

ADVERTISING *Brief*



Recommendations for promoting and marketing volunteer organizations

Introduction

One of the main issues for a not-for-profit organization is how to best use their limited time and resources to reach the greatest number of people. The main objective was to identify the most useful and effective forms of advertising. This was accomplished through a broad survey that addresses issues such as where people get information about current events and opportunities about their community. People of different ages and backgrounds use different mediums to gain information about their community; therefore another objective was to determine how to target specific populations of people, giving organizations the means to target the groups they feel fit in their organization the best.

Recommendations

- ◇ For all ages, we recommend holding call-out meetings or information sessions.
- ◇ For ages 17 through 25, the best way to encourage this age group is to generate word of mouth. This can be done through social media, such as Facebook or Twitter, or getting current volunteers to spread the word about the organization and their experiences.
- ◇ For ages 26 through 55, the Internet, e-mail or websites, and newspaper ads are the most effective ways of reaching them.
- ◇ For ages 56 and older, the newspaper, ads or exposé, is, by far, the most effective way of communicating information.

Natalie Noonan
Kandi Jenkins
Rebecca Westall
Stephen Lucas

Analysis

There were two questions on the survey, “Where do you generally get information about current events in your community?” and “What form of advertising is most effective in encouraging you to contact an organization?” that looked to determine effectiveness of advertising. After analyzing the data, both returned the same three forms of advertisement as the most effective: word of mouth, Internet (either e-mail or websites) and newspaper. Almost half of the respondents chose each of these three choices at least 50% of the time.

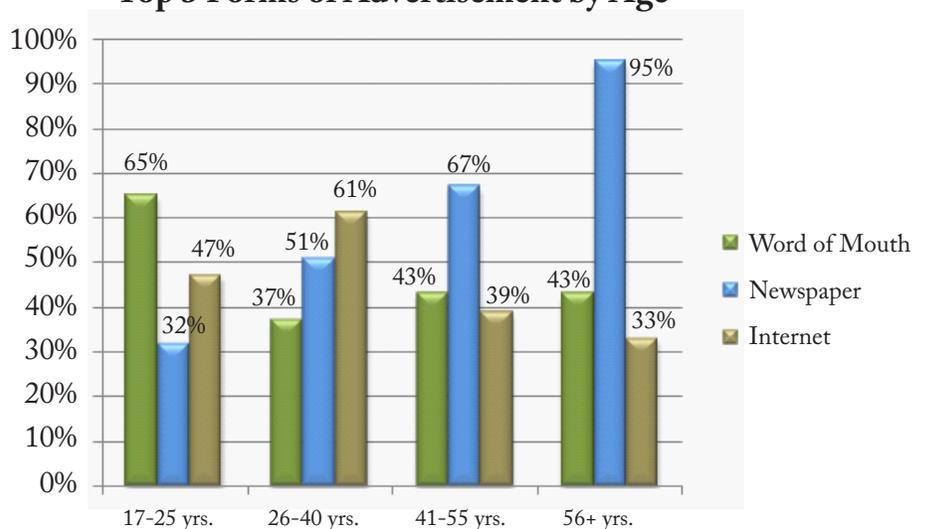
“Use a multi faceted approach. Mature folks still rely on printed media and younger folks are more technologically savvy (Facebook, Twitter, etc.).”

We then broke down this information to determine if there were patterns of effective advertisements within different age groups (see Figure 1). We found that younger respondents were more likely to pick word of mouth as one of their top methods of acquiring information. As people get older, they are more likely to depend on the newspaper, with 95% of respondents 56 and older choosing newspaper as their top form of advertisement.

“I suggest just talking to more people face to face. Most of the organizations that I volunteer for are ones that have had representatives come up and talk to me.”

Figure 1

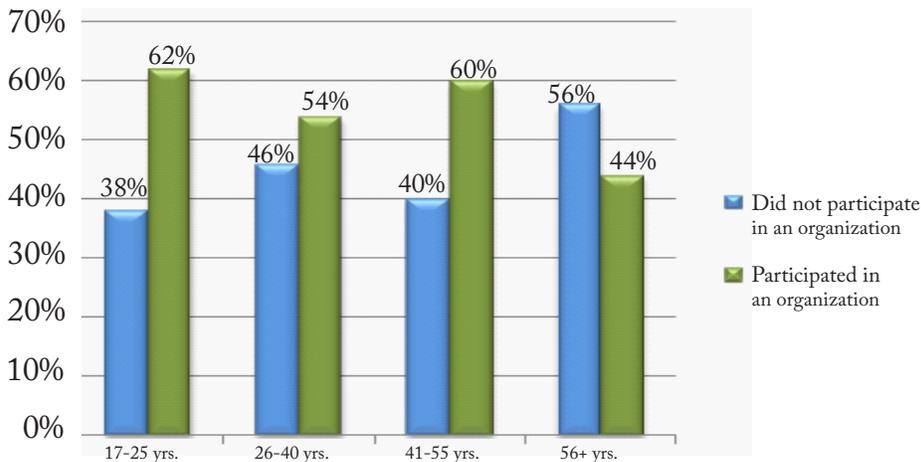
Top 3 Forms of Advertisement by Age



The question “How did you hear about your most recent volunteer position?” reinforced the findings that word of mouth is the most effective and useful form of advertising. Almost 37% of respondents chose word of mouth as the way they heard about their volunteer position, almost twice as popular as any other option. The Internet (combining e-mail and websites) and church made up another large segment of respondents (23% and 13%, respectively). Church’s high response rate can possibly be explained as another form of word of mouth or as a partnership with a volunteer organization, such as using it as the location for an information session.

Figure 2

Participation in an Organization After Call-out Meeting



“One girl I met on campus was quick and to the point and didn’t take up people’s time but rather handed out small informative flyers directing people who are interested to a web site where they can get further information.”

Another group of questions on the survey asked about attendance and participation in call-out meetings or information sessions. These are meetings that organizations put together to promote opportunities within the community. Our results showed that 33% of our respondents have attended a call-out meeting in the past year. Approximately 60% of respondents who attended a call-out meeting went on to participate in the organization. Looking at these results broken down by age, respondents under 55 are more likely than those 56 and older to participate in an organization after attending a call-out meeting (see Figure 2). Respondents 56 and older were less likely to participate in an organization, but over 40% of respondents participated, making call-out meetings an effective form of advertising.

Conclusion

There are different forms of advertisements that we suggest you use, based on the age group that you want to target. However, the overall best way to promote your organization is through word of mouth. This can be obtained by encouraging current volunteers to tell their friends, family, co-workers and any other potentially interested people about your organization.

It is clear that people want personal connections with the organization and other volunteers in order to persuade them to participate in a volunteer position. Other groups’ findings enhance this, demonstrating the similarities in feeling needed by the organization between people of all ages, personality types and genders.

“Word of mouth is vital. People take advertisements much more serious when they hear something directly from another person that is taking the time to speak with them.”

Overview

In any given community, such as one like Bloomington, IN, (where our studies took place), organizations provide multiple volunteer opportunities that span a variety of activity types and varying levels of time commitment. While many of these organizations may have a current base of dedicated volunteers, there is always a need for more help and there are always other capable and willing potential volunteers out in the community that have not yet been reached.

Our group was interested in finding out what types of volunteer activities respondents are interested in participating in, as well as which ones they feel confident are available in the community. We also examined whether respondents, based on their age, had differing preferences in the types of populations they would want to help/volunteer for. Though we kept the needs of RSVP specifically in mind, this information is important for any volunteer organization. With the information provided throughout this brief, organizations can shape or adapt their volunteer opportunity offerings (when possible) and plan their marketing budgets better.

Based on a random sample from the Bloomington, Indiana population, our research clearly indicates that there are a few key recommendations that volunteer organizations should follow to be more efficient with their marketing resources as well as more effective in their volunteer recruitment:

A Few Key Recommendations

- Maintain high levels of volunteer opportunities pertaining to human welfare
- Increase marketing of human welfare opportunities
- Increase the number of other volunteer opportunities in non-human welfare areas (such as working with animals, education, health-care, etc) in conjunction with increased marketing of these volunteer opportunities
- Tailor marketing efforts regarding volunteer opportunities towards specific age groups.

“It would be something that directly benefits the lives of other people. Something I could see that I had done to help, opposed to indirectly aiding in something and never knowing if I was of any use.”

—Respondent answer to the question ‘Describe your ideal volunteer experience’

Areas of Volunteer Interest

People are most willing to work in human welfare volunteer opportunities.

After asking survey respondents what types of volunteer opportunities they would be willing to participate, it was clear that human welfare volunteer activities, which include volunteering with issues concerning poverty, homelessness, human rights, and hunger, was overwhelmingly the category that received the most interest. Chart 1 (right) indicates that 89% of respondents are willing to volunteer in the human welfare sector.

We found similar results presented in the article *Volunteering for Human Service Provisions: Lessons from Italy and the U.S.A.* by Ugo Ascoli and Ram A. Cnaan. This article stated that the results from the Independent Sector's biannual surveys conducted in 1988, 1990 and 1992 showed that people of all ages are likely to volunteer in human services sector. Specifically, females and low and moderate income people many of whom were retirees and students, but also people in the 31-60 age group are likely to volunteer in human services sector.

