as a willingness to from people to help out.

5.0 Volunteer Screening

So now that you've recruited a **NEW** volunteer (that is, you've found someone who says that they want to do some volunteer work for you), there are some pretty important things that have to happen next.

Happen next ... you're thinking to yourself ... I've gotten someone, what else do I need to do except a dance of joy?

As was mentioned earlier, getting and keeping volunteers is a competitive business, and every voluntary group out there who is even only slightly well-organized, is trying to do everything they can to make their volunteers want to stay with them. This means that potential volunteers are going to expect some professionalism from the organizations that they volunteer with. They will judge the Huntington Society, and they will judge you, based on how they became involved as a volunteer.



What comes next is the screening process. This is not a horrible thing ... this is your opportunity to demonstrate to your potential volunteer that you are anxious to make sure that we make the most of their valuable time, and that, as an organization, we cannot let just anyone volunteer for us.

5.1 What does volunteer screening mean?

Screening is a multi-step process that tries to minimize risk. In volunteering, risk comes in many forms.

- What if I'm asking this person to do something they don't really want to do, so they quit?
- What if I'm asking this person to do something that they don't know how to do and they ruin an event?
- What if I'm asking this person (who is a total stranger) to take care of something important (like handling money) and they steal money from the Chapter?
- What if I'm asking this person (who is a total stranger) to visit a person with Huntington's and they physically harm the person with HD?

Volunteer screening serves two main purposes:

- to create and maintain a safe environment for everyone involved;
- and to ensure an appropriate match between volunteer and task.

According to Volunteer Canada:

“Volunteer screening is being adopted by a growing number of organizations. The process includes assessing risk, writing position descriptions, discerning the suitability of an individual for a given task, providing training and, when necessary, modifying the setting and arrangement of the task.”

Volunteer Canada also says that:

“All organizations, from the smallest, most informal sports organizations to large institutions like hospitals, have a moral, legal, and spiritual obligation to appropriately screen those who work for them, including volunteers.”

5.2 Steps involved in volunteer screening

The key to successful screening is to use an approach that best suits a specific role or task that you are recruiting volunteers for. In other words, while you want to be consistent, you don't want to make things harder than they really need to be.



Determine the risk

This is an important step, but it is tricky. What is risky to one person isn't necessarily risky to another. Think of risk as being a balancing act, in your head, between "What is the absolute worse thing that could happen?" versus "If the worst thing did happen, could I live with it?"

For example, what's the worse thing that could happen if you let a total stranger hand out brochures at a mall?

Or, what's the worst thing that could happen if you asked a total stranger to visit a person with HD at their house?

When you start thinking about it that way you can see how there are probably some things that you would want to be sure of, in advance. In other cases, perhaps not.

Use an application form

Among other things, the volunteer application form provides needed contact information. If the volunteer position requires other screening measures (medical exam, driver's record, police records check), the application form will ask for permission to do so.

A sample Volunteer and Special Event Application form is included at the back of this manual in Appendix #1 and #2. An application form is a bare minimum requirement, no matter what the volunteer task is. It gives a potential volunteer the opportunity to tell you what they've done in the past, what they like to do and what they don't like to do.



Conduct interviews

The interview provides not only an opportunity to talk to the potential volunteer about their background, skills, interests, and availability, but also to explore any doubts about the suitability of the candidate. In other words, the interview will help you determine the ‘right fit.’

Sample interview questions can be obtained from the Kitchener office. The Communications and Volunteer Development Department can also help you determine what answers you are looking for.

This is one of the steps that you might end up skipping (See Appendix 3). For example, if you are fortunate enough to find someone who is happy to help you with Bingo, they would be operating in a highly-controlled environment (the bingo hall) where the chances of something going wrong is quite small. Consequently, you might choose to skip the interview process.

Follow up on references

By identifying the level of trust required in the position (another way of looking at the amount of risk) and asking specific questions, your potential volunteer's suitability may be easier to determine. People often do not expect that their references will be checked. Do not assume that people only supply the names of people who will speak well of them.

