



Why do Organisations Involve Volunteers?

The most successful organisations 'involve' rather than 'use' volunteers. It is good practice to reflect this in all your communications and to remember that volunteering is a two-way relationship, one that should benefit both the volunteer and the organisation. Your organisation's view on the role of volunteers and what they can bring to your organisation will determine how you manage and involve them.

Belief in your Mission

Volunteers have chosen your organisation because something about what you do appeals to them. Organisations and their clients often feel encouraged by knowing the volunteer is there because they want to be and not because they are paid to be.

Extra Hands

Volunteers are the lifeblood and backbone of many organisations who simply could not succeed without them. Volunteers contribute to organisations by: extending services so you have the capacity to reach greater numbers; extending hours of operation; or diversifying the types of services offered by your organisation.

Additional Skills

Involving volunteers with additional skills which support and complement the existing skills of salaried staff can help an organisation be even more effective in achieving its objectives. Volunteer expertise can include HR support, graphic design, board membership, receptionist, IT skills, accountancy, electrician – the list is endless!

Specialised Attention

Staff members often have to divide their time and skills across many of the organisation's operations. Volunteers can give dedicated attention to specific groups, issues or projects.

Diversity

Volunteers in Ireland today come from all walks of life, different age groups, backgrounds, cultures and classes. By involving volunteers from a variety of backgrounds and with complementary skills, an organisation can learn to approach challenges creatively and with a fresh perspective. Involving a wider variety of volunteers also ensures your message has a wider reach within the community.

Community Spirit

Involving people from the locality as volunteers - students, employees, families, new arrivals - is a great way of building a connection with the local community and demonstrates your organisation's commitment to it. As well as bringing local knowledge, enthusiasm and skills to your organisation, volunteer involvement reflects acceptance and ownership of your project or group within the community.

Organisational Feedback

Volunteers often feel more free to say what they think about an organisation's practices than paid employees do. This is a very valuable way for your organisation to gather information about its practices or programmes and to make any changes needed for future success.

Community Ambassadors

Inviting volunteers to be part of your organisation extends your area of influence and contact with the wider community. Your volunteers may also participate in community groups, social networks, businesses, educational bodies and so on, where they may well be only too delighted to speak about your organisation's work or establish contacts that you can use in future planning, fundraising or development.

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." - Margaret Mead