A key takeaway from this, for any organization, is to make sure that opportunities to work with situations dealing with poverty, homelessness, human rights, and hunger be readily available, as that is what a majority of potential volunteers would be willing to do.

AREAS OF VOLUNTEER INTEREST

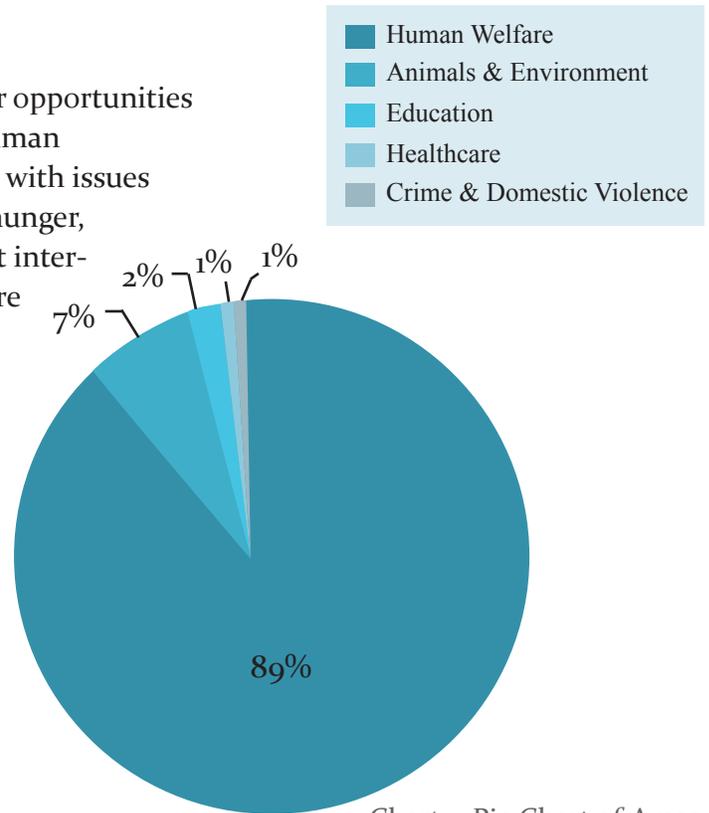


Chart 1. Pie Chart of Areas of Volunteer Interest

It's Not Just About Providing the Right Opportunities

Utilize marketing to boost confidence levels of potential volunteers

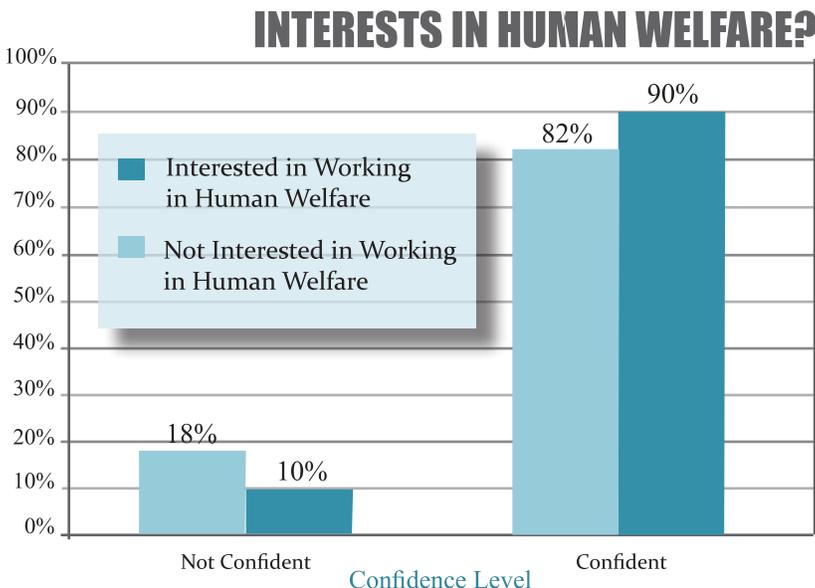


Chart 2. Bar Chart Representation of Respondents' Willingness to Volunteer in Human Welfare and Confidence Level

Though we noticed that a large proportion of respondents were interested in human welfare, we wanted to understand whether they felt confident that they could find volunteer opportunities that matched their interests. Looking at Chart 2 (left), it is apparent that roughly 90% of respondents who were interested in human welfare were confident that they could find a volunteer opportunity to match that interest, but 10% were obviously left not feeling confident. This is an area of opportunity for RSVP and other volunteer organizations to attract more volunteers in the human welfare sector by increasing awareness of these kinds of opportunities to boost confidence levels.

Another key takeaway from the graph (Chart 2) is that those who are not interested in human welfare opportunities are even more likely to not be confident that they can find an opportunity to match their volunteer interests. The causes of this could be two-fold (or one of two):

- There are in fact, less volunteer opportunities available in these areas for potential volunteers to get involved with.
- These types of volunteer opportunities are in fact readily available, but are not marketed as well/or as much as opportunities with human welfare activities.

Organizations should assess for themselves whether they are offering non-human welfare type volunteer opportunities, and if not, increase the number of opportunities available to capitalize on the 11% of respondents that said they would be willing to volunteer in non-human welfare areas. If organizations do in fact have such opportunities available, they need to assess whether they are being marketed it well; if not, they should consider augmenting their marketing efforts to let potential volunteers know about these available opportunities.

Volunteer Populations of Interest

Matching those in need with potential volunteers' preferences

We wanted to investigate whether the age of a potential volunteer had any interesting effects on the types of populations (whether human, animals, or natural disasters) that they would be interested in working with.

AGE EFFECT ON POPULATIONS OF INTEREST

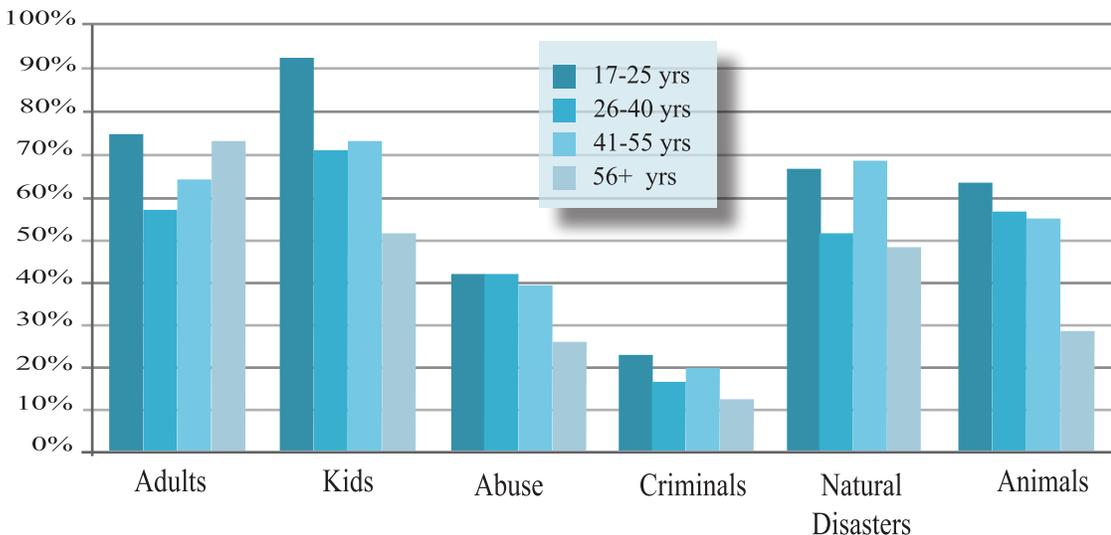


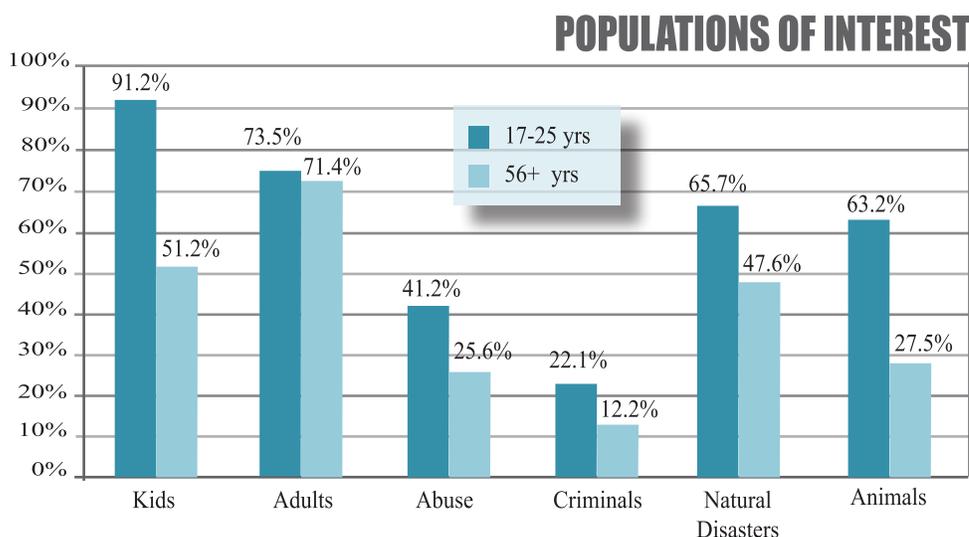
Chart 3: Age Effects on Populations of Interest

Across the board, we found that respondents of all ages are interested in working with children and adult populations. Looking at Chart 3 (above) it is particularly interesting to note that over 90% of potential volunteers age 17-25 are interested in working with children. One may construe, then, that human welfare volunteer activity types that involve those in need who are either adults or children will garner the most potential volunteer interest.

