

# Top Tips & Ideas For Involving Volunteers in Your Organisation.

AS COMPILED AT THE VOLUNTEER CENTRE NETWORK AOTEAROA HUI, 31 OCTOBER 2018



# Top Tips & Ideas For Developing Role Descriptions

Offer roles in bite sized pieces.

Make use of the training and resources available to you. Your local Volunteer Centre is a good place to start.

Using values in roles builds connection.

Don't put volunteer in the title.



Be specific about what is required.

Sell the benefits to the volunteer and others.

Have the 'why' or activity in the job title.

## MAKE IT CLEAR HOW THE ROLE LINKS TO THE PURPOSE OF THE ORGANISATION.

Who will the volunteer be responsible to in the organisation?  
Who are the stakeholders?

Ensure the impact of their contribution is in the job description.  
What is the outcome?

## TAP INTO THE MOTIVATION OF THE VOLUNTEER. WHAT'S IN IT FOR THEM?

Write job descriptions so that potential volunteers can see themselves in the role.

Be creative and use a snappy title to get people's attention.  
eg. Pooper-Scooper with a Smile.

Start with the person, rather than the task. Ask "What can you/would you like to offer?"

Ask your local volunteer centre for help.

Include a description of your organisation in two sentences at the beginning.



# Top Tips & Ideas For Involving Youth Volunteers

Recruit young people through their own networks.

Tap into existing forums and expos. Eg. careers expo.

Create think-tanks, steering committees or advisory groups with young people, so they can tell you what is needed.

Pro-actively encourage youth to engage by enabling them to co-create opportunities.

Explain the variety of volunteer roles available.

Find out what motivates them. Not all young people are the same.

Make presentations at schools about volunteering and the range of roles and projects available.

## FIND PROJECTS THEY ARE PASSIONATE ABOUT.

Celebrate your youth volunteers during Youth Week.

Harness youth innovation and let them lead the way.

Don't assume all young people are interested in technology or social media.

Make the most of Student Volunteer Week. Check out annual campaigns on [www.volunteeringnz.org.nz](http://www.volunteeringnz.org.nz)

Let them know what's in it for them.

- Adds weight to their CV.
- Contributes towards the Duke of Edinburgh award.
- Helps towards achieving University scholarships.
- Gives work experience.
- A chance to test a career before embarking on further study or jumping into employment.
- A way to connect with their community.

Tap into established institutions. Eg. Schools, Tertiary institutes.

Ensure existing (often older) volunteers treat youth with respect and don't assume they have no skills or experience to offer.

Look for opportunities for inter-generational volunteering.



Provide lots of coaching, mentoring and support.

Youth like FUN!

Offer short, pop-up opportunities.

Youth need flexibility, so be flexible.



# Top Tips & Ideas For Involving Older Adults as Volunteers

Recognise prior skills, education and their many years of life experience.

Be mindful of physical constraints and provide appropriate opportunities.

Have focus groups of older adults to advise on 'older adult' strategies.

Break down commitment barriers so opportunities are more accessible.

## OFFER PROJECTS AND OPPORTUNITIES THAT VALUE THEIR SKILLS.

Take time to build relationships.

Engage with other organisations who are already involving older adults well.

Provide meaningful roles that give purpose.

Become a part of the Positive Aging Strategy in your region.

Do some research on what motivates 'boomers' born from the mid 1940s to mid 1960s - what kind of world environment did they experience during their formative years?

Make sure you have a job/role description.



Consider why you want to define or label this group of volunteers. Will it help you with recruitment or retention strategies, or are you defining just for the sake of it?

Be respectful with your wording eg. Older Adults or Mature Volunteers vs. Elder, Senior or Retired.

Consider how you would want to be recruited. What would that conversation look like?

Make sure it is fun to be involved.

Offer a variety of roles. Some older volunteers want to get out of the house, others are looking for ways they can contribute from home.

