

Volunteer Retention: Building Relationships Across a Cultural Divide

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GOALS:

- **Identify challenges** to achieving recruitment and retention goals.
- **Understand best practices** to successful outreach to underrepresented communities.
- **Identify strategies** to achieving recruitment and retention goals.
- **Articulate effective methods** to retain underrepresented volunteers and staff.

WHY do people volunteer?

- Helping others
- Making new friends
- Building self-confidence
- Giving something back to the community and/or institution
- Sharing talents, abilities and experiences
- Gaining personal growth
- Feeling needed, useful and appreciated.
- Give back to "like-minded" organizations that share like passions.

How do you get to real Inclusion and Equity?

The Answer: **Relationships**

Real and meaningful relationships require hard work, commitment and courage.

Why is it important to do targeted outreach and recruitment in brown communities?



HISTORY MATTERS



Why is this history important TODAY?

- Informs current attitudes of individuals
- Provides historical perspective
- Serves to demonstrate the use of “real or perceived;” legislated hate”
- Illustrates how easily the population is willing to accept one sided bias and attitudes of oppression

Coalition Building



How we frame an issue matters.....

- When we conduct research
- Place an ad for employment
- Build outreach and retention plans
- How we debate a topic
- The manner in which we process information
- The words and way we communicate with one another

Human relationships across race, class and culture are made stronger – or – undermined based on how we frame the contact.

“Collaboration” as both a positive and negative.

Achieving success in diversity requires:

- Articulation of truths
- Commitment
- Deliberate action
- Investment of resources
- Courage to face change
- Ongoing action
- Accountability

- It is critical that you know your community
- Be clear on the purpose of the your outreach
- Understand how the community prefers to consume their information
- How they want to participate
- Communicating effectively

How do you connect with this family in a way that respects their individuality, history and culture?



What do you know about them?

- What is their culture?
- What is their nationality?
- What is their socioeconomic level?
- What is their immigrant status?
- What are their education levels?
- Where do they live?
- What is their religious background?
- Who is their leader?

Society already knows how to focus with laser accuracy on a very particular demographic...



So, why is it so difficult to do for brown people?







There is NO singular approach to successful outreach.



Framing the conversation & research to find your answers...



Where can you find volunteers?

- Members of your family
- Spiritual centers; social and spiritual friends
- Active adult communities
- Students in school, college and vocational centers
- Pre or Post retirement individuals
- Former volunteers
- Local volunteer centers
- Members of service organizations
- Fraternal and social organizations
- People engaged in social services or other "child/family" centered advocates

Your target audience should help frame the outreach & research...

Focus groups and data collection

1. In person
2. Telephone
3. Questionnaire

Trending

1. Purchase patterns
2. Demographic shifts/census data
3. Employment rates
4. Poverty rates
5. Infant mortality
6. Graduation rates

Cultural Norms

Passed from one generation to the next, cultural norms are the shared, sanctioned, and integrated systems of beliefs and practices that characterize a cultural group. These norms foster reliable guides for daily living and contribute to the health and well-being of the group.

As prescriptions for correct and moral behavior, cultural norms lend meaning and coherence to life, as well as the means to achieve a sense of integrity, safety and belonging. Thus, normative beliefs, together with related values and rituals, confer a sense of order and control upon aspects of life that might otherwise appear chaotic or unpredictable.

Read more: <http://www.answers.com/topic/cultural-norms-1#ixzz1E2GAjcyI>

Embed into the community!

- You must build meaningful and authentic relationships within the communities where you hope to have influence.
- Your presence must be long-term, or permanent.
- You must be both visible and vocal.
- You must have a “value-added” role.

Know your target audience.

- Race, ethnicity, nationality, & culture
- Immigrant status, recent immigrant, multiple generations
- Primary language, multi-lingual
- Geographic region, state, city, & local community (who are the people in your neighborhood?)
- Age group
- Income level, sources of income

Know the history and experience of the target community...

This is critical because not only does it inform the tangible history and lives of a community at a given time, but it also informs what is currently important to those people.

“We believe, feel, act, decide and are informed by.....because we know from personal experience that.....”

How can you involve your target audience at every step in your process?

- What questions are you trying to answer?
- How will you frame the questions?
- Who will ask the questions?
- How will the information be processed and translated for your purposes?
- What changes will be made as a result of the insight(s)?

Now that you've got them, how do you
KEEP them?

- Establish friendships
- Develop skills
- Rewards of involvement
- Education opportunities and job experience
- Personal development
- Social interaction
- Feeling of self worth
- Ability to do something special for the cause that is loved.

- Make them feel welcome and connected
- Introduce and regularly celebrate volunteers
- Discovering and investigating their interests, motives for volunteering and expectations from their volunteer experience and organization.
- Offering choices in volunteer placement
- Check in with your volunteer pool regularly to assess the comfort level, engagement and the health of the relationship
- Engage in personal and professional development
- Host information nights and forums for volunteers to discuss strengths, weaknesses , opportunities and threats

- Keep up with the trends in volunteering
- “Buddy system” for support
- Regular training and re-engagement of curriculum
- Provide help and support
- Volunteer recognition that involves all key stakeholders, staff and board members
- Avoid volunteer burnout
- Provide exit interviews of volunteers who discontinue service

Effective communication is key:

- Be patient – it takes time and a great deal of effort to achieve successful diversity outcomes.
- Provide value – make sure that your targeted audience understands what you do and how you are connected to their community.
- Involve others – you can't do things alone, develop and nurture relationships that will benefit your outreach efforts.
- Do what you say – be clear and transparent about what your intentions and actions have, or will be in the future.
- Cross pollinate – don't let the borders of any community create a physical boundary; have neighborhood leaders join other neighborhood list-serves to keep a pulse on what's going and share *relevant* information between communities

It can never be assumed that all people of a targeted group ascribe to all information attributed to the target group or community.

The power of the individual is stronger than the sum of all parts of the community.

Recognize and appreciate this to avoid offending both the individual and your target audience.

Always do what is right for the community!
AND ITS CHILDREN.....