Other than working with adults, the largest discrepancy in what types of populations respondents want to work with occurs between respondents age 17-25, and adults 56+ years of age. Comparing these two groups shows a few things worth noting (Chart 4 below). First, there is a particularly large difference between these age groups in terms of their interest in working with children and with animals (approximately a 40% and 35% difference respectively). Older individuals may feel they do not have the patience to work with these types of populations. Organizations may want to fuel less of their marketing resources towards targeting 56+ aged populations to educate them about potential volunteer opportunities working with these types of populations, or conversely, to make sure to market these opportunities towards younger adults.

Secondly, while neither group expressed a strong interest in working with abused or criminal populations, this is by far the lowest category for adults ages 56+, perhaps indicating that they do not feel comfortable working with these populations. Or, it may also be possible that our sample is both of a generational and regional demographic that feels less inclined to work with these types of people/situations. Organizations should stray away from designing volunteer opportunities with these populations for potential volunteers ages 56+, or should at least designate more of their marketing of these opportunities towards other potential volunteer populations.

Chart 4: Differences in Populations of Interest between Respondents 17-25 and those 56+



Concluding Thoughts and Recommendations

At a time when organizations are more than ever facing stringent budgets, and the need for volunteers continues to grow, organizations must strive to match the right volunteer opportunities with the right potential volunteers, as well as make sure that these opportunities are well marketed.

Through the research shown, volunteer organizations can be more efficient by assessing:

- The balance of volunteer activity types they are currently offering and aligning it with the proportion of volunteer opportunities that potential volunteers are willing to work with (see Chart 1). This would work especially well for an organization like RSVP.
- Increase marketing of non-human welfare volunteer opportunities, as well human welfare opportunities, depending on which the organization is/or is not already marketing well.
- Use targeted marketing of certain age groups depending on the volunteer opportunity.
 - Specifically, for an organization like RSVP, spend less marketing resources (if any) towards older adult populations for opportunities that deal with helping criminals or abused victims.
 - For volunteer opportunities involving working with child populations, make sure to market these opportunities well towards potential volunteers aged 17-25.

Why People Volunteer and why it matters for RSVP

The Big Question

What motivates people to volunteer?

This is the question which this policy brief seeks to explore, and is the question whose answer carries far-reaching implications for non-profit organizations like RSVP. With a better understanding of what motivates people to volunteer, RSVP's recruitment efforts stand a better chance at building a strong and reliable volunteer base in the community.

We began our exploration of what motivates volunteerism by focusing on three categories of motivation; self-actualization, social, and recognition. We defined self-actualization as the desire to maximize personal potential, social motivation as the desire to interact within a community, and recognition motivation as the desire for acknowledgment of contributions.

Using these three categories as a foundation, we predicted that one type of motivation would be favored more frequently among volunteers in the Indiana University student, staff, and faculty. Survey data was collected and from analysis of that data, this policy brief was drafted. The analysis and recommendations that follow is our effort to explain what motivates people to volunteer, and how the likelihood of being a volunteer changes based on different demographic characteristics.

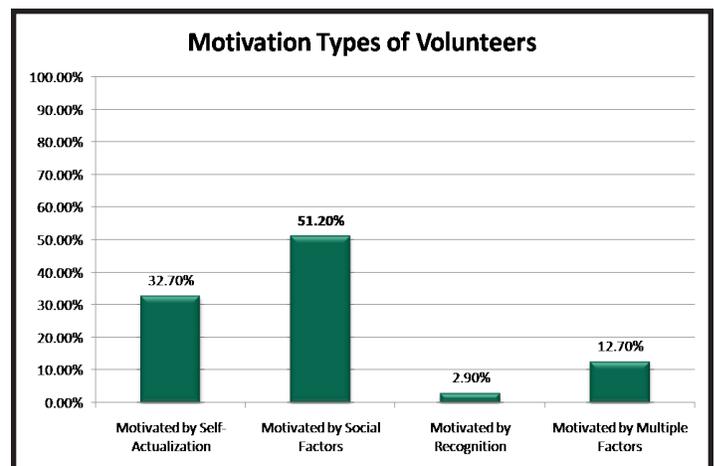


"What do you think . . . should we get started on that motivation research or not?"

Source: discover.cbu.ca

Who volunteers and why?

To enhance their ability to recruit volunteers, RSVP must specifically address the unique concerns of certain volunteer types. The major take away of this analysis is that social motivation proved to have the most drastic effect on volunteer status. Looking at the graph below we see that an overwhelming number of volunteers ranked social motivation as their primary motivational category.



Using the data on motivational factors along with demographic data, we created a predictive function to determine how likely someone was to have been a volunteer. Here we discuss three hypothetical volunteers and the recruitment potential of each.

Least likely volunteer

The first volunteer type we constructed modeled a person least likely to volunteer. This person was a male who is 55 years or older, who is not married and without kids. He is religious, shy, motivated by recognition, unhealthy and possesses a high school level education. In our testing, his probability of volunteering was only 7%.

To address this, RSVP can take a number of explicit steps to increase this volunteer type's propensity to volunteer. The first of these is to emphasize the health benefits of volunteering with RSVP. Health was the second most important determining factor in our predictive function. In our testing, simply changing health and leaving all other controls the same resulted in an increase from 7% to 21%

Authors

Arianna Dimitroff, Phil Johnson,
Eric Silvestri, and Chelsea Kennedy

in the individual's probability to volunteer, underlining the importance of addressing the concerns of unhealthy potential volunteers in attempting to increase their participation. The beneficial nature of social interaction and physical activity adherently associated with volunteering, as well as the insurance supplement program RSVP offers, are excellent selling points in encouraging this volunteer type to get involved. By focusing on their health, and providing avenues for improving it, we can encourage these individuals to volunteer.

In addition to health, targeting this individual's desire to be recognized presents RSVP with another opportunity to improve the probability of persons of this type to volunteer.

An ad taken out in the newspaper acknowledging the work of volunteers can provide an excellent low cost option that both satisfies the recognition some volunteers desire, as well as a subtle advertising opportunity that is statistically confirmed as an effective medium for those 55 years and older. In all, if RSVP wishes to increase the breadth of volunteers it appeals to, an effort to highlight health benefits of volunteer work and recognize the work of its volunteers will increase the probability of our first hypothetical volunteer type to get involved.

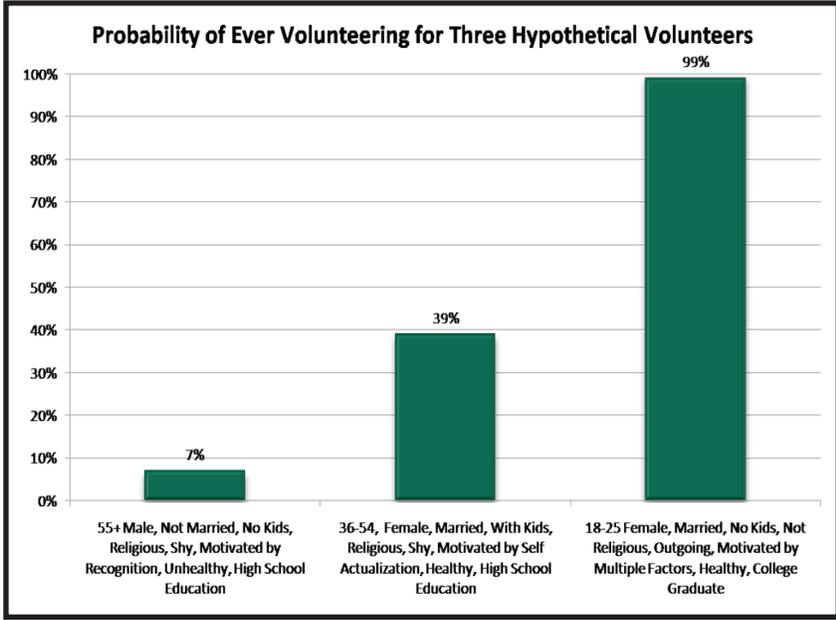
The Soccer Mom

In constructing our second model, we wanted to produce a hypothetical volunteer that reflected a typical "soccer mom" in an effort to tease out how the organization can adjust its recruiting practices to attract similar volunteers. Our theoretical soccer mom was between 36 and 54 years old, married with children, religious, shy, motivated by self actualization, healthy, and in possession of a high school level education. Testing revealed that our soccer mom had a probability of volunteering of only 40%.