This is another step that you might choose to skip, depending on the kind of role you are putting a new volunteer into.

Request a Police Records Check

A Police Records Check (PRC) is just one step in a screening process. PRCs signal — in a very public way — that the organization is concerned about the safety of its participants.

Many organizations make this a requirement of ALL new volunteers, regardless of the kinds of tasks they will be taking on. For the time being, the Huntington Society's position is that only in instances of high-risk volunteer activities should a police records check be required (e.g. home visits with a person with HD, or becoming a brand new treasurer of a Chapter).

And that's it. By following through on these steps you are not only ensuring that you've got a new volunteer who is the kind of volunteer that you need and want, your actions also send a message about the quality of the volunteer program at the Huntington Society Canada.

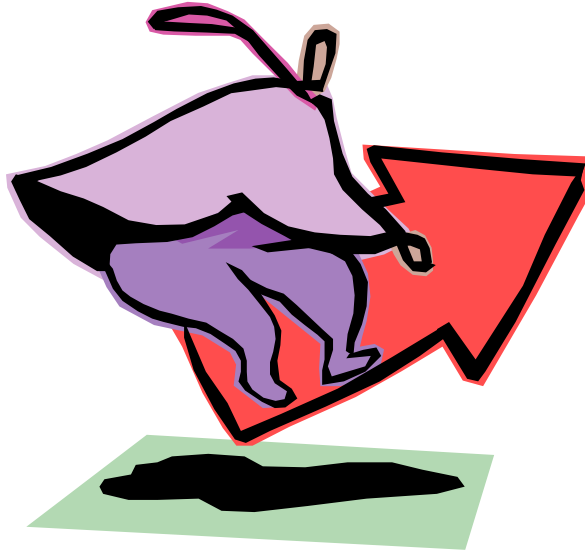
6.0 Volunteer Orientation and training

Now that you've recruited a new volunteer, and you've checked to make sure you understand the kinds of things they want to do for you, and that they are the kind of volunteer that you want, you want to get them up and running as soon as possible. This step is called orientation.

6.1 What does orientation and training mean?

Orientation and training is basically the process you would use to help a new volunteer understand who they are volunteering for, what they are needed to do, and how they are expected to do it.

Orientation/training sessions are an important part of the volunteer experience, no matter what the volunteer activity is. While the amount of orientation/training required depends on the volunteer position that you are trying to fill, it is important that the process include orientation to the Huntington Society of Canada, and orientation/training for the specific job you want your new volunteer to do. If you don't do these things, then you are not being fair to your new volunteer, and there is a good chance you will lose them.



The sections ahead highlight the kinds of things that you should be making sure a new volunteer is exposed to. In virtually all instances, you should already have the tools in hand to do this easily and efficiently. If not, just call the Communications and Volunteer Development team, and we can forward material to you.

6.2 Orientation to the organization

You probably had to talk about the work of the Huntington Society of Canada with your new volunteer when you were trying to recruit them. Now you need to fill in the gaps. Almost all of the elements below are covered under the Society's VTI Level I training manual. In an hour or less you should be able to cover the basics with your new volunteer. Keep selling – you want your new volunteer to be even more interested and excited in volunteering for you than they were when they first agreed to sign on.

Introduce Society's mission and mandate

A new volunteer should know what it is the Society does and why. S/he should also know what we don't do, and why.

Be sure that they also have a good understanding of what Huntington disease is, and its impact on individuals and families.

Outline Society's programs and services

Remember, your new volunteer is going to be talking to their network of family, friends and colleagues about his/her new volunteer job. You want to be fairly confident that they can talk intelligently about the work of the Society, or at least know where to get the information they need.

Outline organizational structure and staff

Depending on what your new volunteer is doing for you, it will be particularly important that they know how the organization is structured and how to get in touch with certain staff members. You can go into as little or as much detail as you think is appropriate.

