

Matching Volunteers to Roles

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GETTING THE RIGHT MATCH

The key to matching volunteers to roles is understanding the specific requirements of the role AND the volunteers motivation. The volunteer's values should also align with the core values of your organisation.

Understand and be clear about the core functions of the role and the prerequisites e.g. skills/experience required, and deal breakers - anything that may exclude a volunteer. E.g. Medical Filing Clerk would need excellent attention to detail, be methodical, previous office experience, knowledge of filing systems, must be a non-smoker.

Know what skills and attributes the successful applicant will need. Be clear and understand what skills/experience an applicant will need to bring and what skills you are happy to teach or for the applicant to learn on the job.

It pays to periodically review all job descriptions to ensure they are still current and relevant. Talk to current volunteers in the role to see if they think the job description is a fair reflection of the actual role.

ROBUST RECRUITMENT

It is wise to interview more than one applicant to ensure you are getting the best person for the role.

The first person to apply might be suitable for the position; the second person to apply might be perfect for the position.

Make sure the recruitment process is inclusive and provides plenty of opportunity for a prospective volunteer to learn about your organisation. Getting the right match is a two way process. Matching the right volunteer to a role is equally as important as the volunteer deciding that the role and your organisation is the right fit for them.

Key points to consider when matching a volunteer to a role include:-

- Needs of your organisation
- Needs and motivation of the volunteer
- Volunteer understanding and belief in your organisations ethos
- Any additional support needs e.g. skills training
- Consistency in approach to reference checks and official checks

PREFERENCES AND 'MUST HAVES'

Some useful tools to help sort out the best candidate for the role:

- Understand the absolutes e.g. must have a full, clean drivers licence
- Understand what the preferred skills/attributes are, break it down in to a skills matrix
- Deal breakers e.g. criminal convictions, lack of experience, smoker
- What support/training can be offered to a volunteer (if any)

It is not uncommon to have a prospective volunteer to apply for a role that doesn't fully utilise their skills. Bear in mind that some people choose to volunteer as a way of doing something different to their paid employment. Take care to listen and ensure you are offering a role that will meet the needs and motivation.

To get the right volunteer in the right role, understand and know what the role requirements are and the needs and motivation of the volunteer.