

20 TOP TIPS FOR 'ASKING'

Although research shows that the majority of volunteers were **'asked'** to get involved, research also shows that 60% of adults in Scotland have never been **'asked'** to volunteer. In 2005, the Year of the Volunteer, VDS conducted research into **'asking'** with current and lapsed volunteers, and with people who have never volunteered.

The findings were shared with volunteers managers from a sample of The Volunteering 100 Group to test out how the learning might be applied to volunteer management practice.

Here is what the study tells us about **'asking'** people to volunteer:

WORD OF MOUTH

1. Use word of mouth - get out there and ask people, and find out routes into a variety of groups, e.g. different age groups, ethnicity, disability.
2. Encourage volunteers to bring a friend/family member to volunteer award ceremonies, open days and social events and ask existing volunteers to describe what they do as a volunteer.
3. Give potential volunteers as much information about what's involved as possible, and invite them to a 'taster' session.
4. Recognise and respect that people may say no to becoming involved as a volunteer.

TOOLS FOR 'ASKING'

5. Leaflets and posters.
6. DVDs/ CDs.
7. Website.
8. A question and answer sheet for anyone helping to recruit volunteers.

IMAGES AND MESSAGES

9. Use images that contain at least two people, the more the better.
10. Use images that identify with the cause.
11. Use positive messages, e.g. the difference volunteering makes to the recipient/community.
12. Use messages that convey what volunteers do.
13. Use messages that convey the time involved.
14. Target recruitment messages, e.g. to specific groups or people likely to support the cause.
15. Link messages to the motivation to volunteer.
16. Keep things simple - use a few messages at a time.

FLEXIBILITY IN ASKING

17. Potential volunteers want a choice of volunteering opportunities and to negotiate the amount they give.
18. Existing volunteers want the opportunity to renegotiate their role and time commitment when their personal circumstances change.
19. **'Ask'** new people to volunteer rather than 'asking' existing volunteers to take on more hours.
20. Keep on **'Asking'** - people out there want to volunteer, they are waiting to be asked!

For further advice on volunteer management contact your local Volunteer Centre.

www.volunteerscotland.org.uk