Introduce volunteering with HSC and with Chapter/Area Representative

This is one topic that is not covered in the VTI Level I manual; your Chapter or your Area Representative roles and responsibilities. Make sure you give your new volunteer a good sense of the “lay of the land” in terms of what you and your group do, how and when you do it, and where you see your new volunteer fitting in.

6.3 Orientation to the task at hand

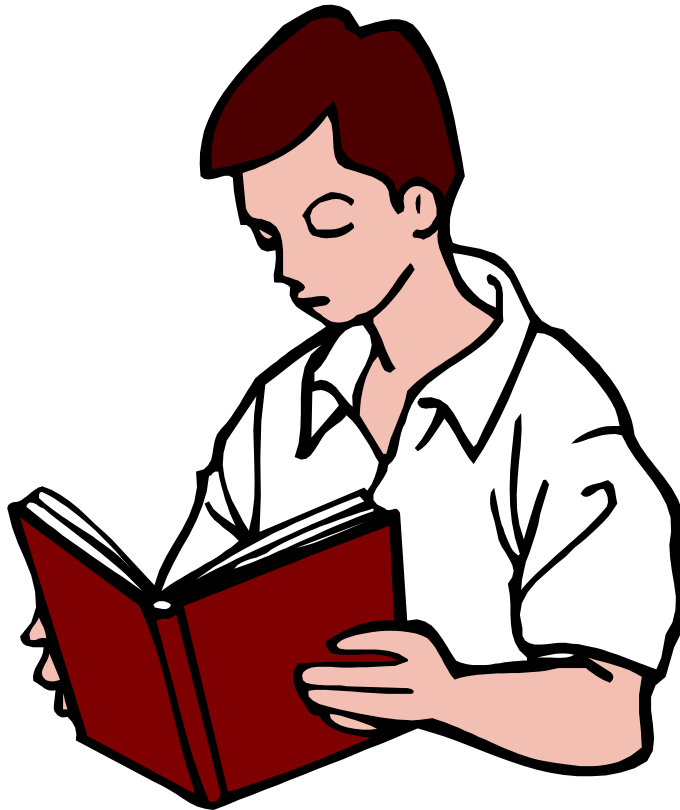
Once you've covered off the organizational stuff, make sure you spend whatever time is required to give your new volunteer the training they need to do whatever job you've recruited them for.

Outline specific volunteer responsibilities

Since you created a job description as part of the recruiting process, the best place for you to start is to walk your new volunteer through the job description. Any additional details that you think they will need in order to take on their new role (that were not included in the job description) should be passed along at this time.

Remember, your new volunteer will only be as successful as they can be if you have prepared them well in advance. In most instances, a volunteer's failure has nothing to do with them, but can be traced back to a lack of clarity about what they were supposed to do and the manner in which they were supposed to do it.

7.0 Volunteer Supervision and Feedback



So, you've recruited your volunteer, you've screened them in some way, and provided some orientation and training for whatever volunteer job you needed them for. Now you're wondering, "What comes next?"

Read on.

7.1 What is Supervision and Feedback?

First of all, don't get too excited about the "supervision" part of "Supervision and Feedback." All that is meant by this is that when you've got a brand new volunteer, no matter how well prepared you think they are for whatever task you've assigned them, you probably want to double-check. The feedback part is where you provide them with information that they need to either:

- a) do a better job than they are doing now;
- b) do more of what they are already doing.

7.2 What does Supervision look like?

When you think of the volunteers you currently work with in your area, you probably have a pretty good understanding of how they conduct themselves and how they perform tasks associated with the various events and activities that you and your group do.

Need for supervision? Minimal, if any.

But what happens when you've got a total stranger entering your group, willing and interested in volunteering? You don't know how they conduct themselves and you don't know how well they would handle any volunteer task you might give to them.

Need for supervision? If you don't know for sure, you need to double-check.

For example, you have a brand-new volunteer (who you've never met before) who is willing to sell Amaryllis for you. They've completed a volunteer application form and you've maybe interviewed them to get a better sense as to what kind of person they are and what they do in their non-volunteer life. You're pretty confident that they'll be just fine if you give them a couple of cases of Amaryllis plants to sell. But do you know for sure?