"I would love to be able to include my 13 year old daughter in my volunteer efforts."
-Survey Respondent

The soccer mom presents RSVP with the opportunity to tap into the self-actualization motivated volunteer. Advertisements to this group should include emphasis on the enriching nature of volunteering and how it benefits not only those helped but those doing the helping.

Stressing the flexibility of volunteering and providing opportunities for families to participate together are effective strategies to motivate this type of volunteer as well. RSVP may consider an online calendar that allows for users to sign up in time slots so that the soccer mom can better adjust her schedule to her volunteer activity.



The All-Star

The final hypothetical volunteer we analyzed is the all-star, who has a 99% probability of volunteering. She is between 18 and 25 years old, is married without children, not religious, outgoing, motivated by multiple factors, healthy and possesses a bachelor's degree. This is the one volunteer with whom RSVP need not worry about motivational type, since she is motivated by multiple factors.

RSVP would do well in increasing their efforts in locating these individuals and building relationships with the businesses that employ them to streamline the volunteer process. By engaging in a dialogue with local businesses, RSVP can push for the adoption of flextime policies that allow young professionals to take time from work to volunteer. Flextime policies are win-win. By allowing employees to volunteer in the community, they provide a social avenue for employee relationships to cultivate, and improve their business's respective image within the community.

RSVP can also use socializing outlets like Facebook.com or linkedin.com as a low-cost tool that allows individuals that volunteer to communicate with each other, provide feedback, and encourage others outside the network to volunteer. By incorporating itself both within the local business community, and the online social networking scene, RSVP can target and retain individuals who are highly likely to volunteer.

Educational Shift: From Self to Social

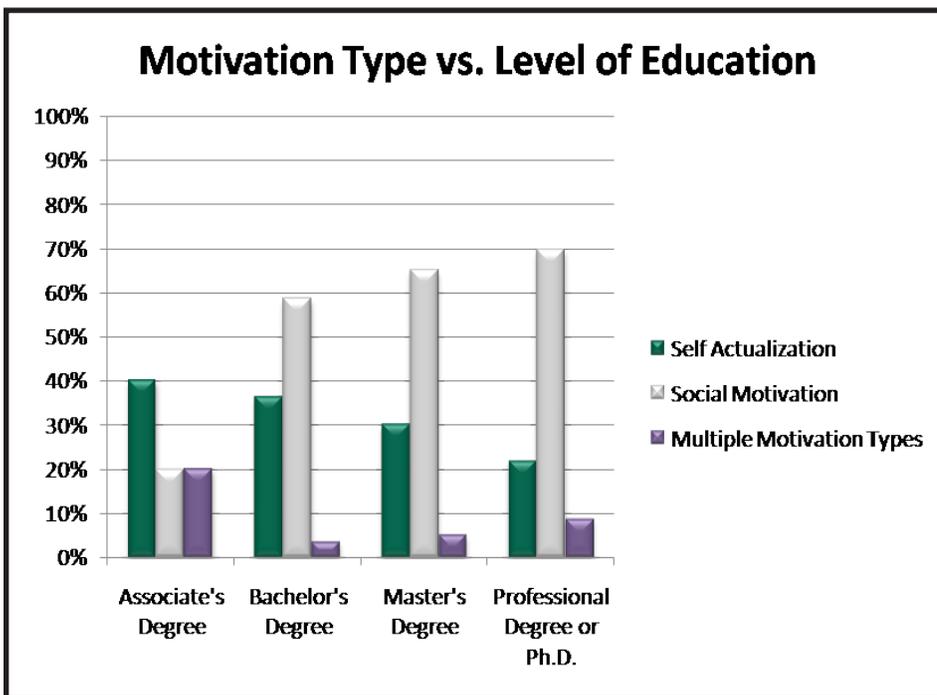
Along with exploring which motivational type lends itself to volunteering in the community, we explored whether or not motivational type would change given a shift in other demographic factors. What we found was an interesting relationship between education level and motivational type. Our findings suggest that as people move

through educational institutions earning more and more advanced degrees their driving motivational forces move from the self actualization category into the social category. The graph below shows that those holding associates' degrees are primarily motivated by self-actualization. We see however, that as higher degrees are attained social needs clearly become the dominant motivational force while self-actualization recedes. Given some thought, this trend makes sense. Limited progress in the educational system could leave people desiring more knowledge that they might move closer to reaching their potential. This is especially true for those holding associate's degrees since it is culturally seen as a half-way point to the four-year degree. The self-actualization needs of learning, improving, and growing are met as one climbs farther and farther up

the ivory tower, the issue is that the ivory tower is lonely at the top. In place of those self actualization needs that were strong when only an associate's degree hung on the wall, social needs take over after doctoral work or degrees in law or medicine are obtained. In other words, people want what they do not have. Those without a higher education want to improve themselves, while those with limited social contact outside their university departments desire community.

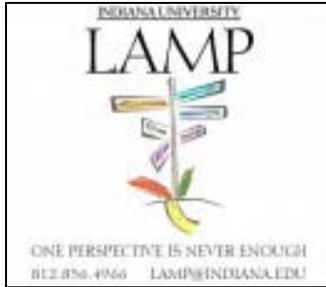
The implications of this trend on volunteer recruitment are numerous. For one, if the volunteer task for which you are recruiting requires a higher level of education, advertise using social benefits as the crux of the argument. Earlier we discussed how important social motiva-

tion is for high probability volunteers; for people with a higher education it is even more important. The reverse implication is also beneficial to recruitment efforts. Many volunteer tasks do not demand an associate's degree, yet as we discussed earlier, a higher education yields a greater likelihood of volunteerism. This means that for whatever reason, the self-actualization benefits of volunteerism are not being communicated as well as social benefits. RSVP's recruitment efforts could benefit from a new emphasis on why volunteering is personally enriching (broadens perspectives, learn new communication skills, physical activity etc...) Concurrently, appeals to those who feel socially isolated should find their way to department bulletin boards, presentations at department meetings, or newsletters from the dean.



Final Thoughts and Considerations

The previous discussion was a brief overview of our efforts to answer the question of what motivates people to volunteer. By using the recommendations outlined in this brief, RSVP can create more effective recruitment methods aimed at attracting the maximum number of *potential* volunteers and encouraging them to become *active* volunteers. In all of these recommendations, it is essential for RSVP to recognize the unique nature of each volunteer type as well as the distinct appeal of each motivational type. By acknowledging this, RSVP can utilize the abovementioned recommendations in a low cost, sweeping effort to increase their volunteers across the board. We hope that the results of our research and analysis prove to be useful for RSVP when developing a future recruitment strategy and wish them luck with all of their endeavors.



Factors that Discourage Volunteering

Julie Neel, Bryan Cook, Margherite Brucci, and Carl Gidley

Objective:

Our research indicates that there is a large percentage of people in the IU community who have the desire to volunteer, but are currently not volunteering; 68.8% percent of the respondents in our sample described themselves as willing or very willing to volunteer in the future, but only 33.2% are currently volunteering. We will seek to determine what factors deter individuals who have the desire to volunteer from actually participating with volunteer organizations. Specifically, we will examine the relationship between perceived volunteer organizations' time requirements and the amount of time individuals are willing to give on a monthly basis.

Introduction:

While for-profit organizations generally receive thousands of applications for vacant positions, non-profit organizations that rely on volunteer labor are not usually given the luxury of playing a passive role in securing their volunteers. Volunteer organizations are faced with the daunting task of deciphering how to best persuade potential volunteers into donating their time, effort, and energy to the organization. In order to persuade potential volunteers, organizations must convince individuals that volunteering is a worthwhile use of their time, determine what factors motivate and discourage participation, and reach the right people with the message that is relevant to them. This task is further complicated by the fact that the methods necessary to achieve these objectives vary greatly between different demographic and social groups. Finally, non-profit organizations generally do not have a large budget or staff at their disposal when trying to attract volunteers, so efforts must be as cost-effective and efficient as possible.