Look for ways to support people who are recovering from illness (or have moved to a new city to be near children) and want to get back into the community.



# Top Tips & Ideas For Involving Older Adults as Volunteers

U3A, Rest Homes and Retirement Villages are good places to recruit older volunteers.



Attend expos such as International Day of the Older Person events and Active Aging Expos.

Use photos of people twenty years younger (we think we're younger than we are).

Offer ongoing training and learning opportunities. State the purpose in the role description.

Look for inter-generational opportunities for them to share their knowledge and experience.

Ask them what they would like to do. How would they like to be involved?

## ENGAGE PEOPLE WHILE THEY ARE WORKING. DON'T WAIT UNTIL PEOPLE RETIRE TO SHARE VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES.

Volunteering is a great way for older adults to make new friends. Host morning tea gatherings that connect to the project.

Rather than just telling them about volunteering, ask them if they are currently volunteering.

Many are, or have volunteered in the past. Let them tell you their story.

Build on their knowledge to link to something new that will benefit from this knowledge.

Tell them about changing demographics, as they'll enjoy hearing that younger people are out there in force.

Remember that some people retire at 60, 65 or earlier - it's still a long way to a rest home from there, and many enjoy good health during that time.

A retiree is not a granny with grey hair and knitting needles, with a cat on her lap. They could be actively engaged in raising grandchildren, caring for aged parents, kayaking, or generally doing things that they were not able to do while raising their own families, with work commitments and mortgages.

Take time to educate older volunteers on new cultures in your community and how to engage with them.



# Top Tips & Ideas For Your Volunteer Induction Process

One size induction does not fit all. Vary how and when you offer induction and use technology to assist the process.

Remember to induct your Governance volunteers too!

Make time to ensure that new volunteers are inducted well.

Make sure Health, Safety and Well-Being is well covered.

Create an induction checklist.

Assign responsibility for the induction process.

Consider a good induction as an investment.

## EXPLAIN WHAT THE ROLE INVOLVES AND WHY IT MATTERS.

Outline the organisation's Vision, Mission, Purpose and Values.

Introduce your volunteers to each other and to staff. Buddy them up.

Provide a job description that explains how the role contributes to the organisation's purpose.

Ensure volunteers understand how they contribute to the wider vision.

Ensure they have a go-to person and their contact details.

Read through the resources available from your local Volunteer Centre. Learn about your responsibilities when engaging volunteers.

Train staff in how to work with volunteers.

Check in on progress and take feedback from the inductee.

Make sure the induction process meets the needs of the volunteer.  
Eg. learning styles, generational differences, languages, and cultural considerations.



Ask potential trustees to spend time in the office / programme before agreeing to join the board.



# Top Tips & Ideas For Volunteer Appreciation & Recognition

Remember that little things can be big things to some people.

Ask volunteers for their input in decision making.

Make recognition fun eg. Chocolate Fish Award for the most Smiley Volunteer this month.

Say thank-you sincerely and appropriately.

Invite / include them in all your training.

Handwrite personal Christmas cards.

Award a Volunteer of the Month.

Recognition is not just about length of service, but also about impact. Short-term volunteers should also be acknowledged.

## COMMUNICATE THE TANGIBLE OUTCOMES AND RESULTS OF VOLUNTEER EFFORTS.

Utilise the languages of appreciation - not everyone likes to be appreciated in the same way eg. Words of Encouragement, Acts of Service, Quality Time, Gift Giving.

Include your governance team when appreciating and recognising volunteers. Make sure you invite them to events.



Look for ways to recognise volunteers in culturally significant ways.

Have appreciation kits at events eg. water bottles, sunblock, t-shirts.

Remember birthdays and special occasions.

Have team recognition awards.

## MAKE SURE YOU PLAN AND COMMUNICATE RECOGNITION EVENTS WELL. MAKE USE OF THE MEDIA.

Top down appreciation is essential. Grow a culture of appreciation across the whole organisation.