The answer is that you don't. The simplest thing to do is to give the person a call after a few days to touch base and see how things are going. Maybe this person has some questions that have come up as a result of trying to sell the plants. Maybe this person has told people that the Society will offer a tax receipt for the purchase of the plant. This is the kind of thing that you want to catch earlier, rather than later. The only way to do so is to put in place some kind of supervision.

It's really that simple. You are weighing "how important is it that this thing is done right" against "how sure am I that this person will do it right." Based on that scale, you provide whatever amount of supervision is required to get you the result you want. This ensures that you are happy, and the volunteer is happy.

7.3 The importance of Feedback

Supervision just naturally leads to feedback. If you are checking in with someone about the volunteer job they are doing and they're not doing it quite right, you let them know so they can get back on track. Or, you check in with someone and realize they are doing a fabulous job right off the bat, and you make sure to tell them.



Feedback, pure and simple.

But the other part of feedback that is just as important is giving your volunteer a chance to provide YOU with feedback. You might be perfectly happy with the work that they are doing, but what you don't realize is that your new volunteer is bored and not enjoying their new volunteer job. Give your new volunteer a chance to give you this important piece of information so that the two of you can work something out. If you're not careful, you could lose a brand new volunteer.

The process of giving and getting feedback is a really good way to verify that you recruited the right kind of person for the particular volunteer job you were trying to fill. If you got it right, good for you. But if you didn't, it's not the end of the world. Learn from the process and make whatever adjustments you think are needed to your recruitment and screening strategy and try again. In the mean time, work with your new volunteer to see what can be done to hang on to them, but maybe in some other role.

8.0 Volunteer Recognition

Most people like to be recognized for the work that they do, whether as part of their jobs, for the things that they do with their family, or for their volunteer work. This is the last part of the volunteer management cycle, but it is perhaps one of the most important.

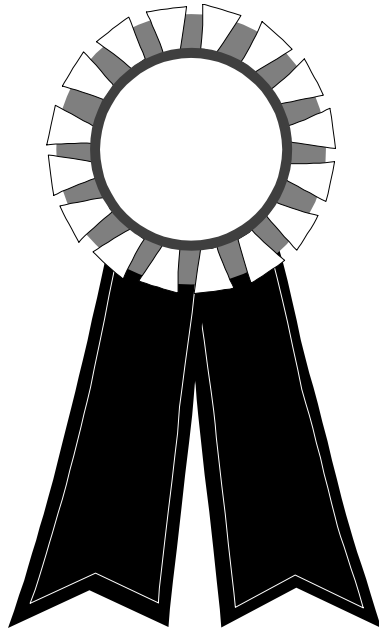


8.1 What is volunteer recognition?

Let's face it ... there aren't too many people out there who don't like to be told that what they are doing is appreciated. How we demonstrate to people that their work is appreciated is volunteer recognition.

Some people might think that the only time they are “recognizing” someone's contribution is when they make a special presentation, give them an award, and so on. While these things definitely qualify as volunteer recognition activities, you don't always have to do things that are quite so formal.

Telling someone that they are doing a great job is also volunteer recognition. Giving someone a personal thank you card to acknowledge that they went the extra mile is also volunteer recognition.



You don't have to spend a lot of money to be effective in your volunteer recognition. The Communications and Volunteer Development Department can help you brainstorm ways you can recognize your exceptional volunteers. Volunteers appreciate that you thought of them, not of how much you spent on them.

Remember, volunteer recognition works best when you know that it will be genuinely appreciated by the volunteer. Some people respond differently to different forms of recognition, so the more sensitive you are to this point, the happier your volunteers will be.

What other volunteers have said about the type of recognition they preferred (poll conducted by The Toronto Volunteer Resource Centre) Taken from, “How to thank volunteers” by Bruce Raymond, *Canadian Fundraiser*, December 23, 1996 at <<http://www.charityvillage.com/cv/research/rvrol8.html>>.