Here, we will focus on the relationship between how much time people believe volunteer organizations require and how that discourages their willingness to volunteer. We will do this by examining how believing that organizations require more than individuals are willing to give affects their willingness to actually participate with an organization. Our research indicates that beliefs that

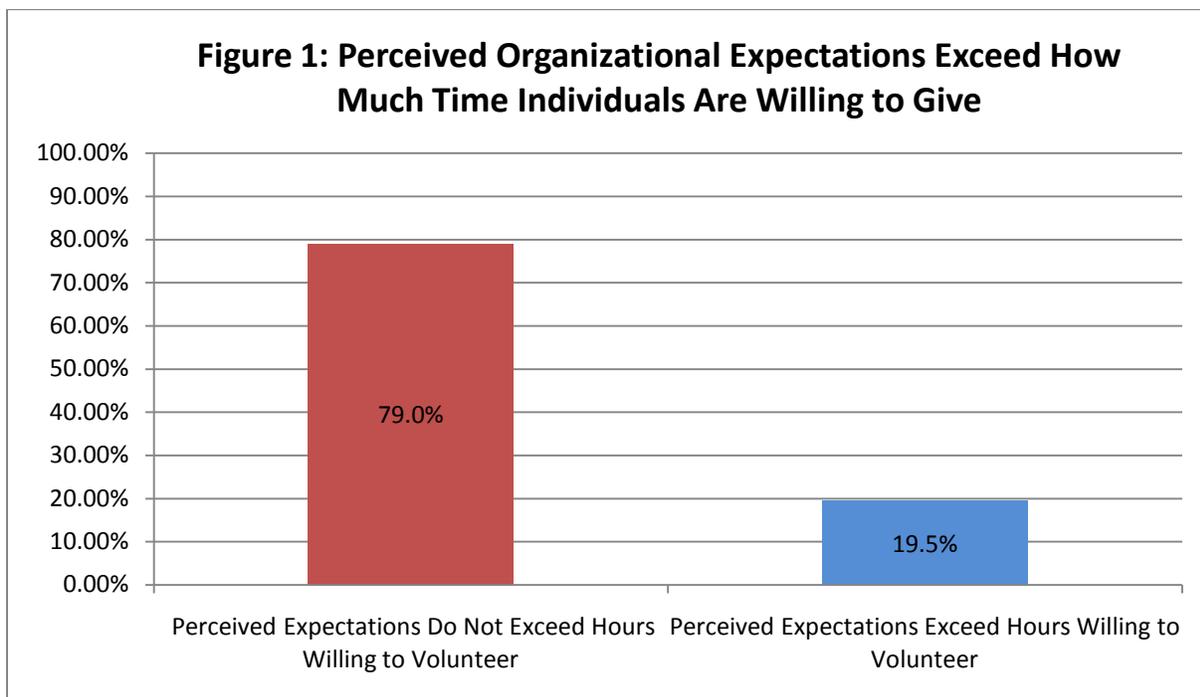
"Most people don't hear about volunteer opportunities and don't take time to look for them. Being friendly and cooperative with potential volunteers without pressuring them is good too."

-Anonymous Respondent

organizations require more time than individuals are willing to give acts as a deterrent to participation. Using this information, non-profit organizations can advertise to potential volunteers by emphasizing that volunteering participation can be as little as one hour a year in hopes of easing the volunteers' fears about not having enough time to meet the organization's expectations. Organizations can also attract volunteers by stating that they only need a few hours from everyone in order to make a large difference in the community. Non-profits can then effectively use their advertising efforts to attract future volunteers.

Results:

In our survey of IU faculty, staff, and students we asked how many hours they were willing to commit to volunteering with an organization and how many hours they expected organizations wanted them to commit on a monthly basis. Comparing the respondents' answers to these two questions, we were able to determine what percentage of the sample believed that organizations wanted more time than they were willing to give. As seen in **Figure 1**, 19.5 % of our sample believed that organizations wanted more of their time than then were willing to give.



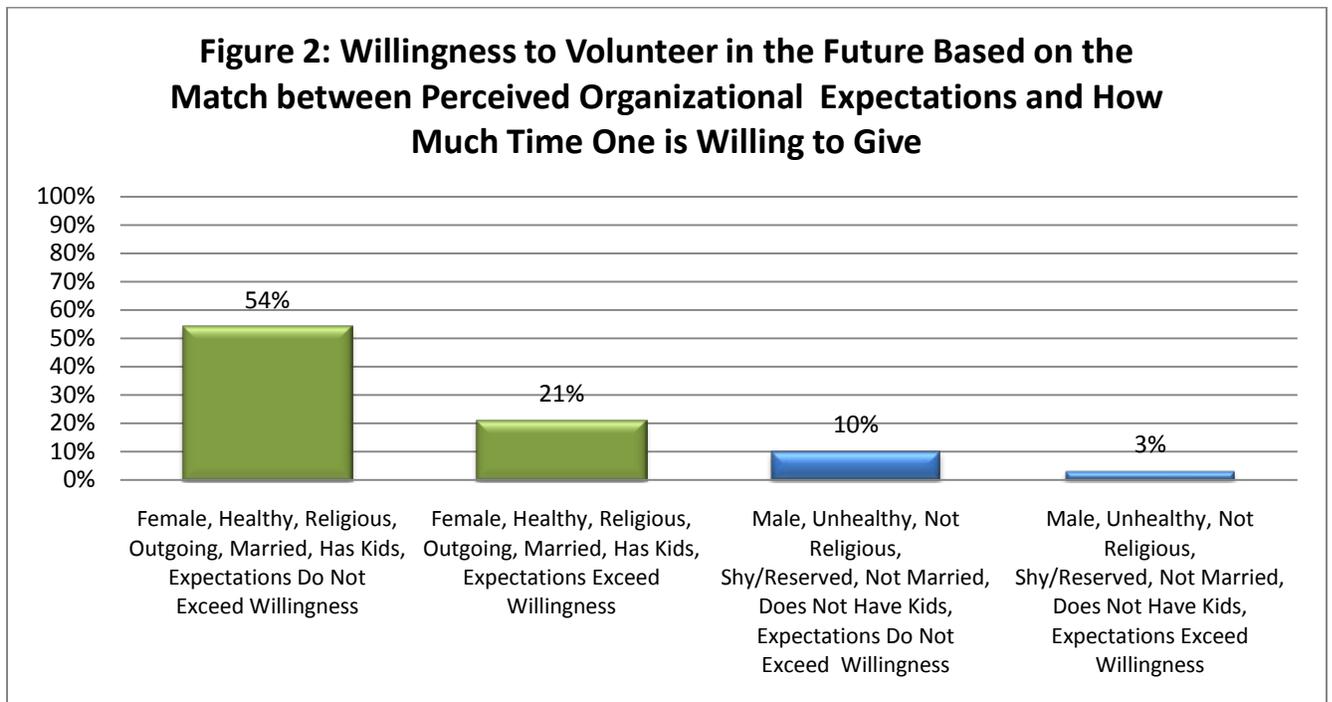
After finding that roughly 20% of our sample believed that organizations required more time than they were willing to give, we needed to determine whether or not these expectations decrease people's willingness of volunteering in the future. By measuring the effect that this belief has on the likelihood that an individual is willing to volunteer in the future, we were able to determine that believing that organizations expected more time than they were willing to give was a major deterrent to actual volunteer participation. As seen in **Figure 2**, the most likely volunteer, a healthy, outgoing, religious, married female with kids who believes that that organizations' expectations do not exceed her time willing

to
volunteer
is the
most
likely
candidate
to
volunteer

“I would suggest that recruiters enforce the idea that it doesn't matter how much time a volunteer can give because with a community of volunteers time is not an issue but rather the number of people contributing for a cause, and that every little bit of time helps.”

-Anonymous Respondent

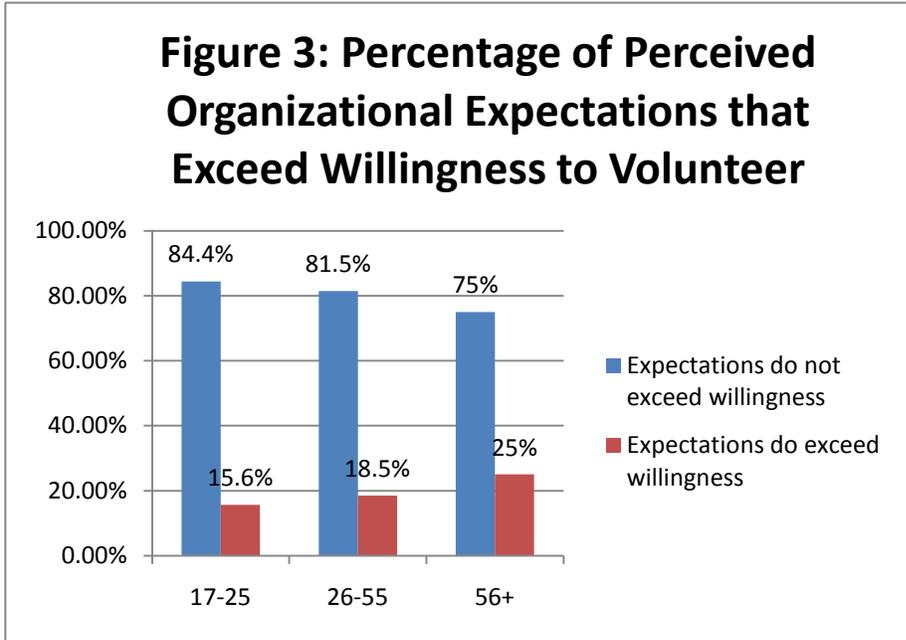
in the future from our sample. Such a female has a 54% likelihood of volunteering in the future. Although this individual's other characteristics contribute to the likelihood of her volunteering in the future, her beliefs about volunteer organization's expectations play a strong role in her willingness to volunteer. Compared with a female with all the same characteristics except that she does believe that volunteer organizations expect more time than she is willing to give, there is a 33 percentage points drop in her willingness to volunteer in the future. Holding all other factors the same, simply changing this hypothetical volunteer's perception of how much time volunteer organizations require from their volunteers more than halved her likelihood of volunteering in the future! This effect is also found among other hypothetical volunteer types. As seen in the first example, the likelihood of the second hypothetical volunteer type in **Figure 2** drops 7 percentage points by changing his perception of organizations' expectations. From these examples, our research shows that when one believes that organizational expectations exceed the time they are willing to commit, the probability that they will volunteer in the future drops significantly.