Appreciation starts with a values match between the volunteer and the organisation. Allow volunteers to co-create their opportunity to contribute.

Create Volunteer Profiles highlighting your volunteers' successes and stories. Share with the public.



# Top Tips & Ideas For Volunteer Appreciation & Recognition

Host Team Volunteer Appreciation Awards and give Appreciation Certificates.

Share how the volunteer's effort has impacted the people your organisation serves.

Tap into other recognition opportunities eg. Trustpower Awards, Civic Honours, Business Awards.

Share volunteer stories with your local Volunteer Centre, so your volunteer can be celebrated far and wide.



## GET INVOLVED WITH YOUR LOCAL VOLUNTEER CENTRE RECOGNITION EVENTS.

Offer pastoral support.

Seek funding to ensure that volunteers are not out-of-pocket by volunteering.

Feed them if applicable.

Write policies that ensure recognition is embedded into the culture of your organisation and not just a once a year event.





# Top Tips & Ideas For Encouraging, Collecting & Implementing Volunteer Feedback.

Make sure there is a way to give confidential, anonymous feedback.

Make follow-up phone calls to see how volunteers are getting on.

Recognise the importance of feedback for storytelling and funders. When you recognise the importance, you will prioritise it.

Offer lots of different ways for people to give feedback eg. surveys, face-to-face, slide-scales, phone calls.

Not everyone will respond to the same method.

## HAVE AN INDEPENDENT PERSON GATHER FEEDBACK.

Make use of online survey tools eg. Survey Monkey.

Diarise regular catch-ups with volunteers or small groups of volunteers to get feedback on specific topics.

Feedback doesn't always have to be formal. Get in the habit of asking 'How is it going for you?'



Hold exit interviews.

Have an annual review similar to paid staff. This combines the opportunity with 1:1 with volunteers, to check how their year has gone and find out their future intentions. Make sure they have permission to leave if they want to.



# Find Your Local Volunteer Centre.

**NORTHLAND**

[www.volunteeringnorthland.nz](http://www.volunteeringnorthland.nz)

**AUCKLAND**

[www.volunteeringauckland.org.nz](http://www.volunteeringauckland.org.nz)

**BAY OF PLENTY**

[www.volbop.org.nz](http://www.volbop.org.nz)

**WAIKATO**

[www.volunteeringwaikato.org.nz](http://www.volunteeringwaikato.org.nz)

**GISBORNE**

[www.gisbornevolunteercentre.org.nz](http://www.gisbornevolunteercentre.org.nz)

**NEW PLYMOUTH**

[www.employment-support.org.nz](http://www.employment-support.org.nz)

**HAWKES BAY**

[www.volunteeringhb.org.nz](http://www.volunteeringhb.org.nz)

**WHANGANUI**

[www.volunteerwhanganui.org.nz](http://www.volunteerwhanganui.org.nz)

**MANAWATU & DISTRICTS**

[www.vrcmanawatu.org.nz](http://www.vrcmanawatu.org.nz)

**NELSON**

[www.volunteernelson.org.nz](http://www.volunteernelson.org.nz)

**KAPITI**

[www.volunteerkapiti.org.nz](http://www.volunteerkapiti.org.nz)

**MARLBOROUGH**

[www.volunteermarlborough.org.nz](http://www.volunteermarlborough.org.nz)

**WAIRARAPA**

[www.waivc.org.nz](http://www.waivc.org.nz)

**WELLINGTON**

[www.volunteerwellington.nz](http://www.volunteerwellington.nz)

**CANTERBURY**

[www.volcan.org.nz](http://www.volcan.org.nz)

**MID & SOUTH CANTERBURY**

[www.volunteering-msc.org.nz](http://www.volunteering-msc.org.nz)

**OTAGO**

[www.volunteeringotago.org.nz](http://www.volunteeringotago.org.nz)