Discounts on memberships, etc. (81.4%)

Additional training (81.2%)

Personal development training (69.2%)

Luncheon with volunteers (68.9%)

Employee privileges (68.5%)

Volunteer job enhancement (68%)

Participation in staff activities (64%)
Individual lunch with agency (60.4%)
Social event with volunteers (60.4%)
Gift item with agency logo (59.0%)
Community recognition (55.6%) Personalized gift item (55.1%)
Award pin (52.2%)
Award certificate (49.5%)
Gift with universal volunteer logo (46.8%)
Participation in organized sports event (22.2%)

8.2 The importance of volunteer recognition

Volunteer recognition is an important part of keeping your volunteers happy, motivated and engaged. It shows that you recognize and value a volunteer's time and contribution – something that you got for free, but don't take for granted.

There are about a billion different ways of recognizing volunteers, so be creative. If you run out of ideas, give the Society's office a call and we can help you figure something out.

Remember, if you don't keep your volunteers happy and motivated, there is always some other organization out there that will.

Informal

- Phone just to thank them.
- Give a monthly award for contributions.
- Create a yearbook of volunteers.
- Send a letter to their CEO, and copy Human Resources.
- Given tickets to an event.
- Offer a free professional development session.
- Write an article about them.
- Nominate them for a leadership position.
- Help them network.
- Use them as consultants or advisors.

Formal

- Designate levels of achievement.
- Celebrate anniversaries of volunteer's years with you.
- Produce a video of their work with you.
- Provide incentives for volunteer's contributions.
- Provide fees for educational or self-improvement programs.
- Create a special assignment for special volunteers.
- Give the volunteer ownership of the task.
- Donate to the volunteer's charity of choice.
- Name an award for an outstanding volunteer.
- Establish a group award to promote teamwork.

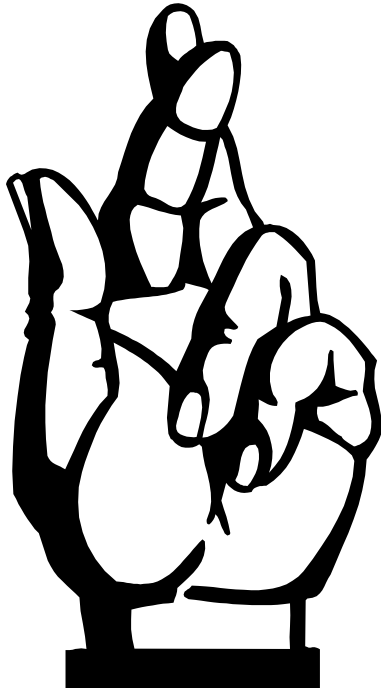
9.0 What Comes Next?

First of all, we want you to have fun with this stuff! These are maybe new concepts, new approaches or new tools. Play with them and see how far you can take them.

Think back to how you joined the Huntington Society as a volunteer. What made it easy? What made it difficult? What was great about it? What would you wish had been done differently? Now take that learning and put yourself in the shoes of a brand new volunteer whose expectations come from Section 2.4. Are you and your group in a position to compete for a stranger's time?

It is our hope that you will use this material as much as you can, and that you will call us with any questions, concerns or problems you are facing so that we can help you work things through. While volunteer management isn't rocket science, it does require some thought, some organization and some commitment. This manual tries to provide as much of these as possible.

After having read all of this, you might be thinking that you haven't learned anything new. That's a good thing. It means that you already approach your volunteer leadership with an eye to volunteer management principles. That's pretty important.



On the other hand, you might have finished reading this and are somewhat overwhelmed by everything that's in here. Don't be. The whole manual is broken down into manageable bits and pieces. Maybe the goal for you is to begin tackling those bits and pieces just one or two at a time. With help from the Communications and Volunteer Development team (assuming you want it), you will eventually cover all the bases.

Remember, volunteer management, and all the parts that it is made up of, is really grounded in one simple fact: people are important. And that's what the Huntington Society is all about.