(Note: While the other characteristics of the ideal volunteer shown in Figure 2 were not explicitly discussed above, they would be useful in determining who to target when trying to attract volunteers. Individuals who are female, healthy, religious, outgoing, married, and have kids are likely to volunteer.)

Because of the strength of the effect that believing organizations expect more than an individual is willing to give has on the likelihood of a person volunteering in the future, we propose that efforts should be focused on reworking individual's perceptions about volunteer organizations' expectations. This strategy not only has the potential to alter the willingness of a large percentage of the IU community ($\approx 20\%$), but it would also be cost-effective. Altering perceptions of volunteer organizations would mainly require changes in how volunteer opportunities are advertised, allowing volunteer organizations to avoid cost and labor intensive structural changes. In order to effectively affect the perceptions of the target 20%, the make-up of this portion of the population must be determined. The remainder of this section of the brief will be used to highlight groups in the population that are more likely to believe that organizations expect more time than they are willing to give.

Figure 3: Percentage of Perceived Organizational Expectations that Exceed Willingness to Volunteer



First, as shown in **Figure 3**, the likelihood that individuals believe that organizations require more time than they are willing to give increases as age increases. While only 15.6% of 17-25 year olds believe that organizations expect too much, a full 25% of the portion of the population that is 56 years old or older believe that organizations expect

more than they are willing to give. The increased presence of this expectation in the middle age bracket is probably a result of the increased amount of responsibilities that 26-55 year old people have in their lives. Because people in this age group often have children, a career, and other things demanding their time, there are likely to see any additional time commitment as too burdensome. Individuals who are 56 years old and older are likely to believe that volunteer organizations expect too much out of a fear of over committing themselves. Older people are probably afraid of becoming too involved in things that will place mental, physical, and emotional strains on their lives.

Second, as shown in **Figure 4**, individuals with extroverted personalities are more likely than individuals with introverted personalities to believe that volunteer organizations require more than they are willing to give. While only 7.9% of introverted individuals believe that organizations

Figure 4: Organizational Expectations Higher than Willingness and Personality



expect too much, 22.6% of extroverted people think organizations require more hours per month than they are willing to give. Similar to the middle age bracket in the chart above, extroverted people are likely to have this perception of volunteer organizations because they feel like any additional demand for their time is too burdensome because they already have many things demanding their time in their lives. Because extroverted people are more likely to take the initiative socially, they are more likely than introverted people to be involved in a variety of organizations.

Recommendations:

1. Highlight the availability of volunteer opportunities that do not require large time commitments in advertising.
2. Provide volunteer opportunities where parents can bring their children.
3. Advertise volunteering as an activity that will not produce excessive mental, emotional, and physical strains on volunteers.
4. In order to appeal to extroverts, highlight the volunteer's ability to say no to requests for further time commitments made by volunteer organization staff.
5. Advertise volunteering as an activity that can be done with friends and family.

2009

Understanding the 55 years and Older



Yvonne Liu

Sara Powell

Cassandra Weber

L316 Statistical and Logical Reasoning

Instructor: Shelley Nelson

Who is in our sample?

The 55 years and older population at Indiana University is a very specific, thus not very diverse population.

Race | 100% white

Education | 82% with some sort of college degree

Health | 95% reported good to excellent, physically and mentally

Internet Access | 91% at home

Employment | 93% employed

Religious Affiliation | 41 %

What are their Attitudes Toward Volunteering?

- 78% have volunteered at least once in their lifetime
- **57% are currently serving as volunteers**
- 56% are willing to volunteer in the future
- **Only 38% feel that they have enough time to participate in volunteer work**
- **As many as 21% feel that they don't have anything to contribute when volunteering**

Introduction

The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) is a national program of the Corporation for National and Community Service that is supported locally by the Area 10 Agency on Aging. It seeks to provide meaningful volunteer opportunities in various volunteer and community organizations throughout Monroe and Owen Counties, specifically for adults 55 years and older. RSVP seeks to match these volunteers with agencies and positions that best compliment the unique interest, talents, availabilities, and skills of the specific individual.

A particular concern of RSVP is their struggle to recruit a greater number of their target market to serve as volunteers. And, perhaps even more troublesome, is their struggle to maintain this volunteer base once people have initially been placed. In tackling these issues, we used our random survey of the Indiana University population and focused on those 55 years of age and older. We looked at specific demographical information, as well as views, attitudes, and overall perceptions toward volunteerism for this specific sample. The information collected was then analyzed and compared to the same factors among people under the age of 55, to determine just what makes RSVP's target population unique.

We want to emphasize those features of RSVP that would be particularly attractive to the 55 years and older population, specifically that it only requires an extremely small time commitment, and that regardless of what this particular population may think regarding their ability to serve as a volunteer, every single person has the capability to offer

something when they serve as a volunteer. Finally, we want to use some of the statistical information to serve as a sort of compelling force or social pressure for this population to get them to go out and volunteer.

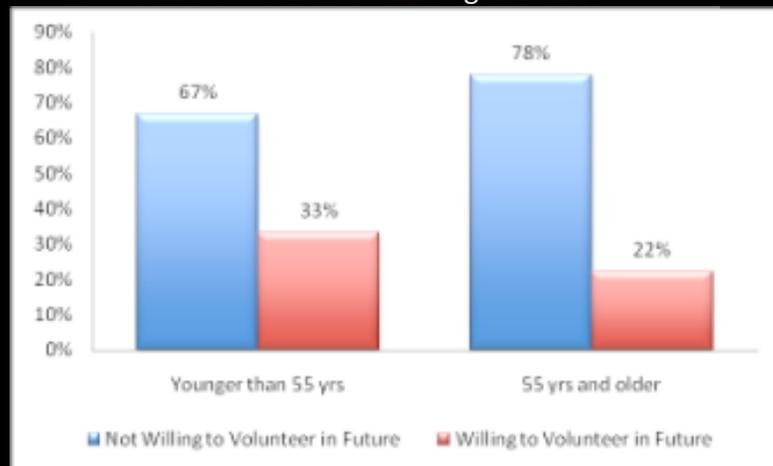
"I found that the best way for me to recruit volunteers was to create actual face to face discussions with people. My experiences involved university students and church groups. I asked to attend meetings of every possible kind and present a 15 minute presentation: services offered, audience getting the service, track record if one was established, kinds of volunteering available and the kinds of support provided for volunteers. Those discussions seemed to travel through the community like wildfire. After several community based presentations we publicized (in many different ways) the first training session. People could come even if only interested. At the end of that meeting we asked people to sign up."

Recommendation 1: STRESS the range of positions and tasks to create confidence among potential volunteers

It was found that willingness to volunteer in the future was related to whether or not one felt he or she had something to contribute when volunteering. For both the younger and older populations, those who felt that they had something to contribute were more likely than those who did not to be willing to volunteer in the future. The reverse is also true; those who did not feel that they had something to contribute were less likely than those who did to be willing to volunteer in the future. Specifically, those 55 years and older were approximately three times more likely to be unwilling to volunteer if they felt that they had nothing to contribute when volunteering (*Figure 1*). Since the idea of volunteering is associated with making a positive impact, it is not surprising that those who feel capable of contributing towards a positive outcome would be more inclined to volunteer and get involved in the future.

As such, it is recommended that organizations take steps to convince potential volunteers that everyone has something to offer, whether it is skill, experience, personality or something as simple as presence. Advertise the range of positions and tasks associated with different volunteer opportunities. For example, some people may feel more comfortable with a position in which they just have to be present, like working at the local animal shelter may simply mean spending time playing with the animals. However, other potential volunteers may want to incorporate their specialized skills and knowledge into a specific volunteer position. No matter which they prefer, it is important to find creative ways of letting the community know that everyone has something to offer regardless of age, gender, mental or physical health condition.

Figure 1: Those Who Feel They Don't Have Something to Contribute are Less Willing to Volunteer



Recommendation 2: STRESS Variety and flexibility of volunteer time

We found that those who are 55 years and older prefer a shorter time commitment than those younger than 55 years of age. Specifically, 64% of those 55 years and older prefer to volunteer 5 hours or less, compared to 46% of those younger than 55 years

of age. Thus, we suggest that volunteer organizations clearly state and advertise the variability and flexibility in volunteer time commitment. The older population may find one-time and short-term volunteer positions particularly appealing. It would also help if they are given specific time options and those time options should be advertised. For example, giving the option of volunteering once a week versus once month or once a year might be a good way to insure that all volunteers can find a time commitment that suits their ideal.

Recommendation 3: Use social expectation as compelling force to enlist volunteers

Our third recommendation is to use social expectation as a compelling force to enlist volunteers. In our sample of respondents 55 years and older, even though most of them (93%) are employed, more than half of them (57%) are currently volunteering. The fact the so many people in this age group are already volunteering while holding a job can be used to encourage, as well as put pressure on others to volunteer. Besides, among the educated population and those of higher socioeconomic status, there already exists a level of social expectation to give back to one's community.

It was found by another group in our class that newspapers and word-of-mouth are the best ways of spreading information among those 55 years and older. Using volunteer testimonials or volunteer recognition in the newspaper may be one way of increasing the current social pressure on this age group. It would also be practical to request current volunteers and enlist their help in spreading the word. Peer and social pressure is as work when current volunteers tell their friends, family, co-workers, acquaintances, or anyone they come in contact about their role as a volunteer and suggest they also get involved, allowing organizations to recruit and retain volunteers more efficiently.

Recommendation 4: Target non-religiously affiliated population

Members belonging to a religious organization often donate their time and resources already. Altruism is positively rewarded and highly regarded in religious cultures. Since it is a cultural construct within religious cultures that serving others is to serve their God, there is an existence of social pressures to volunteer. This is reinforced by the data we collected. We found that those who are religiously affiliated were found to be much more willing to volunteer in the future. Thus, it might be beneficial to hype up the social pressures and expectations place on those who are not religiously affiliated to increase their involvement. This is in line with our third recommendation above.

Remember that churches and other places of worship are not the only or most effective way to recruit people in this 55 years and older population at IU. Be sure to strongly advertise in several public places in addition to church communities. Again, make use of the newspapers and word-of-mouth, which were by far the most effective means of spreading information to this population. Also, target the places that this particular population frequently visits. Specifically, we found that about 30% of this population goes to a coffee shop or café at least once a week. Restaurants might also serve as a way to get the organization's name out there since 86% of this population eats out at least once a week, with the majority eating out several times a week. Perhaps, it is useful to invite restaurants that serve a large senior population to provide discounts for those who prove membership to specific volunteer organizations. In addition, organizations could also request those restaurants to help advertise, signs on displays around the restaurant could be a good way of reaching those who are non-religiously affiliated as well as those who are. Finally, we found that 53% of our sample went to gyms and other athletic facilities at least once a week. So having these facilities hang up fliers advertising specific volunteer programs is another possible way to reach out to more people, and thus attract more potential volunteers.

“The existing volunteers need to become advocates and ambassadors to all they know. They need sensitivity in this - no one wants to feel pressured - but I am far more likely to go to a volunteer opportunity if the cause is one I care about or if a friend I care about asks me for help.”

Overall Recommendation:

Use current volunteers as advocates for the organizations. Part of being a volunteer should be recruitment of and spreading of information to as many people as possible.

Volunteer Retention

Meredith Lizza, Bryan Stephens, Randi Edelman

Overview:

- The most popular tokens of appreciation among all age groups are a volunteer page in a newspaper, certificates of appreciation and annual banquet dinners
- The majority of volunteers that begin commitments to a volunteer organization are motivated by increasing their levels of social interaction
 - Social Gatherings
 - Coordination into teams
- Recommendations of banquets and social gatherings can be cost-effective and adapted to each individual organization

Today volunteer organizations often find success in initially recruiting volunteers, but organizations continue to struggle in retaining those volunteers over long durations. This obstacle forces volunteer organizations to continually pay transaction costs, including recruiting and training new individuals. The financial and social cost of large volunteer turnover is illustrated in previous research:

“Due to the nature of the organizations that tend to rely on volunteer work, turnover also can have very adverse effects, in particular, on service delivery and financial resources. As examples, the resignation of a volunteer tutor can seriously disrupt learning in a literacy program, and the resignations of a “Big Brother” or Big Sister” can, contrary to program goals, contribute to a child feeling abandoned and unwanted. Also, many organizations rely on the services of volunteers in part because they are understaffed and strapped for funds; constantly having to recruit and train new volunteers can be a severe financial drain (903-904).”¹

The objective of our analysis is to suggest ways for RSVP and other volunteer organizations to improve volunteer retention. We believe that volunteer retention can be improved by specification of tokens of appreciation. In doing so, this would encompass a wider range of volunteers throughout the organization. By organizing activities that promote group interactions and a sense of community, volunteer organizations can better retain their volunteers.

¹ Miller, Lynn E., Gary N. Powell, and Joseph Seltzer. "Determinants of Turnover Among Volunteers." *Human Relations* 43.901 (1990): 901-917. Web. 4 Dec 2009. <<http://hum.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/43/9/901>>.

“I think most people like being recognized for the work they're doing, whether it's for pay or on a volunteer basis. That said, I don't think it should be over the top. Small tokens of appreciation or a chance to talk with others about the work they're doing might be of interest...so I think opportunities to meet with other volunteers might be a nice way to make people feel more connected/involved.”

There is research to support the idea of tokens of appreciation being linked to high retention. In a study by Hager and Brudney, results show that volunteer organizations which have:

“adopted to a large degree the practice of hosting recognition activities for volunteers have a higher rate of retention.”²

This claim highlights our recommendation of recognition as an important component of retention. However, it is not as important that the type of recognition focuses on the individuals themselves, but be recognized as an individual contributing to a group accomplishment. As seen in Figure 1, the three most commonly chosen tokens of appreciation among all age groups were a recognition page in the newspaper, certificates of appreciation and/or holding an annual banquet dinner. Specifically for RSVP, 50% of respondents who were over the age of 55, responded that a banquet was an attractive form of recognition. Taking this into account, we recommend an inexpensive, informal banquet dinner for volunteers. The banquet should not be structured, but more of an additional way volunteers can interact in a relaxed environment. A great example of the type of banquet we envision is a potluck. A potluck is not only cost effective but it allows volunteers to contribute their personal talents as a way of recognizing their peers.

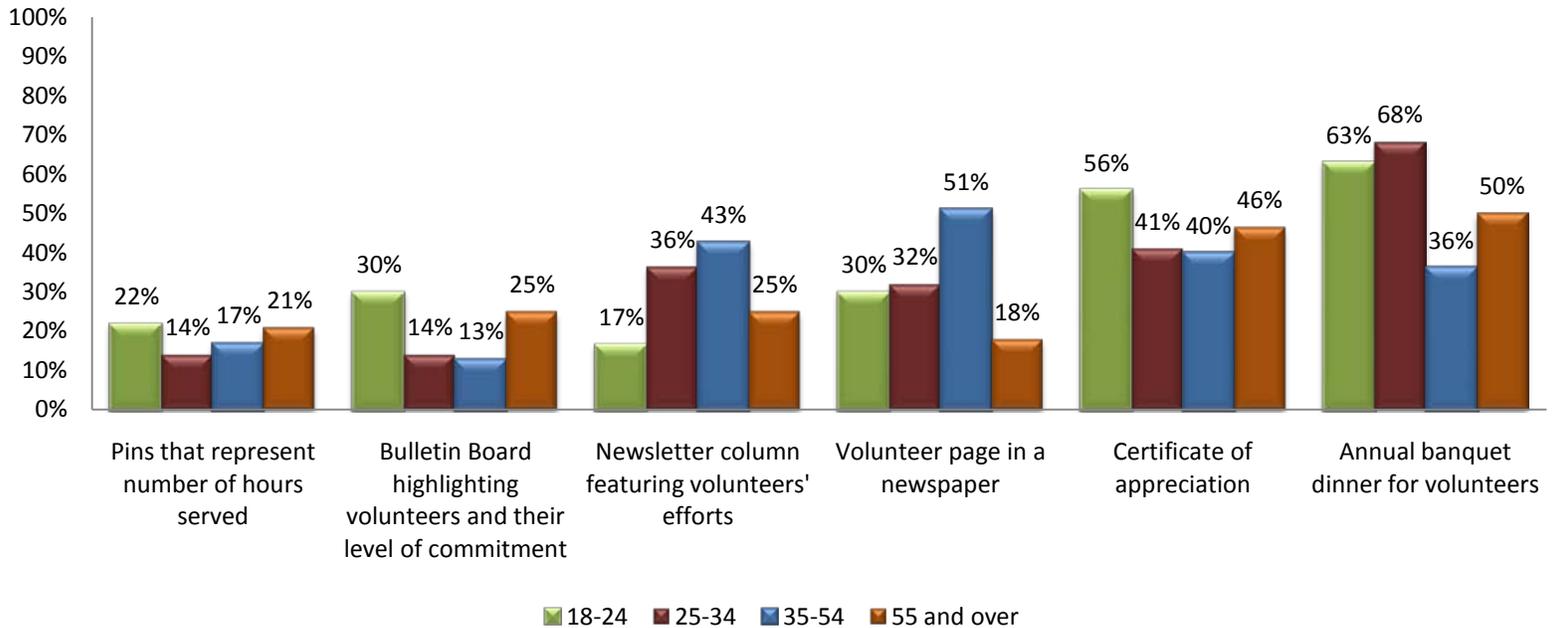
Figure 1 (below) also shows analysis that recognition programs are not all-encompassing. By personalizing information-gathering, organizations will be better able to understand what specifically retains incoming and current volunteers. It is important for organizations to constantly communicate directly with volunteers and find out how to provide for their needs to create an ideal volunteer experience.



² Hager, Mark A., and Jeffrey L. Brudney. "MANAGEMENT CAPACITY AND RETENTION." *Challenges in Volunteer Management* (2008): 9-27 (chapter 1). Web. 4 Dec 2009. <http://books.google.com/books?id=_YbgUa-NyJUC&pg=PA9&lpg=PA9&dq=Management+Capacity+Retention+of+Volunteers+2008.pdf&source=bl&ots=8I5e3mUIxt&sig=gz48CyflxQvZQRK0jCzkumZWdqI&hl=en&ei=iJMZS5_nOYPQ8QaFwPjIAw&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=3&ved=0CA4Q6AEwAg#v=onepage&q=&f=false>.

Figure 1)

Tokens of Appreciation Breakdown by Age



“The ideal volunteer experience would foster a sense of community amongst the volunteers, so that all the people working on the same project knew each other well.”

There are two different kinds of underlying factors that motivate people to volunteer: normative and solidarity benefits. Normative benefits are tangible forms of recognition, which helps the volunteer progress as an individual. These benefits improve the esteem, social status, overall community perception of the volunteer. Volunteers seeking these types of benefits are more inclined to be attracted to external forms of recognition such as: pins, certificates, and newsletters.

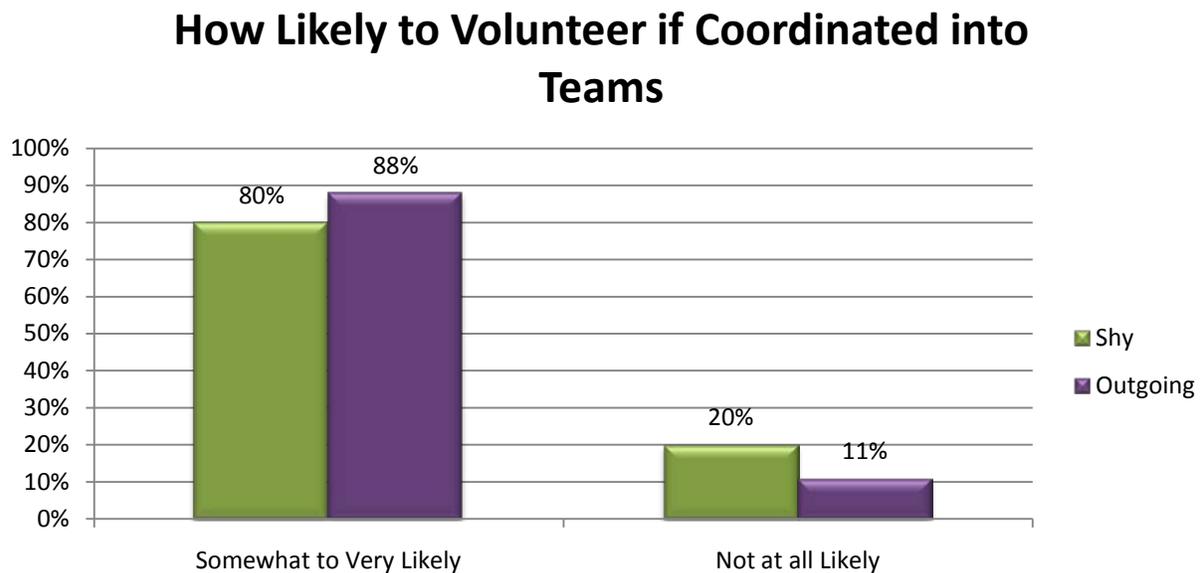
The second factor motivating volunteerism is solidarity benefits. These factors focus on developing a close social network through the creation of relationships among the volunteers, the organization, and those being helped. These individuals would view working in groups and taking part in re-occurring social gathering as the most effective types of incentive packages.³

³ This idea is best shown by the study done by Gross (1995) on abortion activists. They were asked to rank a list of reasons for volunteering on a scale from 1 to 5, coded 1= not very important to 5= very important. The abortion activists “ranked moral and value reasons as being most important for becoming a volunteer and material and solidarity incentives lowest.” (*Volunteers: A Social Profile* 431-432) But when it came to their current level of activism, the high valued reasons had switched with the lowest valued reasons. Now normative and solidarity reasons were ranked the highest while moral and value reasons were the lowest according to their rankings (p.431-432).

When looking at the motivating factors behind volunteerism, solidarity benefits play an important role, if not the most important, in volunteer retention. Therefore, we decided to analyze the prospect of collaborating volunteer efforts into teams. After breaking down the categories by gender, age, race, marital status, employment, and education, it was clear to us that an overwhelming majority of people are attracted to working in groups regardless of these socio-demographics. Knowing that socio-demographic differences are not a factor in social interaction, we turned our focus to personality differences.

As you can see from Figure 2 (below), when both shy and out-going individuals were asked if they were more likely to volunteer when coordinated into teams, it is not surprising that 88% of those who described themselves as outgoing liked the idea of volunteering in teams. What is surprising is that nearly 80% of those who described themselves as shy also like the idea of volunteering in teams. This reinforces our recommendation, that volunteer organizations should accentuate the social aspect of volunteering. This would also create an opportunity for outgoing individuals to interact in an atmosphere where they are already comfortable and allows shy individuals to develop new relationships.

Figure 2)



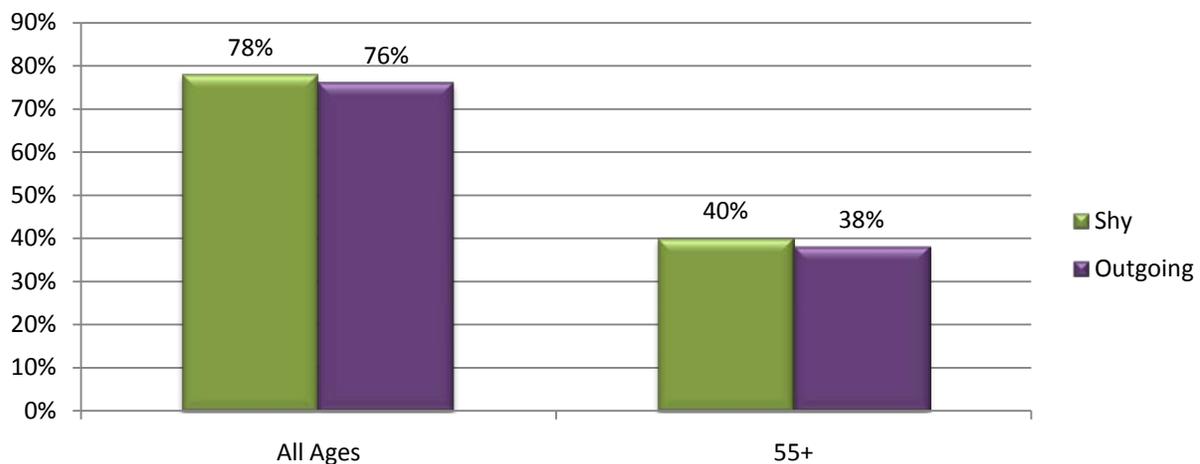
However, promoting the team aspect of volunteering may not be as successful for senior citizens (age 55 and over) as it is for younger generations (ages 18-54). Independent of ever having volunteered, marital status, gender, religion, physical health, and personality, we found that senior citizens are 81% less likely than all other age categories to volunteer if they were told that they would be able to volunteer in teams. It is not necessarily the idea that senior citizens don't want to volunteer in teams, it is more that volunteering in teams isn't necessarily a motivating factor for them to begin a volunteer commitment.

“Joining with people I like and respect. Doing something with a clear value that I understand and accept. Personal contact. Possibility of long term involvement. Not a big splash.”

Much like the results for coordinating volunteers into teams, socio-demographics have no effect on a respondent's attitude towards social gatherings. Overall, it is clear that a majority of people like the idea of volunteers attending social gatherings. Knowing this, we turned our attention to the question of the frequency of the social gathering. Respondents were given the option of choosing between: every week, every other week, once a month, once every 6 months, and once a year. We hypothesized that how often individuals would like these gatherings might differ depending on personality type. So, we divided the analysis into how the respondent described themselves: shy or outgoing. For the convenience of RSVP, we also decided to break apart the age group 55 and older to see how they compared to all ages. As you can see from Figure 3 (below), the top two most common responses for all age groups is to hold social gatherings once a month and/or once every six months, with once a month being the most common response of the two.

Figure 3)

Prefer to Have a Social Gathering Either Once a Month or Once Every Six Months



Recommendations

- **Social Gatherings:** These events should be casual and un-structured; they should be an out-of-office venue where people can socially engage with the volunteer organization as well other as peer volunteers. Volunteers should not see it as another required time commitment, but as an opportunity to get to know the organization at all levels. We see this as a good opportunity for volunteers to foster a day-to-day relationship with volunteer organization.
 - Coffee shops, Ice Cream Parlors, Bowling Alleys, Pizza Spots etc.
- **Banquets:** End-of-the-year banquets are the best way for organizations to show appreciation for their volunteers' time and efforts. Much like the social gatherings, the banquet should be informal and leave adequate time for the volunteers to chat, in a light fun atmosphere. The banquet can be both fun and cost effective. Volunteers prefer another opportunity where they can interact with each other, or possibly involve their families.
 - Potluck, Dessert Banquet, etc.
- Both recommendations can be adapted to needs of the organizations and its volunteers



“I think it is just nice to have a small, inexpensive get-together and tell all the volunteers thanks and that they are doing a good job. All people need is a little pat on the back and encouragement.”